



WOOLGROVE SCHOOL

Literacy Policy



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1. LITERACY INTENT

In Literacy we aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking, Listening, Communication, Reading and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to be taught literacy skills through dedicated lessons and through cross-curricular links. A broad and balanced approach to the teaching of literacy across the curriculum has been devised and planning provides opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills. These skills are of paramount importance to the pupils at Woolgrove school and all staff play an important role in nurturing the development of these basic skills.

The intent of the Literacy policy is to ensure that:

- All pupils experience broad, balanced and relevant activities in Literacy, which are appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
- All pupils experience enjoyable and engaging lessons which reflect their needs, interests and abilities.
- All pupils experience a rich and stimulating language environment
- All children are able to independently use their literacy skills to communicate with others inside and outside of school
- All children regardless of their ability and pathway are able to make progress proportionate to their potential.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of Literacy are laid out in the National Curriculum in England Document (2014) and Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Document (2014). Woolgrove's Literacy curriculum is devised from the Classroom Monitor programme which is based on the Birth to Five, Development Matters Ages and Stages, and Early Years Outcomes and KS1 and KS2 National Curriculum. The Literacy curriculum is personalised for every child with individual targets and next steps being identified for all pupils.

The Governing Body

Governors are kept informed about the teaching and learning of Literacy at Woolgrove School through regular updates.

3. IMPLEMENTATION & SUBJECT ORGANISATION

There are five different pathways the children can follow according to their age, ability, learning style and individual needs. Each pathway follows a modified and personalised curriculum.

In the **Early Years Foundation Stage** children should be given opportunities to:

- Explore methods of communication including sign language, speech, PEC's and communication books/boards and apply these through every part of the personalised curriculum they are following.

- Explore a range of different genres, with teaching and learning being centred around 'Big Books'.
- Learn to read and write in a variety of forms such as writing names, labels, lists and captions, and some pupils may progress to writing sentences.
- Become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

The focus of learning in **Pre-Formal/Semi-Formal 1 classes** is that the curriculum is delivered through play. As the children are at the exploratory stage of learning, play is a fundamental way in which the children learn and develop key skills. Children will be provided with a literacy-rich environment that focuses on high-quality texts, introduced to children via the use of sensory stories, songs and rhymes. A 'Big Book' or text is introduced each term as repetition is key to the children's development. The focus of one book for the whole of the half term means that children have an immersive experience with a familiar text. Children's individual interests will also be followed to encourage engagement with literacy texts and to develop speaking and listening opportunities. For pupils developing early reading skills they may need to be supported using meaningful photos, symbols and words. Alongside the play-based approach to learning, are a variety of sessions where pupils come together to learn key skills and knowledge, this includes phonics, communication and mark-making sessions.

Semi-Formal 2 classes build on a range of genres and forms of print. The focus is still provided by a 'Big Book', which changes on a 2-3 week cycle. Children will have opportunities to explore their book or text in depth using teacher led strategies such as helicopter stories, role play and cross-curricular links, as well as being allowed the time to consolidate their learning through child-initiated activities. Writing content includes; names, labels, captions, lists, invitations, simple poems such as acrostics, and descriptive and recount writing. Some pupils write in sentences and may begin to join sentences together with the support of an Integrated Visual Coding system and are developing some understanding of the use of full-stops and capital letters.

The **Formal** curriculum is planned each half term or term and is based on the children's interests, which could be taken from a book, text, author or area of interest. The curriculum incorporates some active, sensory and cross curricular learning experiences as well as table-top learning experiences. Opportunities for consolidation and repetition are built into activities to maximise learning opportunities and for children to embed skills and make progress. The curriculum is taught through whole class and small group teaching. For some activities the carousel style of teaching may still be used. The Formal Curriculum focuses on children being independent learners. Many of the strategies used for the Pre-Formal and Semi-Formal curriculum will continue to be used and adapted to meet the needs of our formal Learners.

Formal classes use an extended range of genres including poetry, non-fiction and different types of stories such as traditional tales, familiar stories and adventure stories. Pupils write more confidently using a variety of different forms such as; non-

fiction writing, stories and poems. Pupil's writing is developed to include extended sentences and paragraphs.

The Literacy policy is subdivided into three key areas:

- **Speaking, Listening and Communication**
 - **Reading**
 - **Writing**
- Literacy planning is carried out in three phases (long term, medium term and short term).
 - Our medium-term plans (Appendix A) define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. These plans are monitored and reviewed by the Literacy Subject Leader.
 - Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan. (Appendix B). All assessment is completed using Classroom Monitor, which allows teachers to use this to inform their planning. This lists the specific learning objectives, derived from Classroom Monitor and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of how learning is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of the children.

