



LOCATION : CURRICULUM HANDBOOK, DOCUMENT 6

## ENGLISH POLICY

### 1. Introduction

- 1.0 English is a core National Curriculum subject and as such is part of every pupil's entitlement. It is the starting point and focus from which other subject developments are dependent. Every effort is used to offer access to all the attainment targets in English differentiated to the abilities and needs of each pupil. All pupils spend a minimum of five hours a week on the English curriculum. This is broken down into ability based Communication and Literacy groups in Key Stages 1 - 4. In addition there are short discrete communication sessions, and cross-curricular class group lessons. Each class has one discrete half hour lesson for drama each week.
- 1.1 Understanding of and use of spoken Language is fundamental to our interaction and response to other people and our environment.
- 1.2 At Abbey Court, Schemes of Work (covering Communication, S&L, Reading and Writing) are used to ensure the aims of The National Curriculum for English are met. To support language development teachers work closely with our Speech and Language therapist to set targets for pupil progress. Schemes such as the Derbyshire Language Scheme along with other adopted extension Language schemes are also seen as essential tools to develop language for our pupils.

### 2. SMSC

Abbey Court School makes effective provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) aspects of learning and thus promotes the development of the whole child. Abbey Court School values highly its work in personal, social, health, sex and relationship education and citizenship. We want pupils to become responsible adults and supportive citizens and seek to create an ethos and climate in the school which will help them to flourish as young people, therefore, we actively promote and evaluate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The four SMSC aspects are connected and the school's provision for one area will often make an impact on another e.g. When pupils listen to music from different cultures this may also make an impact on their spiritual development. Activities to promote moral development are also likely to have an impact on social development. The school provides opportunities to promote these aspects of pupils' development, within the curriculum. Each subject policy therefore enables staff to be clear about what it means to promote development in these four areas, within each subject. This is further supported through the subject schemes of work and the SMSC Exempla.

### 3. Rights Respecting School

Abbey Court School is a Rights Respecting School and puts the 54 articles of the Unicef Children's Charter at the heart of all school policy. This policy reflects that we believe that as a school we must do everything possible to ensure that, through their learning, our pupils grow as healthy as possible, learn at school, receive protection, have their views listened to, and be treated fairly.

#### **4. Definition**

- 4.1 English is the means of communicating and interacting with the world around us. Receptive and expressive understanding and use of language is necessary for communicating our needs, interpreting information and solving problems. Use of English is the essence of our every day life and facilitates interaction with other people.
- 4.2 The English Curriculum will provide a variety of communication experiences. Communication can take many forms. The pupil may communicate through touch, facial and bodily expression, gesture, signing (Makaton), using symbols (Symwriter) and through vocalising, speech, reading and writing.
- 4.3 Reading may be defined as the ability to interpret the written word for information and pleasure but at Abbey Court the teaching of reading is individualised to access learning to all pupils through the use of objects of reference, signs, symbols, social sight methods, structured reading schemes, a wide range of story and non-fiction books, shared home reading scheme, drama, animated poems and action rhymes, visits to libraries, theatres and museums.
- 4.4 Drama is an art, a practical activity and an intellectual discipline. It involves the creation of imagined situations and characters, enacted in a designated space. Beginning with play and leading through all elements of theatre, drama can help pupils make sense of the world. Drama is an integral part of the Speaking and Listening component of English within the National Curriculum and is a powerful communicative tool. At Abbey Court Drama is used to support learning in many areas of the curriculum as well as being important in the English curriculum therefore a separate Drama policy has been developed. (Drama Policy as per cycle of policy review.)
- 4.5 Writing is a means of expressing one's feelings, thoughts and knowledge in a form other than spoken words. At Abbey Court access to writing, creative and formative is taught through group and individual programmes geared to each pupil's ability.

#### **5. Aims.**

##### **5.1 Speaking and Listening.**

- 5.1.1 To develop communication and language, receptive and expressive, is the priority for all our pupils at our school. It provides the foundation for other learning to develop.
- 5.1.2 To assess each pupil's language ability on entry to our school in conjunction with the Speech and Language Therapist. To use the results to formulate an individual learning programme in Speaking and Listening.
- 5.1.3 To develop pupils' ability to use language in a continuous and progressive way.
- 5.1.4 To encourage appropriate forms of communication/ speech with fluency, confidence and clarity, in a variety of groupings and contexts for a variety of audiences, for a range of purposes of increasing complexity and demand.
- 5.1.5 To encourage responsiveness to the presence of others and to establish reciprocal interaction patterns.

