



English, Reading and Communication Policy

Introduction

At Hillside Specialist School and College we identify Communication, Reading and Writing as hugely important skills for all of our learners. Through the English curriculum, we will help pupils develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively in a number of ways, including spoken language, symbols, gestures, Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) and written language, and to equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want pupils to enjoy and appreciate all forms of literature and experience a wide variety of texts. We use a wide range of strategies, resources and approaches to facilitate this, including the 'DFE validated Twinkl Phonics Scheme' and associated 'Rhino Readers'.



Subject Aims

- To develop effective Communication, Reading and Writing skills in all learners, developing their individual potential to the full.
- To foster an enjoyment of literature and language through exposure to a range of multi-modal texts.
- To develop initiative and ability to work both independently and in cooperation with others across the curriculum.
- To offer appropriate subject material and teaching experiences, considering individual learners needs.

Through these steps we hope to encourage pupils to

- Be effective, competent communicators using their preferred method and to be good listeners
- Develop an interest in words; developing a growing vocabulary in a variety of forms specific to each individual
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses
- Enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres
- Begin to read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment
- Have access to differentiated English and communication content at their specific level – including Phonics and early reading, becoming surrounded in English and communication content across the curriculum and accessing range of accreditation routes where applicable.



The Policy as a Working Document

The policy and curriculum maps act as a framework of guidance for all staff to facilitate their planning, teaching and assessment of the English skills. We ensure that there are opportunities for pupils of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and we ensure there is progression in content, delivery and targets so that the pupils are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school.

While we do follow the National Curriculum programme of study for English at each Key Stage it is recognised each pupil will need adaptations according to their level of ability. As each class has a very wide range of abilities within it the teacher will need to approach the teaching of English with imaginative enthusiasm so that each pupil has the opportunity to access the lessons at their particular level. The NC programme of study will have to be partially or substantially modified although the work must offer challenges to all pupils. At Key Stage 5 level students access a range of accreditation options from ASDAN, AQA Units to Functional Skills English and Maths and beyond.

Reading

Objectives

- To read, share and access books and literature.
- To teach a variety of reading strategies including synthetic phonics, visual and kinaesthetic methods.
- To teach functional reading skills and help students to apply these in their daily lives, in the community and in planning for the future.

Throughout the school all teachers are aware that reading is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learner's reading skills. The school is committed to provide a literacy rich environment to allow learners every opportunity to generalise their reading skills for example in FE learners read signs in the environment. We subscribe to the

Synthetic phonics is delivered through the **Twinkl DFE Validated scheme** encouraging fidelity to the core content, strategy and purpose of the scheme across the Primary years and beyond. Alongside phonics, learners also learn to read high frequency words, have access to a wide variety of texts and literature in both discrete English sessions and via creative and engaging cross curricular teaching.

We use the Rhino Readers book scheme as well as the Twinkl Originals fiction and non-fiction series. Both schemes are available online both for school and home use, with a portion of these texts being available in physical form from the English resource cupboard. Additionally, we stock a range of other fiction and non-fiction texts covering a range of topics and ability levels.

Writing

Objectives

- To teach systematic fine motor skills; grasp, letter formation, handwriting.
- To teach a range of spelling strategies.
- To teach grammar, vocabulary and punctuation.
- To develop compositional skills and encourage the enjoyment of writing.
- To teach functional writing skills including email, word processing and other key skills.



Throughout the school all teachers are aware that writing is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learner's writing skills.

Alongside handwriting, learners will be encouraged to compose texts using word processing packages, mobile phones, emails, social networking sites etc.

Expressive and Receptive Communication/Spooken Language

Objectives

- For all staff to consistently use specific and effective communication strategies specific to each learners needs.
- For each learner to be encouraged to access a wide range of communication strategies.
- To provide opportunities throughout each day for students to expressively communicate using a variety of tools, resources and skills.
- To provide opportunities for students to develop their expressive communication skills and apply this to communication with others, academic work, making requests and to support their independence as they progress towards adulthood.

