

MEADFURLONG MIDDLE SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Updated May 2002

Introduction

1. Recognise that the four components of English (reading, writing, speaking and listening) are interdependent and of equal importance.
2. Teach English to help fulfil the aims of the school. English lessons provide a context for developing personal qualities, characteristics and academic literacy and language skills.
3. Acknowledge that the aims of the school, Curriculum 2000, the English National Curriculum, the National Literacy Strategy Framework and the documentation contained within this document provide the ingredients for the planning, teaching, learning and assessment practices and resourcing of English.
4. Aim to teach and apply English skills through a range of other areas of the curriculum.
5. Acknowledge the need to provide additional time to English for group/guided/paired, class novel, independent reading, library time, drama, handwriting, spellings and some focused, extended writing.

A View of Language Learning

1. The most effective language learning is through the study of language at work in 'primary, texts, rather than through isolated grammar or comprehension activities.
2. Language learning is holistic, and each part (reading, writing, speaking and listening) supports and enhances overall language development.
3. Language develops in relation to the context in which it is used. Reading fiction is quite different from reading non-fiction, reading history texts is quite different from reading science texts etc. It is dependent on our motives, interests and previous knowledge. Similarly, writing/the making of texts varies according to purpose and audience.
4. Language develops through the active engagement of the learners. Children become more effective readers by learning to interrogate/deconstruct texts. Their writing improves as they learn to apply this knowledge and skill to construct their own writing, across a range of genres and for real purposes.
5. Language develops through interaction and joint construction of meaning in a range of contexts. Modelled/shared reading and writing planned and focused opportunities for discussion after reading and writing will enhance language learning.
6. Children reflecting on, and monitoring their own progress as readers, writers, speakers and listeners can enhance language learning.
7. Language develops more effectively when children enjoy a language rich environment.

General Language Aims

At Meadfurlong Middle School we aim to:

1. Enables pupils to recognise the relationship between reading and writing;
2. Provide teaching and learning opportunities which integrate reading; writing, speaking and listening activities;
3. Provide real contexts for effective learning;
4. Make accurate assessment of our pupils language learning attainment, recognising that this is not always consistent or linear;
5. Assist pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses in their language learning, and to set manageable targets. Assist them to monitor and reflect on their progress over an agreed period of time;
6. Enable our pupils to use their knowledge of language and textual materials for the purposes of pleasure, learning, the making and communicating of meaning and personal empowerment.

Our Beliefs about Reading

Meadfurlong School believes that:

1. A reader requires three sorts of knowledge:
Semantic (text) knowledge – an understanding that words carry meaning and that meaning; Can change in different context
Syntactic (sentence) knowledge – an understanding that texts are constructed according to certain rules of grammar;
Grapho-phonological (word) knowledge – an understanding that language is made up of many “pictures”, symbols or letters to which we attach specific sounds, to enable reading and spelling.
It is essential to teach and maintain a balance between the three sorts of knowledge.
2. A reader must know that reading is a complex, intellectual process, requiring the reader to draw on a range of meaning making skills.
3. A reader deploys previous knowledge of other texts to enable the effective reading and further meaning making of the text being read.
4. A reader is aware that texts are constructed for particular purposes, audiences and within recognisable text types/genres.
5. A reader can predict the ways that texts unfold, and can confirm or readjust those predictions accordingly.
6. A reader is making decisions, judgements etc before becoming involved in the main body of the text.

7. A reader is increasingly able to ask searching/critical questions in engagement with new and unfamiliar texts.
8. A reader knows how to interact appropriately with a variety of text types/genres for particular purposes.
9. A reader is aware that one way of demonstrating progression in reading can be through raising increasingly more complex questions about the same text.
10. A reader is aware that learning to read is a lifelong continuous process.
11. A reader is aware that other readers do not necessarily read and make meaning in the same ways as each other.
12. A reader is able to explain why a text has been rejected, unfinished or has failed to satisfy the purpose of reading it.
13. A reader improves when taught and encouraged to monitor and reflect on own reading ability and progress.

In reading, we aim to enable pupils:

1. To read fluently and with understanding across a broad range/balanced diet of texts.
2. To use all the available clues in texts to search for meaning.
3. To recognise, and understand why and how, makers of text construct them for a variety of purposes.
4. To develop a range of reading strategies for individual texts, and across a range of texts. (Non fiction texts are, for example, read differently from the way narratives are read.)
5. To read for different purposes, ensuring that the pupils interact and respond appropriately to the texts being read. (e.g. pleasure, to find out information, to discover and develop models for own writing, etc)
6. To make realistic predictions of texts, and to check/amend those predictions depending on features of textual development.
7. To make progress as readers.
8. To become increasingly reflective on own reading development.