- 5.1.6 To promote consistent behaviours in relation to people and objects.
- 5.1.7 To establish understanding and systematic use of communication behaviours.
- 5.1.8 To build a repertoire of signals related to needs, preferences, interests, ideas and feelings.
- 5.1.9 To establish a means of communication which will enable pupils to exchange information with others and exert some degree of control over their surroundings and experiences. Makaton signs to assist communication are used throughout school.

## **5.2 Reading**

- 5.2.1 To identify the place of reading within the broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum and in particular, its relationship to speaking and listening, writing, spelling and handwriting.
- 5.2.2 To provide every opportunity to encourage enjoyment of books, through story books non-fiction books, rhymes, poetry and song and I.C.T.
- 5.2.3 To promote all aspects of reading as a necessary means of development for all our pupils.
- 5.2.4 To develop individual ability to read through structured teaching, reinforcement evaluation and review.
- 5.2.5 To involve parents/carers in supporting and motivating their child's interest in reading through a shared reading programme. (See Appendix I.)
- 5.2.6 To use alternative methods to support the teaching of reading, such as signing, symbols, pictures, information technology, tactile books and sensory resources.

## **5.3 Writing**

- 5.3.1 To develop all aspects of writing, formal and creative in a relevant and planned way for the abilities of each individual pupil.
- 5.3.2 To use supportive methods to access the writing curriculum to all pupils.
- 5.3.3 To demonstrate the use of the written word through group discussion/news activities.
- 5.3.4 To develop handwriting through the agreed school approach.

## **6. Objectives.**

### **6.1 Speaking and Listening.**

- 6.1.1 To ensure that every pupil has the most appropriate means of communication identified for them and is helped to use this means to the maximum, e. g; Objects of reference, eye pointing, signing, use of symbols, speaking.
- 6.1.2 To make full use of I.C.T. when endeavouring to achieve pupils' targets, e. g; video, computer, switches and individualised communication equipment.
- 6.1.3 To provide opportunities for interaction on an individual and group basis.

- 6.1.4 To use an augmentative communication system (e.g. Makaton) to extend and support the vocabulary and developing communication skills of our pupils as appropriate.
- 6.1.5 To identify pupils with a particular sensory impairment and to seek the assistance of the appropriate sensory impaired service to work with the teacher to plan an effective sensory communication programme to support the pupil's learning.
- 6.1.6 To plan and regularly evaluate each pupil's individual programme in Communication, Speaking and Listening as an integral part of their Individual Education Plan. (See Appendix 4 current Communication Database).
- 6.1.7 We work with parents and carers on identified programmes as appropriate.

## **6.2 Reading**

- 6.2.1 To plan and regularly evaluate each pupil's individual programme in Reading (Literacy) as an integral part of their Individual Education Plan.
- 6.2.2 To ensure that pupils are given every opportunity to develop their ability to read with respect to their individual abilities supported when necessary by objects of reference, Makaton signs, symbols and relevant and motivating computer software.
- 6.2.3 To focus the systematic teaching of reading through the appropriate Phonics reading schemes including 'Oxford Reading Tree phonics', and the 'Moon dogs' schemes for early readers and the 'Magic Belt series' scheme for more confident readers. Other schemes may be used to meet individual pupil interests. Teaching will be enhanced by the use of additional schemes and a range of books, fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- 6.2.4 To provide access to phonics teaching to ALL pupils at Abbey Court School from the development of early phonological awareness through to structured teaching of Synthetic phonics, depending on pupils' individual abilities. Letters and Sounds (Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics) is used to support phonics teaching and learning, supported by Jolly Phonics at Key Stage One and Two and Read, Write Inc. at Key Stage Three and Four, if appropriate. (See Appendix 5)

## **6.3 Writing**

- 6.3.1 To encourage pupils to use language, sensory responses, objects of reference, drawings, pictures, symbols, I.C.T and Makaton signs to construct their own writing. Equally where appropriate the teacher/assistant will act as scribe to record the creative thoughts of pupils using the appropriate method for each individual.
- 6.3.2 To plan and regularly evaluate each pupil's individual programme in Writing as an integral part of their Individual Education Plan.
- 6.3.3 To use a cross-curricular approach to the development of hand/eye co-ordination, fine motor control and the teaching of hand writing. A variety of writing implements and ICT is used to ensure access for all pupils.