4. SPEAKING, LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION

Speaking, Listening and Communication permeates the whole curriculum and underpins the development of reading and writing. Interactive teaching approaches and a variety of communication strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise standards. Promoting effective communication is fundamental in our aim of developing a curriculum of total communication at Woolgrove. Providing our children with a total communication-enabling environment, allows them to communicate using a variety of methods including signing, symbols and objects. The ability to communicate whether verbally or using an augmented system is integral to experiences and participation and underpins the ability to access all other subjects including reading and writing. It is essential that children are able to communicate their needs to staff and peers to develop the social skills and enable their fundamental needs and wishes to be met.

The aims of total communication are:

- To encourage all children to develop in their speech and language aims commensurate with every child's capability.
- To provide opportunities for children to follow instructions in different situations, with or without non-verbal cues.
- To ensure that children are listened to and are supported to make sense of what they hear.
- To encourage children to develop in confidence to share their ideas and communicate their needs using their chosen method.

Speaking and listening activities are planned to allow children to work on their expressive and receptive skills in a variety of contexts. Children are supported and

assessed using their communication targets identified on their education and health care plan. This could include planning discrete speaking and listening target work, focussed lessons, group discussions and/or drama.

The school is supported by a team of speech therapists that offer specialist advice and training to aid the development of speaking and listening throughout the school. For more information, please see the Communication policy.

Group Discussion

Pupils are supported to understand what 'good listening' is and how to respond during discussions, including practising turn-taking. Group discussions are used to develop positive interactions with peers and aid the development of social understanding by allowing children to express their likes and dislikes.

Drama

Pupils are encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express their thoughts, feelings and social understanding both verbally and non-verbally. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate drama both as participants and observers so that they communicate their ideas through a range of means. A few children may need to be supported in understanding the symbolism used in drama.

5. READING, PHONICS AND SPELLING

Reading

We recognise the importance of reading, and we strive to provide a range of opportunities to ensure pupils have a positive view of reading and are able to make as much progress as possible in this area. For many of our pupils, learning to read or understanding what they have read, may be challenging and so Woolgrove has created a series of reading targets at different levels. This enables each pupil to work on a personalised reading journey by identifying and working on their next steps. Pupils gain and develop these skills by working through a range of activities. Some activities may not involve direct reading of books but may be developed through the use of iPads, computers, singing nursery rhymes or by talking about pictures or objects linked to a story. Children have the opportunity to participate in shared reading as well as individual reading and, where appropriate, some children will take part in group reading sessions. Teachers model and use a variety of texts including nursery rhymes, poems, stories and non-fiction.

Reading Schemes

All reading books are clearly labelled, according to the National Book Banding Reading Levels (Appendix C) and children are appropriately placed within these levels. Due to the range of texts within the early reading bands, pink and red level reading books have been levelled further, by dividing them into three levels (pink, 1,2,* and red 1,2,*). We have also divided our books into 'phonic books' and 'label/repetitive books'. This enables staff to select the most appropriate type of book for a pupil for a particular period of time, linked to the child's targets. In addition to these books, Woolgrove use Twinkl 'Rhino Readers' books. These books are part of the DfE validated Twinkl synthetic

phonics scheme and are designed to match phonic reading levels. Each class has its own sets of Twinkl books.

Reading Assessment and Monitoring

Woolgrove has produced their own reading target assessment system that is directly linked to Classroom Monitor. Every child has an appropriate level target sheet in their reading record and specific, individual reading targets are identified for the pupil to work on. The 'Reading Target Records' (Appendix D) are monitored and updated during reading sessions which are displayed in the front of pupils' reading record books. Subject leaders are responsible for monitoring reading records kept by individual teachers, as well as analysing data across the school and delivering staff training.

Phonics

We have adopted a whole school approach for the teaching of phonics which is based on the DfE-approved Twinkl Synthetic Phonics Programme. Our assessment system carefully matches the phonics scheme which enables staff to pitch lessons at the appropriate levels. This also allows for a more personalised approach to the teaching of phonics, in line with each child's ability. There are regular opportunities for both discrete and explicit timetabled phonics lessons, which follow the recommended structure set out in the 'Letters and Sounds' document. (See below for further information about the teaching of phonics).