Communication at Hillside Specialist School and College exists as a wraparound teaching and support approach used in each part of the day, in a multitude of ways, to ultimately support learners to become more independent communicators.

Staff use a variety of resources and strategies including, but not limited to; objects of reference, PECs, spoken word, InPrint 2 and 3 text, Proloquo2Go APP, augmented technology, Makaton, theme boards, communication books, TOBIs, body sign, Colourful Semantics and more. Specialists across school help to support teachers and support staff to implement these and other strategies as and when required.

Subject Organisation

Providing a broad and balanced English and communication curriculum at Hillside Specialist School is a daily priority. Pupil provision is related to attainment as well as age. Across all Key Stages personalised learning programmes (PLPs) are taught in English lessons and throughout the day. Throughout each Key Stage pupils have opportunity to read books and become immersed in stories, poetry and non-fiction texts alike.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, English is taught through Continuous Provision. The environment and resources enable pupils to explore English and be supported through the development of their skills. Pupils have the opportunity for shared text experiences as the class group share a different story, song or poem song each week.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, English is taught on a daily basis by the class teacher. A curriculum map shows the order in which age appropriate texts are taught, and teachers are expected to include the statutory requirements to teach reading, writing and spoken language, using the text as a basis.

In Key Stage 3 and 4, English is taught for 4 lessons each week. Age appropriate texts are identified from the National Curriculum and included in a curriculum map.



In Key Stage 5, Adult Functional Skills English is taught and generalised throughout all areas of the curriculum. For example; students will read information in the environment during Community Life sessions.

Planning

At Hillside we use the National Curriculum as a basis for our planning, teaching and learning. Teachers employ a range of generic teaching and autism specific strategies to ensure that each child is able to fully access each lesson. Each teacher produces a medium term plan for each half term, specifying the reading, writing and spoken language focus. They also produce a detailed weekly plan, with individual targets and specific teaching activities.

Assessment and Recording

B-squared is used regularly to set challenging targets, and keep a record of targets achieved. We also use PLP Targets and PCA documents on a termly basis to help assess and record each pupil's individual level and progression. In EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 we access Phonics assessment via the adapted Twinkl Levels assessment to assess pupils progress and inform future planning.

We use teacher assessment to assess individual pupils' progress and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year. In Key Stages 4 and 5 some pupils will work towards external qualifications in English, such as Functional Skills. Their work will be marked, and externally moderated against the qualification specification.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all pupils so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify where pupils are at and take steps to improve their attainment. All pupils are set challenging targets at their specific level of ability.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Home Links

Parents can support their children with English by:

- Reading with their child
- Using communication approaches and resources that they use in school
- Completing any homework given
- Supporting communication methods
- Communicating with class teacher for specific targets
- Implementing Personal Learning plan targets
- Becoming involved in whole school literacy opportunities e.g. Book Week, World Book Day

Resources



At Hillside we have collections of set texts, big books, story sacks, guided reading sets, audio books, games and activities for pupils of all ages and ability levels. We have introduced the whole set of Sensory Stories by Joanna Grace throughout each Key Stage and teachers are invited to add Sensory Stories of their own to our growing collection with additional resources stored in the English stock room.

We subscribe to the **Twinkl DFE Validated Phonics Scheme** and as such have access to the vast library of planning, assessment and resources as well as the Rhino Reader book Scheme and Twinkl Originals sets. All of these resources are accessed in school and can be shared with parents and carers via Twinkl Go and a PIN code.

Colourful Semantics is a useful teaching aid to help improve effective communication. Staff can access information and resources about this on the school network to adapt and use within their own class. Teachers create and adapt electronic resources which can be saved in the resources area on the Teachers Drive. Pupils all have access to an iPad, when applications and the internet can be used to support teaching.

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