## **7. Curriculum Planning.**

- 7.1 At Abbey Court School all pupils work within the National Curriculum differentiated in the Abbey Court Schemes of Work. Those who attend the Further Education Unit follow an individualised Further Education curriculum that offers an extension of their prior National curriculum work in English. Their continued progress is accredited through ASDAN and AQA unit award schemes. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Early Years curriculum which is individualised to each child. They work towards the Early Learning goals to develop a mode of communication and to prepare them for the National Curriculum.
- 7.2 Speech and language assessments are carried out by the Speech and Language Therapist. An individual language programme is drawn up and is implemented by the class teacher. Speech and Language and Literacy groups are organised across departments so that pupils at the same or similar assessed level of Language and Literacy work together on the appropriate Language/ Literacy scheme. (See Appendix 2)
- 7.3 As part of their Individual Education Plan and Annual review targets, each pupil has an individual target in Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. These are written by the Class Teacher. They are delivered as shown on the class time table and are evaluated regularly.
- 7.4 Parts of the English Curriculum may form parts of cross - curricular topics this will be reflected in class planning.
- 7.5 The programmes of study as laid out in the New National curriculum 2014, and other adopted curricula will form the basis of the Coverage plans / schemes of work. Literacy is taught as part of a topic based curriculum in the Primary department and through discrete teaching sessions
- 7.6 The Schemes of Work covering each area of the English curriculum are available on the system. These are used as the basis for lesson planning and recording by the teacher of each Literacy core group. The previous term's work is evaluated and used to inform the new term's planning.

## **8. Styles of Teaching.**

- 8.1 The majority of activities are initially teacher directed activities progressing when appropriate, to pupil developed activities and then to pupil initiated activities as appropriate to the programme of study.
- 8.2 The class teacher's role is developed according to the pupil's needs to include: consultant, assessor, monitor, participant etc.
- 8.3 The class teacher uses a variety of teaching styles to meet the pupils' educational needs and the differing demands of all areas of the English curriculum. This will be reflected in the diversity of styles of learning.
- 8.4 The delivery of English will relate to the full range of strategies as detailed in the Abbey Court Whole School Curriculum Policy.

## **9. Styles of Learning.**

- 9.1 Pupils will be working at times individually, in pairs, small groups or whole class groups. For certain designated activities some pupils will work across class groups.
- 9.2 Pupils will be involved in a range of practical and structured activities appropriate to the particular area of English being taught, and the learning responses/needs of the pupils.

- 9.3 Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their progress being self critical where appropriate in order to improve their abilities.
- 9.4 Pupils' own experiences, interests and specific activities are used whenever possible to promote discussions and to encourage participation as speakers and listeners.
- 9.5 Published materials, teacher generated tasks and practical everyday situations and equipment are used to support pupil's development and understanding in English. Teachers will use materials appropriately in a differentiated and age appropriate manner.
- 9.6 All of the above will be used to provide a programme of learning suitable to the individual, group or class.
- 9.7 Pupils are encouraged to undertake educational activities at home in order to promote the continual and consistent reinforcement of learning and the development of new skills in Communication, Speaking & Listening, Reading and Writing as appropriate. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) system ensures all parents are aware of their son/daughter's targets and of ways to support the target achievement. (Communication/Literacy is an IEP target for each pupil throughout the school). Parents are invited to discuss and agree targets for the term and an evaluation of progress on them is sent home at the end of each term. The home-school contact book enables parents to dialogue regularly with school staff about pupil progress and achievement and any further support needed at home. The main focus of the annual review is pupil progress. Discussion includes the examination of ways in which progress might be further maximised by for example, sending home weekly learning activities. All pupils are encouraged to take home reading books regularly and it is expected parents will support pupils learning programmes at home. See Homework Policy.