Our Beliefs about Writing

Meadfurlong School believes that:

1. Writers should be taught to use the semantic, syntactic and grapho-phonological knowledge acquired in reading their construction of texts.
2. Writing is a purposeful, controlled text making activity, quite different from speaking.
3. Writing is a process that can be continually improved to achieve the desired outcome. Planning, drafting and editing are an essential part of this process.
4. Writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences, and that pupils should learn to adapt the construct of a text to suit the audience.
5. Writing should be constructed within recognisable text types/genres. Pupils need to be taught that texts types are bound by rules, although texts are often constructed from overlapping genre/type. All pupils need experience of as many different text types as possible, both as readers and writers.
6. Writing tasks are supported more successfully when modelled on reading activities. Pupils need to be taught to study/deconstruct the texts they read and to use them as models to construct the texts they write.
7. Scaffolding/writing frames should be used for less confident writers or when a new genre is being taught.
8. The most effective writing can be achieved through careful grammatical/linguistic choices. Pupils need to be taught to take control over their writing, to use the most effective style, expression. Word, punctuation etc in order to create intended effect.
9. Writing should be used as an opportunity to explore and consolidate knowledge, ideas and points of view.
10. Pupils writing improves when they share ideas and take part in joint planning and rehearsing of criteria before writing their own pieces. They also benefit from the views of others as they write, from reminders about adhering to the criteria and rules being explored and to purposeful focused discussion on completion of the task. Pupils also benefit from joint writing too.
11. Writing progress is not necessarily demonstrated through construction of longer pieces of work. Pupils should be able to demonstrate that they are controlling their writing by articulating their purpose, intended audience and their chosen genre/text type – whatever the length. Inexperienced writers should be encouraged to produce short pieces of writing with increased control.
12. Writing skills can be improved through reflection and monitoring of own progress. Pupils should be taught to explain strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvements in relation to the learning objective/writing task. Targets should be set to ensure further progress is made.

In writing, we aim to enable pupils:

1. To know that writing is different from speaking.
2. To recognise that all writing should have a clear purpose.
3. To write for a range of real or imagined purposes and audiences.

4. To write in recognisable genre/text types.
5. To use 'models' of texts they have read to guide/scaffold their own writing.
6. To write clearly and legibly, in accurate English.
7. To articulate why particular choices have been made in any writing.
8. To make progress as writers.
9. To become increasingly reflective on their own writing, and together with their class teacher, set targets for further progress.

Speaking and Listening

1. Speaking and Listening requirements are not directly addressed in the NLS document, but the English National Curriculum 2000 (AT1) sets out a full programme which children should experience.
2. Teaching Speaking and Listening in Key Stage 1 and 2 QCA 1999 and the above should be used to assist the integration of speaking and listening progression.
3. Half-termly medium term plans and weekly short-term plans should identify specific skills to be taught in relation to overall learning objectives from the NLS. If, for example, one speaking and listening skill is focused on for a week or two, through a range of activities in English and other subjects, a number of skills will be taught over a half term.

Meadfurlong School believes that:

1. Speaking can become an increasingly controlled, purposeful vehicle in a range of contexts. Pupils' speaking skills can be improved through regular practice involving progressively challenging tasks.
2. Effective speaking meets the needs of particular audiences and contexts. Pupils need to experience different purposes for speaking, address different size and types of audience, in order to learn how to talk in appropriate ways.
3. Listening skills can be improved by providing a clearer focus on which to concentrate.
4. Reading and writing attainment can be improved and supported by talking about the meanings being sought and constructed.
5. Learning is improved through opportunities for pupils to articulate in their own words what they know, what they have learnt etc.
6. Speaking and listening can be improved through encouraging and teaching pupils to reflect on what they say and how well they have heard.
7. Drama activities provide the context for further language development, and skills can be taught through a range of other subjects. However, drama can be the medium for teaching and learning within the literacy hour.

