

English at Glebe Primary School

Basic English skills are essential to a child's learning in all curriculum areas. A substantial part of school time is therefore spent in developing the use of the English language in both its spoken and written forms. This development is best achieved if an appreciation and love of literature and good books is fostered. English lessons in school follow the New National Curriculum published in 2014.

Effective reading, both in decoding text and reading for meaning, is an essential life skill and we place great emphasis on ensuring our children develop this to a high level through effective teaching of both phonics and understanding the meaning from a text. The school's reading scheme, that supports the children's learning, is supplemented by the children's own choice of books. Each class has individual libraries which add to the books provided through the reading scheme, as well as access to small sets of group-reading books or whole-class sets. These books are selected depending on the year group's needs. This provision ensures that each class is fully resourced for both individual and group reading.

Reading as part of a small group is considered important as it gives children the opportunity to read and to discuss the text with other children and with adults; the use of adults posing skilful and searching questions about the text is the most powerful tool at our disposal in teaching children to read effectively. Children's individual progress is monitored throughout the school in a variety of ways, through reading-age tests, end-of-year tests and day-to-day tasks. Part of the school's homework policy is that each child should read daily at home; this should be a combination of reading and discussing their current reading book with an adult. The school provides a Home/School Link book and an incentive system to encourage regular reading from the children and to provide parents and teachers with a place where they can record comments. Any child experiencing difficulties with reading will be identified quickly and appropriate action will be taken by staff to provide the extra help necessary.

The school library is also a great asset and books are regularly checked and replenished, taking care to ensure content meets children's interests and needs. Both class and school libraries are regularly supplemented with up-to-date literature.

We find that the vast majority of our children enjoy writing whatever their ability level. When asked, they say that when writing they can mould and shape imagined worlds and events the way they want. This is an immensely powerful experience for them. In their writing, the children are encouraged to produce work which has genuine audience appeal. The content of what is to be written is always discussed prior to the writing process to ensure each child has access to relevant ideas, content and associated vocabulary. Writing tasks are varied, with narrative writing ranging from traditional myths and legends to futuristic mysteries and adventures. Where possible, we endeavour to give our children real-life experiences to enhance and support the writing process. Poetry is another important area that allows the development of artistic and emotional expression.

Non-fiction genres are dealt with in both English lessons and also in other subjects, linking English skills with areas such as history, geography and science. These non-fiction genres require careful construction, the introduction of an increasingly more technical vocabulary and on occasion the ability to convince an audience of specific points of view.

We regularly welcome those involved in the production of books into school to discuss their work and to stimulate the children's writing. The most recent visit has been from the children's author Jack Trelawny who proved hugely popular across the school.

Books, both the reading and writing aspects, are also promoted as an enjoyable past-time with children participating in events such as:

- World Book Day
- Internal and external writing competitions

The school also believes that speaking and listening effectively is an important skill to develop. From Year 3 onwards our children are regularly encouraged to plan and present their ideas to the class whether to persuade them of their point of view, to take part in debates, to recount an event or to present poems and plays they have written. All children take part in their class assemblies and school productions/concerts, many with speaking parts but with them all performing in one form or another.

Basic rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation are vital and all year groups also have regular handwriting lessons, aimed at improving the children's use of cursive handwriting. Each child has a weekly set of spellings to learn which are tested the following week. These spellings are differentiated according to the child's needs and learning them forms a regular component of the weekly homework.