## **10. Assessment.**

- 10.1 Initial assessment of language and related English skills is assessed in the first instance through the schools baseline entry assessment when starting at Abbey Court. (See Planning, Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy Appendix 2).
- 10.2 Assessment of pupils entering later into school will be carried out by the class teacher through observation and consultation of previous records, information from parents and previous reports from other schools.
- 10.3 Day to day assessment is via observation and marking with pupils, recording results of sessions. All these elements are used to inform the next stage of planning.
- 10.4 Assessment of progress within English is carried out in accordance with the Abbey Court Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy (Section 7) to ensure consistency throughout the school in order to effectively assess, reward and motivate all pupils. Every effort will be made to involve pupils in self assessment of their work in line with the principles defined in the Abbey Court planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy (Section 6).
- 10.5 An ongoing profile of achievement is kept on each pupil in all areas of the English curriculum and is evidence as part of each pupils' red achievement file.
- 10.6 End of year statutory assessments will be undertaken via the use of S.A.T's (where appropriate) and the Key Stage 1 Phonics screening test. End of year Teacher Assessment will also take place in all Key Stages.
- 10.7 Progress in English is reported to parents both in written and verbal form as part of the Annual Review, evaluated IEPs and Parents Evenings.

## **11. Cross curricular links.**

- 11.1 English is an integral part of every area of the curriculum. It is the vehicle for understanding and communicating information being delivered in all areas of the curriculum.
- 11.2 The Communication/Speaking and Listening and Literacy plan developed for each individual pupil will be reinforced in all other subject areas at every opportunity presented.
- 11.3 Every opportunity is taken to develop language, reading and writing skills within everyday tasks and routines.
- 11.4 Every opportunity appropriate to develop cross curricular links is taken so that pupils may extend their language skills through topics, themes and when exploring their environment.
- 11.5 For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties particular emphasis is given to planned sensory support to encourage development of expressive and receptive language.(Abbey Court School Sensory Room Policy.)

## **12. Special Educational Needs and Differentiation.**

- 12.1 Approaches to work are reviewed with a view to an individual's specific needs. This requires a flexible approach to planning work for most pupils.
- 12.2 A differentiated approach to curriculum planning is essential to ensure that all pupils' needs are met.
- 12.3 Each pupil has their own planned programme in each attainment area of the English curriculum. These are evaluated regularly to ensure progression is maintained.

## **13. Staffing (including support staff) and resources.**

- 13.1 Class teachers are responsible for the teaching of English and for the developing of day to day support from support staff. Work experience students and volunteers will also be used to support learning activities within the English curriculum.
- 13.2 Class teachers are responsible for developing appropriate resources within classrooms to enable access by pupils. All classes have a basic range of resources and have timetabled access to the equipment stored in the English Resource Area. Also time is allocated to each class for use of the Secondary and Primary libraries as appropriate. (See Library Policy Appendix 3)
- 13.3 Class teachers are responsible for developing English displays within rooms to celebrate pupil achievement, to provide a source of information, to reinforce learning being undertaken and as a stimulus for further work.
- 13.4 Specific training for teaching and support staff is facilitated by the senior management team advised by the English Subject Leader.
- 13.5 The school Speech and Language Therapist and Deputy Head teachers on each site agree the SALT timetable. The Literacy groups are drawn by each head of key stage as a result of consultation with all staff at the start of each academic year and are evaluated and reviewed once a term.

- 13.6 The English Subject Leader is responsible for the overview of all English Resource Areas and the designated budget for English.
- 14. Equal Opportunities.**
- 14.1 All pupils at Abbey Court School are given appropriate opportunities to access all areas of the English curriculum in line with our school's equal opportunities policy.
- 15. Health and Safety.**
- 15.1 English teaching and learning is subject to the Abbey Court School's Health and Safety policy. All staff are responsible for becoming familiar with and adhering to this policy requirement.
- 16. Integration including community links.**
- 16.1 Integration opportunities into a variety of educational settings will be developed where appropriate for the needs and entitlements of specific individuals.
- 16.2 Visits to a wide range of venues within the locality are planned and regarded as an important and enriching opportunity to support the development of language skills.
- 16.3 Theatre and poetry experiences are provided both in school and through visits, to enhance a rich language environment.
- 17. Evaluation and review.**
- 17.1 The Abbey Court School Subject Leader's role details the necessary processes and responsibilities.
- 17.2 This English policy will be reviewed annually in the light of:-
- 17.3 Changes to the National Curriculum and monitoring and evaluations of the Coverage plans and Schemes of work.
- 17.4 OFSTED requirements.
- 17.5 Monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of its implementation.
- 17.6 Changes in Abbey Court School's organisation.

