

# CROOKHAM CE (A) INFANT SCHOOL

## ENGLISH

*"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book.'" Jeremiah 30:2*

*At Crookham Infant School we aim to make learning irresistible so that as Team Crookham we all develop the life-long learning habits of resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity through exploring together the loving invitation of Jesus to 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.*

*Our vision stems from our Christian foundation and is firmly rooted in our values: Love God, Love Others, Love Learning.*

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning English at Crookham Infant School.

### Introduction

The curriculum at Crookham Infant School is designed so that all pupils develop the learning habits of reflection, resourcefulness, reciprocity and resilience. They learn to apply these characteristics of learning effectively across all subjects and curriculum areas whilst at Infant School and continue to develop them in lifelong learning.

### Aims

In English at Crookham Infants School we aim to enable children to develop their natural curiosity about themselves, their families and the world around them. We support them to grow in confidence in English so that they are able to express their ideas and develop an enthusiasm for reading and writing. They expect learning to be engaging, enjoyable and 'challenging learning', providing them with opportunity to demonstrate reflection like Owl, resourcefulness like Squirrel, or resilience like Tortoise as new concepts are 'learning pits' of challenge to be encountered on their learning journey.

*In our English teaching we aim to:*

- *Give children the Spoken Language tools to express themselves confidently and well, learning independently and collaboratively (Ant).*
- *Link our Spoken Language skills to their use of Kind Words (in Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Feet)*
- *Teach children to read fluently and with understanding to become knowledgeable, selective readers (Squirrel) and critical thinkers (Owl).*
- *Give children the skills to draft, edit and present technical and creative writing for different audiences and of a high standard (Tortoise).*
- *Develop children's understanding of grammar and spelling rules so that new words are embraced as a valuable resource for expressing ideas (Squirrel).*
- *Enjoy and be confident learners in speaking, listening, reading and writing and use these skills to access all other learning.*

### The Teaching of English

We teach the National Curricula for Early Years Foundation Stage and for Key Stage One. We follow a scheme of work for phonics and handwriting. The importance of English to all learning is understood by all, as well as the interrelation of Spoken Language, Reading and Writing. We guide teacher subject knowledge so that learning is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers plan to cover all areas of the curriculum within the school year, building flexibility into long, medium-term and short-term planning so that they can teach concepts to an appropriate depth of understanding for the vast majority of the group before moving on. Models, demonstrations, worked examples, shared outcomes, scaffolds and support are given to enable all children to be successful and there is 'challenging learning' on the English learning journey for all. English learning in each year

## CROOKHAM CE (A) INFANT SCHOOL

group at Crookham Infant School builds on prior skills, knowledge and understanding so that children develop the strong foundation.

### **Reading**

At Crookham infant School early word reading is taught through a systematic synthetic phonics scheme called SoundsWrite which has been carefully selected to best meet the needs of our pupils. During Early Years Foundation Stage we build on children's early experiences of sound awareness, rhythm and rhyme and provide a rich multi-sensory learning environment where language is celebrated and reading enjoyment promoted. Through an enabling environment and planned curriculum that includes direct teaching, children in Early Years begin to learn a defined group of grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Alongside this, children learn how to read words by identifying and blending individual phonemes from left to right all through the word. The skill of segmenting spoken words into constituent phonemes for spelling is taught, together with how to decode and spell common exception words. As the children move on to Year 1 and 2 they develop confidence in tackling more complex phonic knowledge and skills, keeping fidelity to the pedagogy and approach of the approved phonics scheme where the skills of phoneme manipulation are key.

The texts and books read by the children (Reading Scheme) are composed almost entirely of words made up of grapheme-phoneme correspondences that the children have learnt up to that point, apart from a small number of common exception words. We ensure complete fidelity to our early reading approach in using SoundsWrite reading books so that our children are set up to succeed as early readers.

Our handwriting scheme, Kinetic Letters, fully supports our teaching of reading and follows a clear complementary progression. Through it we teach children how to form lower-case and capital letters correctly with clear start and finish points. They move on to learning how to write words made up of the learned grapheme-phoneme correspondences, and then simple sentences composed from these words, as well as learned common exception words.

Learning in Phonics, is broken into small clear steps so that progress is easily assessed and outcomes monitored. Appropriate actions can then be taken to close any gaps with interventions consistent with the SoundsWrite principles and approach.

Diagnostic assessments and interventions have fidelity to the SoundsWrite approach.

Children are taught to know and understand 'concepts about print', for example the convention that print in English is read from left to right, top to bottom or that words consist of letters and that there are spaces between words. To help children grasp this we teach reading strategies and behaviours which can be applied to a range of text types and written genres across the curriculum. Reading comprehension is taught laying good foundations in prediction, clarification, questioning, summarising, inferring and deducing, so that children can build on this prior knowledge as they move on to Key Stage 2.

A rich reading experience is provided for our pupils in high quality texts read by, read to and read with the children, individual reading, shared, paired and guided reading as examples. Within each classroom we display a small selection of books of high quality to positively promote reading for pleasure. Book selections are regularly refreshed to reflect the children's interests and learning across the curriculum so that they can appreciate the importance of reading in learning about the world they live in.

