



Hemyock Primary School Policy for Teaching Literacy



Philosophy of teaching literacy at Hemyock School

At Hemyock, children experience literacy in a meaningful, exciting and purposeful way, which links closely to our topic and uses high quality texts. Literacy skills underpin these experiences, so that children are motivated to write and develop their own style of writing, whilst ensuring they understand punctuation, spelling and grammar in context. We encourage children to be independent in all aspects of the writing process and to make decisions as writers. A high emphasis is also put on speaking and listening and the children are given a wide variety of opportunities to hone these skills throughout their time at school with us.

Rationale

Our aim is to ensure children are motivated to write by ensuring they always have a purpose for writing and that it carries meaning for them.

We provide opportunities to:

- Develop a positive attitude to reading, writing and speaking and listening.
- Ensure children have the skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar to express themselves both orally and in writing.
- Foster a love of reading, through quality texts.
- Speak publically in front of peers and adults with confidence and clarity.
- Enjoy discussing texts alongside teachers with curiosity and an appreciation for ambiguity of meaning.
- Work collaboratively to perform in front of an audience.
- Make mistakes and see them as a way to edit, revise and improve their writing.
- Explore phonetic sounds and how this links to early reading.
- Share their thinking and learn from other's responses.
- Explore literacy in contexts that are exciting, engaging and motivating by linking them closely to our topic.

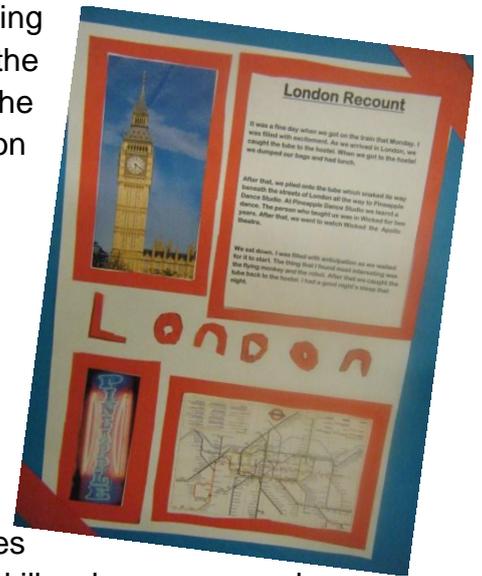
Writing

Writing at Hemyock is taught by providing a purpose for writing that is firmly embedded within our topic, which motivates the children to write. For example, WW1 letters home from the trenches, information texts on healthy eating or explanation texts on scientific processes.

Structure

Writing is taught in blocks in which children learn the skills and structures for the type of writing they are studying. Before beginning the writing block, children write a “cold piece” in the particular genre, in order to provide an assessment of what the children need to learn. This provides

teachers with exactly what skills, language and structure the children are missing and therefore what needs to be taught over the block. At the end of each block, children produce a final piece, which gives the children the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt. Final pieces are presented creatively and often incorporate an artistic element.



Targets

Targets for children's writing are set after cold pieces have been assessed and directly reflect the gaps seen by teachers. It is also ensured that targets include features of the particular genre being taught. Targets are differentiated according to the children's writing ability. The targets are shared with the children to ensure they are clear of what is expected of their writing in their final piece. After writing their final piece, children, depending on their year group, are expected to reflect on these targets and look for evidence of each objective in their writing.

Blue pen editing

A firm emphasis is placed on children editing their writing in “blue pen time”. It is expected that all classes, from years 2 to 6, devote time to referring back to their written work and editing their punctuation, spelling and grammar. They are also expected to reflect on vocabulary choices and redraft parts for better clarity or effect. Blue pen editing is closely linked to teacher’s marking, where a marking code is used to guide children to their errors, without taking away their independence.

Phonics

KS1

At KS1 children are taught to read through Systematic Synthetic Phonics. Children are taught through active, daily phonic sessions using the Letters and Sounds scheme. Our phonics sessions have a great emphasis on the children applying the sounds they have learnt into blending phonemes to make words to use in their writing. Homework, linked to the phonic work in class, is sent home weekly.