In addition to phonics, Woolgrove has produced its own programme to support the development of word recognition. Pupils begin with 'picture' matching activities, followed by 'picture/word' matching, 'letter' matching, and finally progressing to 'pink and yellow words'. 'Pink/yellow words' are a series of sets of high-frequency words, which include the 'common exception words' that the children work through which helps them to commit the words to memory. This, in turn, builds fluency when reading. All the above activities have been developed to be used both in school and at home. Some pupils will be working above this stage and will therefore not need any of the additional resources.

For a small number of our pupils, we use the 'See and Learn' method of reading, alongside our usual reading practice. This is an intervention that has been specifically created for pupils with Down Syndrome.

Promoting the enjoyment of reading and the love of books.

At Woolgrove we strive to promote an enjoyment of reading and the love of books by providing regular opportunities for our children to listen to and enjoy stories, nursery rhymes, poems and non-fiction books. Pupils have access to a range of books within their class 'reading corner' or outside 'story shed', as well as access to fiction and non-fiction books in the school library. Each class has a weekly dedicated library session so that pupils can spend time looking at the books and listening to stories. Classes also have a 'buddy' class that they meet with regularly to enable the children to enjoy looking at and sharing books with others from outside their own class.

Links with Home

Children have a reading book to take home daily and some pupils will have 'pink words' or See and Learn activities. Parents are encouraged to comment on how their child reads at home using the reading record. Target sheets are kept in the front of the reading record book which parents can view.

Phonics and Spelling

The Twinkl Phonics Programme offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons that staff adapt and build on as appropriate for our pupils. Woolgrove use a range of active and multi-sensory activities including mnemonics visual letters, song, rhyme, sign and actions to ensure our pupils can make the best possible progress in this area.

Across the school, the children take part in regular phonic sessions. Pupils are usually divided into groups within their class and activities are taught at the appropriate level. This also allows for a more personalised approach to the teaching of phonics, in line with each child's ability. Once the children have learned the initial first 4-6 letters (satpin), they are taught how to blend and segment the phonemes to read and make/write words, and then further letters and words are introduced. However, for some of our children, the process of blending and segmenting is difficult and so supplementary strategies are taught to help overcome this difficulty. All pupils will be taught phonics and will work through the sequence of the different phases. NB 'phases' are referred to as 'levels' in the Twinkl phonics scheme.

Level 1: Children are taught to discriminate between and use auditory, environment and instrument sounds. We cover: Environmental Sounds, Instrumental Sounds, Body Percussion, Rhythm and Rhyme, Alliteration, Voice Sounds, Oral Blending and Segmenting and Syllables. This phase has a strong emphasis on phonological awareness and this builds the foundations for phonics through Levels 2-6.

Level 2: Phonemes/sounds and graphemes/letters are introduced systematically. Pupils also learn to develop and apply, blending and segmenting skills for reading and writing.

- *Blending* - Bring these sounds together l/o/g/ to make a word (log)
- *Segmenting* - Separate the sounds in log (l/o/g)

Letter progression order

s a t p	i n m d	g o c k	c k e u r	h b f ff l ll ss
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Level 3, 4 and 5: Children develop and broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes. Level 5 focuses on phonetically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words.

Level 6: Children build fluency and accuracy in reading and spelling, explore spelling patterns and grammar and develop skills in the spelling of common exception words.

Aims

Our aims for teaching and learning within phonics and spelling are to enable children to:

- Recognise letters and the sounds they make.
- Use phonic knowledge to attempt to spell.
- Learn high-frequency words.
- Write an increasingly wide range of words from memory.
- Attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies.
- Use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks and ICT.
- Begin to develop an understanding of spelling patterns and rules.

6. WRITING

It is important for pupils to develop as independent and enthusiastic writers, who can write in a meaningful way; a multi-sensory approach is used to achieve this. Pupils should regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others. Opportunities for writing are presented across the curriculum and children are regularly involved in shared writing as well as being given the chance to write by themselves. Children benefit from meaningful experiences to write about as well as being immersed in a subject before being expected to write about it. Speaking and Listening is vital in preparing children for the experience of writing. Children are encouraged to think carefully about the structure of their sentences and a variety of strategies are in place, for example using the Integrated Visual Coding system.

Aims

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

- Explore a variety of writing activities.
- Use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to a reader.
- Develop vocabulary suited to the purpose and genre.
- Learn through teacher modelling as a means to understand the writing process.
- Collaborate with others during the writing process.
- Edit and improve work by making changes where appropriate.
- Experience using ICT as a tool for writing
- Increase their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation, and develop an understanding of the conventions of written language.

Shared Writing

Teachers will model the writing process with the children and encourage their involvement. Children also have opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers to reinforce this learning. This can involve sharing ideas, planning, drafting and editing work.