### **Writing**

Children start their writing journey through play, mark making for a range of purposes such as 'writing' shopping lists, making cards and writing their own name on their pictures. They begin to develop their fine motor skills during the Early Years and begin to select and use mark-making tools appropriately. After exploring patterns they learn the individual letters through the Kinetic Letters Handwriting explicit teaching of good pencil hold and correct letter formation. Through large and small scale movements they build balance and strength for writing in wrist, arm, chest, hip and shoulder girdle so that they can sit securely and hold writing materials appropriately. Links to learning in Physical Education support and complement our handwriting learning. Children use emerging letter formation skills to write phonetically plausible words, phrases and simple sentence in a range of contexts. The development of vocabulary and spoken language skills is a thread that runs throughout the Early Years curriculum as we recognise that 'if we can't say it, we can't write it'. Children are given rich memorable experiences through high quality texts, story and meaningful problem solving where there is an audience and purpose for the writing process. Our learning

## CROOKHAM CE (A) INFANT SCHOOL

habits help us with understanding the thinking behind writing (Owl), selection of resources (Squirrel), collaborative talk for writing (Ant) and writing strength and resilience (Tortoise).

As children progress through Year 1 and Year 2 the link between reading and writing is reinforced. Children's spoken language skills are further developed through opportunities to question, discuss, verbalise and refine their ideas, for example through Helicopter Stories, role play, paired talk, hot seating and drama. Their strengthening learning habits support their understanding of the writing process as they learn about structure and organisation in shared, guided and modelled writing. Children use their developing phonic knowledge and are taught how to edit and redraft before publishing to an audience or for a range of purposes. The systematic teaching of handwriting through the Kinetic Letters approach enables the vast majority of children to achieve the foundation of a fast, accurate and efficient handwriting style in which letters are correctly spaced, sized, formed and ready to join, so that our pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

### Spoken Language

Developing children's spoken language is prioritised across the whole curriculum, from teaching our school rule, Kind Words to teaching specific subjects like Reading and Writing. Opportunities to develop listening skills, grow vocabulary and extend its use for various purposes and audiences are carefully planned, implemented and reviewed. These include:

- Staff modelling effective speaking and listening, how to participate in constructive conversation
- Role play and drama
- Scaffolding strategies for children who require additional support, including those with SEND or for whom English is an additional language.
- Children being read to, discussing books, asking and answering questions
- Sharing the thought processes behind making inference when reading
- Having conversations and explaining understanding and opinions
- Discovering new vocabulary and putting it to use
- Children are given many opportunities to speak in front of an audience and to perform in events whether individually or in a small or larger group, for example in prayers or poems or Remembrance, to Wilson the PAT Dog and his helper, at Christmas nativities or to an invited visitor
- Importance is placed on orally rehearsing written work with clear articulation to support a high-quality outcome
- Discussion is fundamental to learning and children participate in paired, group, whole class and whole year group discussions regularly.
- Vocabulary is taught in exposure to texts, a language rich environment, pre-teaching, visual image, exploring the relationships between words, meanings or homophones, the use of figurative language, words use in different contexts, roots, prefixes and suffixes, key knowledge words relevant to specific subjects or topics

### Delivering English

English learning at Crookham will typically include:

- Activating our learning habits - Owl, Squirrel, Ant or Tortoise to decide how prior learning, knowledge and skills will help us form a strategy to tackle this task
- A range of lessons and strategies combine to develop children's English skills via oral and aural communication, phonics, spelling, reading, writing and handwriting.
- A hook to engage children within their learning.
- A series of activities with direct instruction, collaborative learning and dialogue to unpick the ideas around which learning is based.
- Independent working, including practise of a skill, progressing to trial and error within a concept and reasoning around an idea (critical Owl thinking).

## CROOKHAM CE (A) INFANT SCHOOL

- Looking at a well understood concept in a different context or genre, to embed deep understanding within long term memory.
- Consideration of links within other areas of the curriculum such as facts learnt within History or Geography.
- Identifying children who would benefit from further support, providing additional scaffolding and removing this scaffolding when confidence and independence can be achieved.
- Addressing misconceptions, self or peer review, assessing the learning within the session and where it fits within the larger unit of learning.
- Intervening to address the misconception or fill a gap before moving on.
- Marking/Feedback allowing children to complete, correct and go deeper in their learning.
- Return and repetition of concepts over and over to in order to apply them within different genres and deepening learning.

The above would be seen in learning over time. We would not expect to see all elements within one learning session.

### Targets/Tracking

At Crookham Infant School we layer targets in English:

- Whole School target on School Improvement Plan or Raising Attainment Plans
- Cohort targets
- Group targets/ individual targets
- ILP targets

Each cohort tracks attainment in English and uses this information to set targets (as listed above) and amend planning accordingly.

Moderation meetings are held to support the 'levelling' and 'next steps' process on a termly basis. Termly progress meetings for each year group ensure that children who are making better than expected/ expected/ below expected progress are monitored and interventions are put in place.

### Assessment

Assessment is in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

**Policy Reviewed: March 2023**

**Date of next review: November 2024**