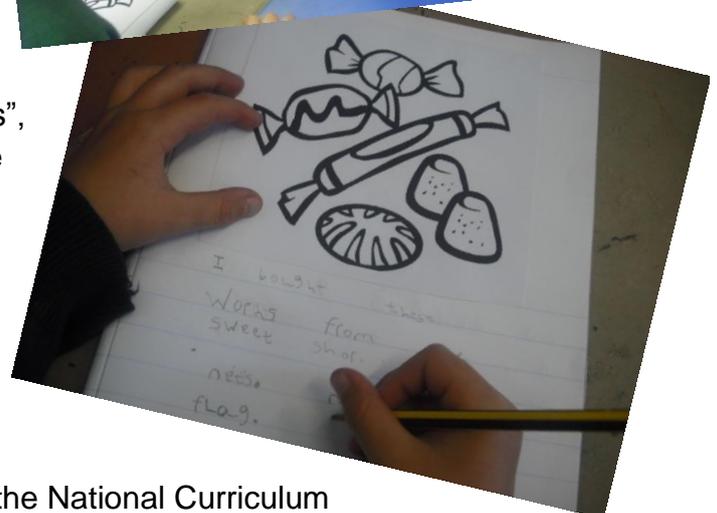
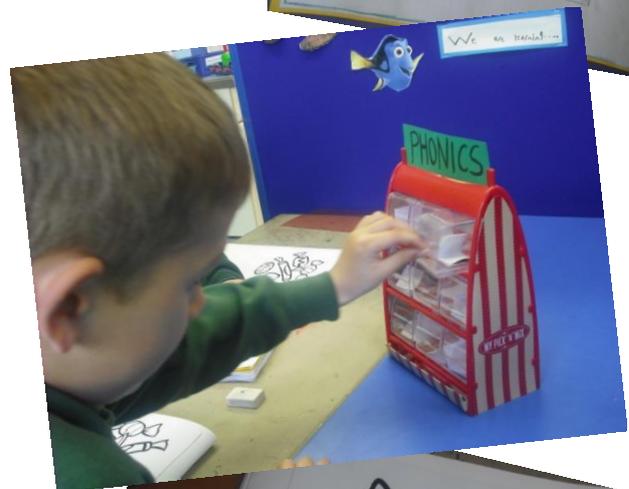
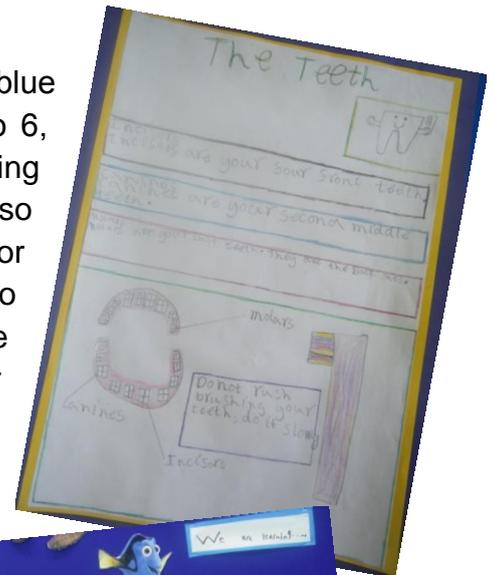
In addition, Children are taught “Tricky Words”, which are not phonetically decodable. These words are practiced daily within a phonics session and again there is an emphasis on using these words in writing.

Spelling

KS2

From years 3 to 6 spellings are taught using the National Curriculum objectives. Children receive weekly direct teaching and then are expected to practice what has been taught in school and through weekly homework. Emphasis is put on learning strategies and rules, rather than learning lists of words. This is done through class discussion, games and rhymes, noticing patterns and applying the rules into writing.

Our marking policy encourages children to check incorrect spellings independently. Children are directed to 5 spellings, ideally linked to spelling rules learnt in class, that they are expected to look up in the dictionary and correct in their writing books.



Younger children are expected to practice spellings identified as being incorrect under their work as part of their “blue pen time”.

Reading

KS1

In KS1 reading is supported through phonics and children are encouraged to use these skills to participate in daily guided reading. In these sessions teachers unpick the literal meanings of texts with children, but also inspire them to share their thoughts and opinions about what they are reading.

Children have access to phonetically decodable books, which they take home to be supported by their parents. This allows children to apply the sounds they have learnt in their phonics. These banded books are changed every day. Children are assessed half termly, using a ‘running record’, to ascertain whether they are ready for the next book band. KS1 children also have access to our school library and are guided to read “real” books. This encourages a love of reading from an early age.

KS2

In KS2, children also take part in daily guided reading sessions. We use the Reciprocal Reading approach, which enhances prediction, clarification, questioning and summarising skills. Where possible guided reading texts are linked directly to our literacy blocks, which enhances the children’s understanding of the different genres and text types.



Presently, guided reading is being taught in mixed ability groups in order to facilitate group discussions. This also allows more able children to articulate their understanding clearly and less able children to be exposed to a wider vocabulary and more sophisticated text analysis.

Children in KS2 also have access to our school library, largely run by pupil librarians, where they are supported to choose appropriate books. Through our library system teachers can track what children are reading and encourage a greater variety of texts.

Currently, we are launching a trial of a new reading challenge for all pupils at KS2. There are 4 challenges, one aimed at each year, that encompass and expose children to books and authors that are appropriate to their age group. Each challenge has been designed to capitalise on our already positive reading culture, by providing fun and imaginative tasks for the children to complete around their choice of books. The challenges gently inspire children to make better choices about the variety of books they are reading. In line with our school's high expectations, the children will be expected to present their thoughts and reflections from their reading challenges in a scrap book style reading journal.

Speaking and listening

Across the school we have very high expectations of speaking and listening in all subjects. Children are expected and encouraged to use technical vocabulary accurately, when explaining their work or thoughts. Our teaching has a high level of class discussion and children listen carefully to each other and adults. Responding thoughtfully to peers is encouraged and praised and consequently children question others and express themselves clearly.



A major factor in such high expectations for speaking and listening is that all adults in the school model good communication skills and language use when speaking to the children. Frequently, adults can be found conversing with children around school, no matter what year they are from.

Right from the foundation stage, children are expected to present themselves in front of parents

and other children in weekly assemblies to share their learning. Further up the school, children are encouraged to help and support younger pupils, meet and greet visitors, pitch house captain speeches and interviewed for buddy



be formally

and librarian roles. Children have many chances to perform in front of an audience in productions, carol services and whole school celebrations throughout the year and we have high expectations of what they can achieve. All these opportunities allow the children to practice articulating themselves clearly and confidently.