**Margaret Windsor**  
**English Final Policy October 1997**  
**First Review October 1998**  
**Second Review October 2000**  
**Third Review September 2001**  
**Fourth Review December 2003**  
**Fifth Review November 2005**  
**Helen Embley January 2008**  
**Helen Embley March 2010**  
**Helen Embley January 2012**  
**John Bosley July 2014**  
**Zoe Silvester April 2015**  
**Updated Vicky Aspin October 2016**  
**Updated by Zoe Silvester 2019**



## **APPENDIX I**

### **Reading at Home**

#### Books for life

When reading a book with your child the aim is not to teach the child to read that book. The aim is to develop an enjoyment of books so that your child will enjoy story time and begin to understand how stories work. They need to do this to begin to learn to read. The risk with concentrating on one book until they have learnt it is that they will become bored with reading and will appear to have learnt to read it when in fact they have memorised it. The following approach is valuable for learning to enjoy books for life.

#### **What to do**

1. Choose a convenient time that isn't just after school or during a favourite activity (don't insist on reading with your child if they are bored or unwell).
2. About 10 minutes can be long enough.
3. Get comfortable and make sure that if your child is able to, that they can see the words and the pictures.
4. Point to the words as you read them.
5. Talk about the pictures. Perhaps they can guess what will happen next.
6. Sometimes let your child read the story to you. This may be from memory or making up a story from pictures. This is a very important stage so let them know that they have done well.
7. If your child is too tired or reluctant, just take the opportunity to read to them in a relaxed way. Never force them to join in.
8. If they particularly like a story it is all right to read it over and over - it can be encouraged.

#### **Later on:**

9. If your child begins to point at words in books it might be time to offer a choice, "Are you going to read today or do you want me to?". Be ready to help. First read the story to them to help them to know what the story is about.
10. Don't correct every mistake they make. If the word "house" is said instead of "home" then the story line may have been understood. On the other hand if they read "horse" instead of "house" then the sense has been lost so ask them to re-read the sentence.
11. Later still if your child becomes confident they may read more and more. A free choice of books is still important so that they still enjoy stories. If a hard book is chosen just return to the earlier methods and read to them.

Reading activities need to take place each day at school including making books to read, labels for their work and regular individual reading. The literacy hour supports other strategies as well.

Confidence is vital and your child needs to be relaxed and able to make sense of the story. Do not apply pressure and do not insist on absolute accuracy. And try to enjoy the story yourself! I hope this is helpful too.

## APPENDIX 2

### Communication and Literacy Core Groups

Classes are organised into groups within each separate Key stage (Key Stages 1 to 4) by the Key stage leaders and Class Teachers at the start of each academic year. These groups are organised into Higher Achievers, SLD and PMLD. Information about teaching and learning and any further planning is then discussed as needed at Department meetings.

Pupils of similar ability are grouped together and staff, rooms and resources allocated to each group for that Academic year. Any changes needed are decided by Department staff in consultation with the English Subject Leader and Department.

The groups take place three times weekly each for 1 hour duration. The content for each session is planned by the teacher leading the group. The work undertaken within these groups supports the aims of the National Curriculum. Every session has at least twenty minutes structured time working on Speaking and Listening based on individual pupil targets and the Communication and literacy schemes of work.

1. Pupils can practise and develop language and literacy at a similar level of ability.
2. Pupils are provided with the appropriate resources to aid the development of their communication and literacy skills.
3. The smaller groups allow intensive teaching of language and communication.
4. Specific language and communication objectives can be set and generalised to the classroom.
5. The groups promote social skills by providing each pupil with the opportunity to interact with every other member of the group.
6. Small groups allow intensive pupil-adult interaction.
7. Teachers/assistants are provided with a structured framework for promoting language and communication skills.
8. Opportunities for teachers/assistants to skill share and develop new skills arise.
9. The groups allow close monitoring of each pupil's language and communication level through ongoing assessment.

