

# Northlands Primary School and Nursery



Inspire  
Challenge  
Succeed

## English Policy

Ratified at the Full Governing Board meeting on 4.12.24

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Due for review: Every two years

## Curriculum Intent

At Northlands Primary School & Nursery we aim to develop the reading, writing, spelling and grammar skills of children through guidance, frequent practice, discussion and reflection. By developing a comprehensive range of skills, we aim to foster a lifelong love of literature for our students. The skills they learn through our English curriculum will enable them to not only access future learning in all subjects, but give them greater opportunities later in life.

## Equality

When teaching English, we recognise the fact that there are children of differing abilities in all classes and therefore take the needs of all children into account – including the targets set for children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) in their provision plans. Using ongoing assessment, teachers rapidly identify students who need further support in English. These children are then given extra support or intervention to ensure progress. Teachers liaise with the SEND Faculty regularly to review curriculum maps for targeted children including those following personalized curricula. Through delivery of our curriculum, we ensure discrimination is eliminated and equality of opportunity is advanced for all.

## Academically More Able

The school maintains a register of children who have been identified as either Academically More Able (AMA). English teachers will recognise those with special talents in English, monitor their progress and provide rigorous challenges. Where appropriate, additional learning opportunities are provided for these children to ensure they can reach their fullest potential.

## **Reading**

Our aims for the teaching and learning of reading are to:

- Develop an interest in words and their meanings
- Use a range of strategies which will help them read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression (including strategies to read unknown words)
- Understand the features of a book and how it works
- Use appropriate reading strategies to find and interpret information
- Use inferential skills to find meaning beyond the literal
- Foster a life-long love of reading and take pleasure in it

## Implementation of Reading Across the School

Reading at Northlands is taught and celebrated in a range of ways. Some of these are whole school, whilst others are specific to key stages. These may be implemented by the class teacher, an LSA, or voluntary readers such as parents and governors.

- Shared reading using a big book or text
- Daily phonics lessons using the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme
- 1:1 reading with an adult
- Big Read (minimum of one hour per week)
- Weekly comprehension sessions
- Sharing of a class text at the end of the day (using Borrowed Book Bags)
- Lexia (intervention)
- Reading Plus (intervention)
- Reading of texts linked to topic work
- In school and local library visits
- Reading for pleasure opportunities
- A programme of author visits, workshops, book fairs, regular competitions and theme days
- Timetabled class library sessions

### Big Read

There must be a minimum of one hour's Big Read each week. Big Read sessions must follow the steps below and cover the objectives outlined in the Reading Progression.

Your whole class (of mixed ability children) will follow the same text and answer a selection of comprehension questions in their Big Read book.

Each session must have the following:

- Your whole class (of mixed ability children) will follow the same text and annotate a selection of comprehension questions in their Big Read exercise books.
- Select high-quality, engaging texts that are appropriately pitched to your readers. These should also include unfamiliar settings.
- The lesson should start with an independent reading focus. An LSA should pre-teach this text prior to the lesson where possible and work with those who really struggle with independent reading (this should not be more than 4/5 at best).
- Teachers should know their text by reading the text beforehand - never let it surprise you!
- Questions should be asked to ensure children understand the text.
- Include lots of conversation-based vocabulary checks and annotation of the text. Answers should be highlighted in the text.

- Use SATs style question stems such as: How do you know... Why do you think... What is this character thinking...? What evidence is there to suggest...? What does this tell you about...?
- Games should be used to enhance reading stamina.
- Lessons should include discussion-based summaries of the text and a chance for children to predict.
- Address any misconceptions that arose during the lesson regarding question types and unfamiliar vocabulary.

### Reading Comprehension

Weekly comprehension lessons are taught in English sets during Friday's lesson and must cover the objectives outlined in the Reading Progression.

