

## English policy

Helen Allison School



**Approved by:** Senior Leadership Team Helen Allison School **Date:** 18.09.19

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### **Vision for the Teaching of English**

At the Helen Allison School, the curriculum for English is fundamental to pupils' development, attainment and progress. Pupils' development in terms of their ability to communicate is vital for them to be able to engage with and understand their world. Within a needs – based, personalised curriculum, the teaching of the English curriculum is via a range of motivating activities.

**Our intentions** are to enable every pupil to overcome their individual barriers to success, develop areas of strength and master skills that they need, so that, by the time they leave our school, they are equipped to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives with at least equal life chances of other young people.

### **Impact**

There are many ways of defining success - our person centred planning ensures that, as a child becomes a young person, they are equipped to lead a fulfilling and rewarding adulthood

### **We aim:**

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables pupils to develop a means of communication through which they can express the full range of human needs e.g. signing, symbol systems, PECS, written or spoken language.
- To enable pupils to understand the communicative intent and to develop their potential in the acquisition of the skills of speaking and listening, reading, spelling and writing.
- To enable all pupils to fulfil their potential and access externally accredited courses where appropriate.

### **Curriculum implementation**

Teachers plan broad and balanced, individual curricula based upon pupils' individual needs.

These developmentally appropriate, bespoke curricula are planned sequentially and reviewed on a 6 weekly basis. There are two general models of curriculum delivery. Within each model, English will be embedded, whether in discrete lessons or as teachers take opportunity to make cross-curricular links in order to motivate and challenge pupils. Due to the often 'spikey profile' presentation that our pupils can present, there is flexibility and they can move flexibly at any stage:

#### Formal Curriculum

This is for pupils who are functioning cognitively at least at or above end of chronological year one expectations. The curriculum will be delivered in a mainly structured manner, with some thematic aspects of delivery, incorporating a modified National Curriculum.

#### Semi-Formal Curriculum

This is for pupils who are functioning cognitively at working towards end of chronological year one expectations. The curriculum will be delivered via creative topics and themes.

### **Implementing the English curriculum**

All pupils' attempts to communicate, whether in spoken or written form, are valued and success celebrated. Teachers establish a positive classroom environment where pupils have opportunities to share their own views and ideas. Communication carries a high priority throughout the curriculum and is cross curricular and across all settings. With the additional advice and support of the school's speech and language therapists our pupils are encouraged to use their language in a functional way. Staff demonstrate respect for achievement at any level, which encourages the development of self-esteem. Staff foster increasing independence and there are frequent opportunities for paired and group work in order to develop social interaction and communication skills. Skills and tasks are presented in a concrete way through practical, motivating experiences; Teachers set individual, challenging, achievable targets for pupils. Time is provided for pupils to reflect on and develop their English work through effective and accessible feedback (see marking guidelines). Teachers ensure that all pupils contribute to group and class discussion wherever possible and construct class rules for speaking and listening: taking turns, good eye contact, active listening and being respectful. The teaching of British Values is embedded within lessons and there is regular opportunity for pupils to extend their learning in English beyond the classroom.

We use a wide variety of resources including:

- PECS to aid communication

- Word processing devices to support writing
- ICT – computers, tablets and interactive whiteboards
- United Kingdom Literary Association/Education City/Hamilton Trust subscription
- Sounds Write phonics programme
- A range of fiction and non-fiction books for all abilities
- Accelerated Reader and diagnostic STAR testing
- Speech and language/occupational therapists work with teachers
- Appointed Interventions leader, with targeted intervention where identified.
- Reading groups and clubs

### **The role of parents**

Where appropriate, home reading diaries are used. Parents are encouraged to read to, to share and to listen to their child read on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to help their child to extend their reading skills by applying them to real life tasks such as shopping lists and recipes.

### **More able pupils.** We will:

- Use a range of different forms of formal talk in lessons such as interactive talk in group work.
- Give students a range of well-structured talk tasks and opportunities. For example, use multimedia presentations, formal demonstrations and explanations, debates to develop their oral presentation.
- Plan lessons which provide interesting activities where pupils talk about their experiences.
- Create challenging discussion by using questions to draw out extended answers.
- Encourage/scaffold pupils to think, reflect, shape own ideas/ develop and answer own questions.

### **Reading**

There is a wide range of reading materials so that pupils are reading for purpose, pleasure and learning. There are several progressive reading schemes. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to keep a reading log, evaluating the books they have read. There are multiple copies of some books used for guided reading. Staff are aware of the need to check for understanding of the text and to monitor that a range of genres are covered. For some pupils learning to read will require a great deal of adult support and the steady build up of picture then symbol then word processing skills. The texts selected are carefully matched to the individual according to level of difficulty and interest.

We use the Sounds-Write reading programme which offers a phonic approach to the teaching of reading. Having been assessed and placed within the programme at the appropriate level, the pupils receive daily input either individually or in small groups. All students are now STAR tested and diagnostic reports available to aid with Accelerated Reader programme.

### **Writing**

We teach our pupils to understand that the written word is a form of communication to other people. They may need considerable encouragement to appreciate the value of writing and for this reason pupils are provided with practical situations in which writing is a purposeful activity. Endless cross curricula opportunities exist for our pupils to practise their writing skills. As pupils progress they will be taught to form letters correctly, to write neatly and with care, on a line and with suitable spacing. Attention is paid to ensuring good writing materials are available and that a correct pencil grip is learnt. The teacher will assess when it is appropriate for the individual pupil to attend to spelling, including using a dictionary and when to introduce basic punctuation.

Pupils who are able to write independently learn how to plan, draft and present their writing for different purposes and a range of audiences. In drafting and redrafting they may work collaboratively or individually to evaluate their writing. Where appropriate and relevant, pupils are able to record work, practise their writing skills and create ideas using word processing technology.

### **Project**

Our school are working on a specific focus area within our whole school development plan: to create a culture of a passion for reading across the school. We hope this will lead to greater opportunities for our students, both in and out of education.

We are currently involved in a project within our local Learning Partnership: the GROW project (Great Reading for Outstanding Writing). The project focuses specifically on reading, and we are delighted to be a part of it.

The project model is based on exciting teacher training sessions, regular network meetings for project leads and personalised in-school support where necessary.

Stage one

We have chosen a lead teacher, supported by a qualified Speech and Language therapist, and we recently attended a launch meeting in September 2019.

Our lead teacher has already begun setting up: individual intervention, whole school incentives such as book club and story time, and coaching colleagues. They are also gathering information and feedback from parents/carers/pupils to inform developments.

**Equal opportunities**

The NAS and Helen Allison School promote the individual needs of pupils, and will take into account their gender and their cultural and religious backgrounds.

**Supporting policies and documents**

Helen Allison School Curriculum Policy

Helen Allison School Marking Guidelines