#### Rationale into practice

1. The teacher leading each group is responsible for the planning, organisation, delivery and recording for the group.
2. The speech and language therapist will act as a support adviser for every group; observing, assessing and consulting with the teacher on teaching/learning techniques for the group.
3. Where groups are taught by classroom assistants the group will function under the direction of a named teacher. The teacher will plan for the Group (i.e. Schemes of Work and weekly sessions and evaluate the teaching and learning regularly).
4. All teaching staff are to ensure that previous lessons/breaks run according to time and that pupils arrive promptly to their core groups seated and ready to start each session promptly

5. The English Subject Leader consults regularly with Speech and Language Therapist and organises training and support sessions needed from the Speech and language therapist for the groups and particular pupils as necessary.
6. Individual recording is undertaken by the teacher responsible for each group. This is to be available to class teachers and disseminated as needed.
7. The Key Stage leaders and teachers evaluate each group termly and in consultation with staff, make any changes needed.
8. Venues for each group will be set each September by the Key Stage Leader and reviewed termly.
10. The Communication and Literacy core groups are evaluated each term by teaching staff at a department meeting.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Library Policy**

At Abbey Court School the Library is seen as a valuable part of school where pupils can:

- Develop their communication skills and enjoy books and other activities associated with reading
- Develop their skills as independent learners
- Develop respect for books and other pieces of equipment within the Library and throughout the school
- Encourage interest in reading, sharing knowledge and information
- Develop organisational skills

The Library is also seen as a valuable resource for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

#### **Staff Involvement**

Under the overall supervision of the English Subject Leader, all teachers are involved in the selection of library books for pupils particularly in their subject areas.

#### ***Provision and Selection of Books***

Subject Leaders will purchase books through their own subject/curriculum budgets.

Teachers should suggest suitable titles / resources to the English Subject Leader that may be purchased for the Library out of their budget. The purchase of Library books is an ongoing process.

Books are withdrawn from circulation regularly using the following criteria:

- Condition of the book
- Contents of the book:
  - Poor presentation
  - Inaccurate/ out of date information
  - Excessive stereotypes

Books that are withdrawn because of their poor condition will be discarded and replaced by more “up to date” alternatives.

#### ***The Library System***

The use of the Library is timetabled for individual Core Groups and/or classes. The Library can be used as an additional teaching area for a small group of pupils or, particularly for older pupils, for the development of skills regarding information retrieval.

Books may be borrowed from the Library when a class is undertaking a particular Scheme of Work or topic and should be returned to the Library. Pupils are encouraged to borrow books and to take home to read. Abbey Court School has a book bag scheme.

#### ***Library Skills Development***

The development of Library Skills is based on the individual needs of pupils. For some pupils the Library provides an environment that is different to other areas of the school and in which they can experience the pleasure of reading. This may involve the use of Sensory Stories or drama. For other pupils Library skills will be developed progressively throughout the school giving due consideration to the following:

- Develop an enjoyment of reading
- Developing an awareness of the difference between story and fact books
- Recognising that books have specific “homes” where they belong
- Developing the ability to sequence items such as books/ CDs alphabetically
- Using a contents page and/or index
- Classifying items into headings or families
- Finding information using the Internet

Many of these skills develop concurrently. Activities will be designed with these skills specifically in mind as teaching points linked to the curriculum. Alternatively, time spent in the Library may be used for the general promotion and enjoyment of books.

### ***The Library Environment***

Non-fiction books are classified according to their curriculum subject area. They are labelled accordingly.

Some books are held within Classrooms. These will include fiction and non-fiction books. On the Secondary Site most fiction books are kept on shelves within classrooms with the Library mainly comprising non-fiction texts.

### ***Literary Events***

Literary events such as National Poetry Day and World Book Day are organised across the whole school and resources in the Library support these events.

### ***A Place for Personal Choice***

The Library has an attractive and peaceful atmosphere in which pupils are able to choose books and where resources are available for teaching staff to support their teaching across the curriculum.

### ***Pupil Contributions to the Libraries***

Pupils will provide display material for the Libraries to give them a sense of ownership. Work produced by any Class can be displayed in both libraries.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for tidying up in the Libraries under the direction / supervision of the TA with responsibility for the Library and/or the English Subject Leader.