- Teachers should refer to the reading progression drive to ensure they teach an accurate coverage of reading skills for their year group.
- Weekly comprehension sessions are taught during Friday's lesson and should cover a range of comprehension skills, including some longer mark questions.
- An 'independent readers' focus during comprehension lessons aims to increase children's reading stamina.
- There should be lots of discussion surrounding the plot and characters' thoughts and feelings at various points in the text.
- Text and question annotation should be used to teach children how to approach and answer different types of questions.
- Use SATs style question stems to ensure children are exposed to a wide range of question types.
- Teachers should model how to answer comprehension questions first before children move on to answer questions independently.

### Reading for Fluency

- Reading for fluency is the ability to read precisely, at an appropriate speed and with the right expression; fluent readers have a clear understanding of what they have read. They can participate in an in-depth discussion about the imagery that is being created whilst they are reading in the moment (reading for meaning). Creating fluent readers, therefore, ensures that all children have the ability to accurately read and comprehend a given text and see success in a wide variety of secondary tasks thereafter.

### Expectations for Reading for Fluency Texts:

- A new reading for fluency text should be introduced weekly in English lessons. These should be revisited regularly throughout the week.
- Word of the week included.
- Grammar skill for the week included.
- Should be the genre of the writing being taught
- Lots of rich vocabulary.

- No more than 4/5 sentences to allow the children to practice their fluency and remember the rich vocabulary.

### Reading at Home

When appropriate, each child in the school will take home a Jolly Phonics or levelled Oxford Reading Tree book with a reading record that is to be signed by an adult once a read has been completed. They are encouraged to reading with an adult at home who will listen to them in a supportive role, encourage predictions and ask questions about what they have read. Children may borrow 'reading for pleasure' books from the library or classroom.

In Early Years, KS1 and KS2, children are expected to read at home to an adult five times a week for a minimum of 10 minutes and their reading record is to be signed by an adult.

### Rewards

To the value the children's efforts in reading and recognise those children that have gone above and beyond, we have a variety of incentives and rewards in place, including book vouchers and gold coins which can be used for visits to our book vending machine, DORIS (Dispenser of Reading in Schools) located in our school library.

### Reading for Pleasure

Throughout our English Curriculum, teachers endeavor to develop a 'love of reading' in the children by exposing them to a range of text types. Children are given the opportunity to visit the school library; attend regular book fairs; celebrate World Book Day and work with authors in the school. Additionally, class reading corners are used to provide a rich and stimulating environment where reading is celebrated and encouraged.

### Assessment in Reading

Assessment in reading is ongoing throughout the year within individual reading sessions against the Early Learning Goals and half termly phonics assessment in Early Years and KS1 to assess children's recognition of phonemes. When these goals are secured, assessments are made against expectations for each year group according to the 2014 National Curriculum – banded as Beginning, Working Within and Secure – as progress is made.

Testing will also occur within KS1 and KS2 to further inform and enable judgements to be made at the end of each half term. Additionally, Reading Ages will be tested to enable progress within this area to be tracked.

## Writing

Our aims for teaching and learning of writing are to:

- Foster an enthusiasm for writing for a range of purposes,
- Equip all learners with the functional skills they need to understand and communicate in the world,
- Ensure students are able to write letters and words accurately, legibly and efficiently,
- Instill knowledge of the correct forms of grammar and punctuation (including sentence structure),
- Create an awareness of spelling rules, linked to phonological awareness (sounds), morphology (structure) and etymology (history),
- Develop creativity, imagination and inventiveness,

## Handwriting

Handwriting is a key transcription skill which children must develop to enable their other writing skills to be effectively communicated. At Northlands, we teach children to write in a cursive style. This is because, once properly developed, it is the most efficient written method. In EYFS learners begin their handwriting journey by learning individual letters, including leading and exit lines. Staff follow guidance on handwriting from the Letterjoin program. Handwriting continues to be developed through Key Stage 1, with some joining of letters encouraged. By year 3 children are expected to be able to join letters neatly. By the end of Key Stage 2 we aim for handwriting to be joined, legible, neat and quick.

## Spelling

From years 1 to 6, children are taught following a spelling scheme called Jolly Grammar. This scheme was developed alongside the Jolly Phonics program so provides seamless coverage of spelling patterns linked to prior phonics knowledge.