Emergent Writing

Children are encouraged to develop both their gross and fine motor skills to prepare them for the experience of writing. All Semi-Formal classes will support the development of emergent writing by following the progression in the school mark-making programme, alongside activities to support the development of fine motor skills such as tummy writing and fizzy hands to equip children with the skills they need to mark make. When at the emergent stage of writing, children are encouraged to mark make as a way of representing their ideas and are then encouraged to read this back, demonstrating an understanding that text carries meaning. In conjunction with regular phonics activities, they can then progress to the use of symbols and recognisable letters in their mark-making. Other skills that will be developed include writing from left to right and grouping symbols or letters in order, to represent a word.

Mark Making & Handwriting

Woolgrove use a multi-sensory approach to mark-making and letter formation. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to rehearse handwriting skills through a variety of activities such as drawing marks and letters in shaving foam, using chalks outside to using iPads. Woolgrove use the 'Progression in Mark Making' scheme (Appendix E) to enable our children to progress through a series of mark-making stages. Once pupils can make the majority of marks, they are then ready to progress to letter formation. Woolgrove use the handwriting scheme 'Handwriting without Tears', which is a multi-sensory approach to letter writing. The children begin by building letters using wooden pieces and then progress to the formation of letter writing, starting with capital letters first, followed by lower-case letters. We aim for pupils to be able to use a comfortable pencil grip and to form clear letters. For those that are able, joined handwriting will be taught.

Independent Writing

Independent writing is a useful tool for formative assessment and for informing the teacher of where to take the children next and is used in conjunction with Classroom Monitor to generate next steps. For this reason, when writing, children should be encouraged to be as independent as possible, calling upon the strategies taught previously. The nature of this task can give children a real sense of achievement and boost their self-esteem.

7. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

There are clear links between the Literacy curriculum and with other subjects. Reading and writing elements of the curriculum are regularly covered in other subjects such as topic work and science, and Physical Development and art encompass a wide range of gross and fine motor activities that feed into mark-making/handwriting and writing. Speaking, listening, communication and vocabulary building also have strong links to all subject areas including PSED and supplementary maths. Links between lessons make learning more meaningful and enjoyable for the children whilst also providing greater opportunities for learning and the reinforcement of skills.

8. THE USE OF ICT

Opportunities to use ICT in Literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate. ICT can be used effectively as a tool for both teaching and learning. Many pupils will benefit from electronic communication aids and from the use of ICT as a tool for writing.

9. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

At Woolgrove we assess the children using Classroom Monitor. This means that each child has a personalised curriculum based on their needs. Teachers set targets using Classroom Monitor and then teach and observe children to ensure that they have mastered their target in a variety of contexts and as independently as possible. To ensure that children have consolidated their learning, teachers use marking slips on their work and each child has a personalised tracking sheet (PTS) that shows formative assessment judgements from their lessons, work and observations from that week. These in turn feed into subsequent planning. The children's views are taken into account using the marking slip so that if children are able, they can indicate whether they enjoyed the task. Teachers use Classroom Monitor daily to inform their planning but it is also used to make a summative assessment by comparing data at three assessment points throughout the year so that progress can be tracked. For more information please see the assessment, recording and reporting policy.

Assessment in Different Pathways

Alongside the use of Classroom Monitor, our Reception pupils are assessed on the Early Years Foundation Curriculum. The semi-formal classes work from an adapted curriculum based on the document Development Matters. Their learning environment is centred on the 7 areas of learning. Formal classes use an adapted KS1 curriculum but continue to build on the skills they have already developed.

10. INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in Literacy according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment with targeted interventions or provision of equipment they may need in order to access their learning. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children are provided with equal access to a Literacy curriculum specifically tailored to their learning style. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

12. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- Careful monitoring of individuals, groups, (including pupil premium) classes and whole school assessment data, as well as the provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
- The quality of the learning environment, inside and outside of the classroom
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing training needs and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

13. IMPACT

- All children have experienced literacy activities and develop and increase their skills and knowledge according to their age and developmental stage.
- All children experience a range of books and stories
- All children develop communication skills to enable them to communicate with others according to their age and developmental stage
- All children are able to independently use their literacy skills to communicate with others inside and outside of school
- All children regardless of their ability and pathway are able to make progress proportionate to their potential.

14. CONCLUSION:

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- Communication Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Keeping
- Computing Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy

15. APPENDICES

- A - Example Medium Term Plan
- B - Example Weekly Plan
- C - National Book Banding Reading Levels
- D - Reading Target Record
- E - Progression in Mark Making