### ***Funding***

Books for both Libraries are funded from the English budget.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Handwriting Policy**

#### **Pre-Writing Activities**

Many of our pupils will explore and develop early developmental writing and pre-writing skills. Many of our pupils do not develop in a linear way and they may jump developmental levels or remain at certain levels of progress for extended periods of time. Pupils who are on levels P1 – 3 are going to be involved in pre-writing activities and will be working on activities that encourage the development of writing skills. Examples are listed below:

- Focus attention
- Looks at something particular
- Holds an object – pass from hand to hand – look at it – pass an object
- Looks from one object to another
- Tracking an object from left to right, up and down
- Matching objects
- Stacking, posting and threading
- Movement – games and rhymes
- Aiming objects/throwing/picking up/putting down
- Fine motor control – sponges
- Painting with hands/fingertips/sponges
- Movement in fingers/hands
- Water play – different sized containers
- Opportunities to use both hands
- Finger feeding/drinking
- Holding a spoon
- Clay/play dough – manipulating, pushing, rolling, etc.
- Tearing/scrunching paper
- Construction toys
- Printing
- Touch screen
- Switches

Pupils who are at these early developmental levels will be working on these pre-writing skills across all areas of the curriculum and also in different contexts. Many pre-writing skills are developed during activities in curriculum areas such as D&T, including Food Technology and Art. Others are worked on during more practical curriculum subjects such as PE – including Rebound and Hydropool sessions - and Drama. There are also opportunities for development of pre-writing skills during maths activities, PSHCE for example during snack time and lunch time. It can be seen, therefore, that the development of pre-writing skills is not a discrete subject area but is undertaken across the whole curriculum.

#### **Handwriting**

When pupils reach P4 then they are likely to be developing early handwriting skills depending on their needs. All staff must be aware of the importance of good presentation when producing writing for use in and around the school. Writing must be clear, well-spaced, level and of a uniform style and size. When possible, writing should start at the top left hand corner of the pupils' work (to encourage laterality) and be at a height where it can be easily read.

The agreed script is that which is used in the Oxford Reading Scheme. Lower and upper case letters should be used correctly.

Lower case: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Upper case: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Before the teaching of handwriting begins, pupils should experience a wide variety of activities to develop their fine motor control and understanding of the writing process, for example, is the pupil's pencil control sufficiently refined?

Consideration must also be given to the physical difficulties pupils may experience that could hinder their progress in handwriting. Many of these difficulties can be overcome by simple adaptations. Advice can be sought from other professionals – physiotherapist, occupational therapist, teaching for VI with regard to seating and equipment.

In the teaching of handwriting, particular attention should be given to letter formation. Teaching aids such as tactile letters can be useful. Initially, it is helpful to concentrate on groups of letters that are formed in a similar way:

l l j h b k t  
c o a g q d  
m n r p  
u y        v w        f x z s

All our pupils' attempts at writing should be met with encouragement. Any "marks" on paper described by a pupil illustrates that he/she understands that writing conveys meaning and should be praised and valued.

### **Write Dance**

This is a tool for the teaching of early writing skills. It is a progressive music and movement programme for the development of pre-writing and writing skills. It uses music and movement initially with gross motor skills then refining those into fine motor skills. The programme assists pupils in developing handwriting but also provides an active and enjoyable activity.

### **Writing**

Our pupils also need the opportunity to be involved in writing activities. These are different from the mechanics of developing conventional "handwriting". These activities give our pupils another opportunity to communicate and thus express themselves.

### **Creative Writing Activities**

- Participate in role play activities (with appropriate support)
- Respond to role play and action rhymes/songs
- Focus on photographs/bright images/ images on computer screen
- Indicate an object that they want
- Point a finger or indicate to a familiar person
- Respond to objects of reference
- Respond to symbols
- Make a choice of objects/symbols for an activity
- Make of choice of something to wear in a drama activity

Some pupils can be encouraged to develop creative writing skills by using simple story maps. These assist our pupils in identifying the main tenets of literature – character, setting, plot.

At an early developmental level, pupils could outline the beginning, middle and end of their story. They can use a combination of photos/symbols and print (with symbols) depending on their developmental level.