At Northlands we are aware that spelling patterns are best learned through a multi-faceted approach. Each week a new rule/pattern is explored in English, Spelling and Handwriting lessons, as well as a selection of words from the statutory common exception words list. The children are explicitly taught the spellings, which are then practiced in various ways throughout the week.

Spellings are formally assessed half termly and any children finding spelling particularly challenging are identified and provided with additional support.

## Grammar

Grammar and punctuation skills are fundamental tools for learners which enable them to communicate effectively through a range of media in the wider world. With this in mind, at Northlands grammar is a cross-curricular focus and has a place in every lesson in every classroom.

Additionally, English lessons on Monday mornings always have an explicit grammar teaching focus, which children then embed into their creative writing throughout the rest of the week. The focuses are determined carefully by teachers and the English Faculty in line with National Curriculum guidance.

## The Teaching of Writing

For the teaching of writing, Northlands has adopted a wide variety of teaching approaches which are adapted to best suit the needs of learners. The regular inclusion of visual literacy, thematic planning, and other engaging stimuli, enrich children's writing opportunities. Weekly Big Write lessons supplement daily English teaching to maximise opportunities for writing and ensure rapid progress is made.

## Oracy

Our aims for teaching and learning within speaking and listening are to enable children to:

- Develop confidence and competence in a range of situations and to a range of audiences,
- Develop an awareness that different situations require different forms of oral expression,
- Develop the mechanisms required for effective oral communication e.g. projection, intonation, clarity and pace.

## Assessment

Assessment at Northlands is an ongoing process. Teachers use formative assessment methods to gauge daily what children know and what they need to do to improve their writing. Further, at key points throughout the year writing is moderated in depth by teachers to determine progress and achievement.

## Homework

English homework is one grammar activity per week (to be completed in the CGP books relevant for each year group)

- English homework is to be set, collected and marked by the set teacher.

- Homework should be given out on a Friday and handed in on a Thursday.
- Homework is not set over the holidays with the exception of Year 6.
- Homework needs to be explained in class prior to being sent home (and should link to the weekly teaching where possible) to ensure that all children can complete tasks.

## Phonics

Synthetic phonics is the ability to blend or combine sounds, to make spoken words and to read written words. There are over 40 sounds in English but only 26 letters that are used to represent these sounds, therefore some sounds are written using more than one letter. It is essential that the children are fluent in saying these sounds that go with these letters.

In Reception and Year 1, children have daily phonics lessons for 30 minutes.

We follow the Jolly Phonics Handbook for teaching phonics in early years and KS1. This scheme provides a multisensory approach where the children learn each sound with an action, song and visual story. Body movements, along with their ears, eyes and voice, helps the children to remember the sounds.

Teaching is divided into four basic skills:

### Learning the letter sounds

- Sounds are introduced to children attending Nursery at the rate of one sound per week.
- The first 42 sounds are introduced at the rate of one a day in Reception.
- Once the first 42 sounds have been mastered, children will be given a Jolly Phonics reading book (any child who has not yet mastered these sounds will be allocated an alternative resource).
- Alongside these 42 sounds, the children learn to read simple, decodable words from their 'word box'.
- Initially, only one way of writing each sound is introduced. Afterwards, alternatives are introduced.
- Each lesson should contain some revision of letter sounds already taught.

### Blending - for reading

- Aural blending – initially the teacher will call out sounds to make a word and the children will learn to hear the word from putting those sounds together.
- The children then move onto looking at the letters in a word, saying the sounds themselves and listening for the word. Identifying sounds in words – for writing

#### Identifying sounds in words – for writing.

- Children listen for all the sounds in words and link these to letters for writing them down.
- Tricky words - These are frequently used words where the spelling is irregular or the words use phonics knowledge that the children have not learnt yet.
- Pace – three new tricky words a week.

#### Tricky words

- a divided up into six colour-coded groups.
- All KS1 classes to display tricky word flowers.

For children struggling with reading, we have 'keep up' interventions outside of the daily phonics lesson to provide additional time for those children to practise learning the sounds and/or blending sounds to read words. Group interventions take place in year 2 for children who do not pass the Phonics Screening Check in year 1.