In Speaking and Listening, we aim to enable pupils:

1. To communicate effectively by speaking and listening with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency.
2. To speak appropriately in range of settings, for a variety of audiences.
3. To develop a wide range of speaking skills on increasingly complex subjects.
4. To think carefully and organise thoughts before speaking.
5. To listen attentively to increasingly more challenging discourses.
6. To respond appropriately to what has been heard..
7. To reflect on their talk.
8. To take part in drama and role-play activities, often linked to other areas of the curriculum.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

1. Medium term plans relate to each half term. Short term plans are drawn up by each year group from the medium term plans at planning meetings, but must be adapted by each class teacher to meet the needs of the specific groups in their class (No more than two or three levels of differentiation are manageable. There is no need to rewrite plans each year as long as adaptations are made as long as adaptations are made as appropriate.
2. Related teaching objectives from the NLS should be brought together to set up a learning 'big idea' to form a specific unit of work to cover a set period of time. **Curricular Target.** (Word level teaching objectives – phonics and spelling – can similarly be grouped into a learning objective, but usually need to be taught separately, although the skills learnt should be applied in reading and writing.)
3. Pupils should be told and reminded of the learning objective on a regular basis. Plenary sessions can be used to review progress-formative assessment.
4. At the end of the unit work the class teacher should know what evidence of learning outcome will enable them, or an observer, to know that this work has led to real improvement and progress.
5. Assessment procedures are intrinsic to the whole planning, teaching and learning apparatus. The view of planning described above, and the aims and beliefs described in this document make assessment clearer and the criteria for success begin to suggest themselves! **It is essential to tell children what to being assessed.**
6. It is important to consider the stages of reading, writing, speaking and listening that pupils pass through as a way of planning for ensuring progression. First Steps and NC Level Descriptors provide such information.
7. Formative, summative and diagnostic assessment should contribute to a developing profile of individual pupils, identifying their strengths and weaknesses and establishing short-term targets. Curriculum, ethos, teaching and learning strategies within the classroom should enable children to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Adhering to the structures set out in this document should enable this to take place.

Summative Assessment

- Following a unit of study – identify method on short-term plans
- Teacher Assessments using NC Level Descriptors
- SATs – Years 4, 5, 6, and 7
- School report
- Standardised tests

This information should be recorded and passed on to next class teacher and parents

Formative Assessment – informs short term planning

1. Day to day assessment of children – observations, discussions, oral and written contributions, all of which should be used to build up a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil in a class. This information should be used as part of summative assessment.

Each class teacher should record only relevant/essential information in a mark book, progress notebook, annotate weekly planning sheet etc to achieve the above.

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Diagnostic Assessment

- This form of assessment involves looking closely at what a pupil knows and can do. It is a very valuable, but time consuming and therefore needs to be planned. Examples of diagnostic testing should be kept and used to consider as evidence of progress or otherwise within a class and as pupil moves up the school.
- Class teachers could target a particular group throughout a unit of work, and therefore plan to target each group over a period of time.
- A reading miscue analysis can be used, most probably at KS2 for children causing concern.

Those involved in Assessment

- Class teacher/subject/head/teaching assistants
- Children
- Keeping own records of what they have been reading, writing and doing in speaking and listening. They should make comments, identify strengths and weaknesses and set targets. Other children should contribute to this process.
- Half termly in depth individual/group interview with teacher to discuss work, identify strengths and weaknesses and set **individual/ group targets** for next half term.
- Parents should be informed of progress, targets etc and encouraged to assist with learning.

Setting Targets

- Consistent adherence to the procedures laid out in this document should enable standards to rise steadily at Meadfurlong Middle School. However, three forms of target should be set, following analysis of relevant assessment information.
- **School targets** linked to a) improvements in SAT results and b) other aspects of English. This must be seen as a whole school responsibility and sub targets should be set for each year group.
- **Curriculum targets for the whole class** linked to the learning 'big idea' described earlier.
- **Individual targets** albeit groups of children will probably have the same targets. The only exception might be children with statements, and then additional guidance should be provided by the SEN Co-ordinator and Primary Support Staff.

Marking

Reference should be made to the Schools marking policy with the following additions.

- Wherever possible, children self mark their own work, allow a friend to read through their work and make/suggest improvements **before** a teacher marks it.
- The teacher should mark work primarily with the agreed learning objective in mind, and should use the agreed code to do so. Any comments made by the teacher should highlight strengths and a focused target for the pupil to improve. (Related to the learning objective). Secretarial skills should not be ignored, and children should be expected to use their phonic and spelling strategies in their writing, but they should not take priority over the content of their work. (Refer to spelling policy).
- Some work will be entirely self marked by the pupils, often in the plenary session.