Below is an example of a Story Map



Setting:	Time:	Place:
Characters:		
Plot/Events:		
Ending:		

### **Personal and Autobiographical Writing**

Personal or autobiographical writing gives our pupils the opportunity to write for an audience and to provide a record of events in their lives which can form the starting point of communication with others. The following could be included:

- Photos of the pupil/ photos of family, significant others
- Special interests/favourite activities
- Mementoes – tickets from events attended/ football scarf, etc.
- Likes and dislikes
- Pets
- Favourite music/TV programmes
- Real objects (or photos) that are of significance

## APPENDIX 5

### Phonics at Abbey Court School

The National Curriculum (2014) states that “*Phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school*”.

Additionally the Rose Report (DfES 2006) directed teachers to teach literacy through synthetic phonics. However, it is suggested that this is “*unlikely to be suitable for many children with SLD and may obscure the importance of teaching in alternative media*” (Lacey et al, 2007). The Rose Report also recognises that synthetic phonics teaching in its conventional form will not be suitable for 8% of pupils.

As a result, at Abbey Court we teach phonics as appropriate to individual needs of pupils. Phonological awareness is taught through the *Letters and Sounds- Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics*, a systematic, high quality programme that guides pupils through six phases of phonological development, at a rate which is appropriate to individual need.

The programme is divided into the following phases:

Phase	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
Phase One	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting. Each aspect is divided into three strands: auditory discrimination, auditory memory and sequencing and developing language and language comprehension.
Phase Two	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
Phase Three	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
Phase Four	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
Phase Five	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
Phase Six	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

The boundaries between each phase and strand are flexible and not fixed: practitioners should plan to integrate the activities according to the developing abilities and interests of the students. The overarching aim is to ensure that pupils experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and to talk about what they hear, see and can do.

There are agreed schemes, which can be used to compliment the Letters and Sounds programme, to provide progression and alternatives which may be better suited to the learning needs of an individual pupil. These are; Jolly Phonics at Key Stage One and Two and Read, Write, Inc. at Key Stage Three and Four.

In addition the following strategies are used to support early phonological awareness:

- Communication sessions with PMLD pupils may incorporate intensive interaction sessions, usually beginning with the pupil initiating communication (either through verbalisation or movement) which an adult mimics to encourage understanding of two way conversations. These sessions contribute to the development of early literacy skills.
- We encourage working from left to right in everything that we do. Thus early phonological awareness skills are developed through tracking activities with pupils who are functioning at early P levels – note the use of ICT programs here and the Sensory room.
- Pupils are encouraged to ‘play’ with sounds –encouraging vocalisations.
- Photographs/pictures of activities and events are a useful tool. Pictures can totally capture the attention of very young children and our pupils and teach the skill of extracting meaning from illustrations to help them make sense of the text. This continues to be used by our pupils as we read stories to them and is an important skill for those who are not going to read or write conventionally.
- Objects of reference are used extensively and objects of reference stations are placed around the school to support pupils awareness of their school environment. Objects of reference are the first stepping stone to learning about symbols.
- Many pupils will read symbols. Symbols are important in supporting communication and reading skills. They are also used for timetables, sequencing skills such as dressing, etc. in the SLD context
- We use strategies to access literature through means other than reading for example; call and response (Keith Parks), drama, television, film and storytelling are all valuable alternatives to conventional literacy. This is also important in making the canon of literature accessible to our pupils.
- Our more able pupils are able to access phonics teaching in a more conventional way. However, using picture cues is not encouraged although this can be a useful way in our context of ensuring that pupils have success.
- Hearing loss has a serious impact on speech perception. We use additional strategies that can support communication such signs, gestures, facial expressions.
- As a school we recognise that the teaching of phonics needs to be consistent and sustained throughout. We use a number of reading schemes to enable us to capitalize on pupils’ interests and motivations these include Read Write Inc resources, Oxford Reading Tree books, Magic Key books and other quality phonics reading schemes.
- Our pupils develop a range of sight vocabulary which will be increasingly linked to life skills such as social sight signs. The recognition of this sight vocabulary is essential to our pupils as they prepare for life beyond Abbey Court.
- Our Literacy Core Groups recognise the need for differentiated, targeted phonic input.

Phonics is taught discretely and there are also opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Progress in developing and applying phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored. With records on progress kept in individual pupil progress files.

Where appropriate, teachers will develop the classroom environment to have an age appropriate display concentrating on both sounds and key words.

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