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English Policy

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Butts Primary School



“One school, one community”

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Curriculum Statement

Intent

The aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- read widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion to learn and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- gain competence in speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Here at Butts, we are committed to providing an exciting, engaging and progressive English curriculum. We want our pupils to become enthusiastic, engaged readers and writers who develop a life-long love of books and a passion for writing. In EYFS and KS1 the learning is focused on spoken language, accurate word reading and spelling and fluent letter formation. However, spoken language skills (speaking and listening) are built into all aspects of the English curriculum with the aim being that every child is able to communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions clearly and succinctly, as well as listening to and reflecting on the ideas of others.

We aim to enable our pupils both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Literacy is central to pupils' intellectual, emotional and social development and plays an essential role across the curriculum helping pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

Implementation

At Butts, we put quality children's literature at the heart of the curriculum, which supports our work in teaching English creatively and effectively. We focus on using high quality children's texts and provides creative teaching approaches to engage pupils in the literacy curriculum. This supports our teachers to nurture a whole school love of reading and writing that allows pupils to make excellent progress. Our pupils are able to increase their vocabulary, understanding and enjoyment of texts.

The teaching of English at Butts, aims to provide a curriculum, which caters for the needs of all individuals and ensures that they acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for them to become successful both in school and in their future lives and careers.

We prioritise the teaching of reading both as a key component of our English provision and one that unlocks opportunity in all other subjects. We believe that all pupils should have the opportunity to be fluent, confident readers, develop a love of reading, have a good knowledge of a range of authors and be able to understand more about the world in which they live through the knowledge they gain from texts.

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. All pupils receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily English lesson. Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for groups. Teachers use the National Curriculum 2014 as a basis for creating medium term plans and a wide, range of teaching styles are employed to deliver our high quality English curriculum.

Impact

At Butts, we place a strong emphasis on reading aloud to pupils. Research tells us that pupils are able to access texts and vocabulary considered to be, two years beyond their chronological age when a text is read aloud to them. Here at Butts, we enable our pupils to experience and enjoy a wide range of texts and stories, in this way, that they might not otherwise meet.

Our approach to teaching English provides pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities to develop and enrich their understanding of what they read. This includes book talk, debate, reading journals, role-play and drama, use of visual images and story mapping. Pupils develop an extensive, wide, vocabulary as well as accessing varied and engaging opportunities to develop their writing skills.

2. Planning/Organisation

In Nursery, short literacy sessions take place daily. The themed topics provide a broad framework for the choice of stories/poems/rhymes and picture books and children usually spend up to half a term for each topic.

English is taught every day, clear objectives are set for each session and shared with pupils. Teachers adapt teaching/learning according to the needs of the pupils, which provides challenge and motivates pupils. Literacy is encouraged and developed across our wider curriculum making links where appropriate. ICT is included where it enhances, extends and complements the teaching and learning of English. Additional adults are deployed to support pupils across the school, dependent upon need. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of pupils or individuals.

In Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, English is taught every day during the school week. RWI Phonics lessons are also delivered daily in EYFS and Key Stage 1 leading onto RWI Literacy and Language. During English lessons, every opportunity is taken to incorporate phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar into the lessons through shared writing, modelling and questioning,

3. Teaching and Learning

Spoken Language

At Butts, we believe that developing spoken language, including vocabulary, is essential for the academic progress of all pupils. The vital importance of oracy is recognised and valued by all. Spoken language is a significant part of our English policy and strategies are being developed to raise the profile of oracy across the whole curriculum. In lessons teachers work together with pupils to develop vocabulary explicitly. This is especially important in the early years but continues to be a focus throughout all year groups up to Year 6 where confidence and competence in spoken language and listening is acknowledged as vital to the underpinning of reading and writing. The Power of Reading together with our 'connected' approach to the wider curriculum, is designed to allow pupils every opportunity to use spoken language and to acquire a rich and expansive vocabulary designed to develop the skills they need for the future.

Pupils receive support to help them demonstrate their knowledge of a topic through spoken language, and classroom talk in lessons is selected to encourage speculative and exploratory discussion. A 'hands up' approach to answering questions is used sometimes but not always. Other approaches to engage pupils allows pupils who may not be forthcoming to answer questions the opportunity to use their voice.

Opportunities are created for conversational talk where adults model conventions and turn-taking on an everyday basis. Most curriculum subjects at Butts have been designed with an enquiry approach to learning, which promotes and gives scope for spoken language to be developed. Pupils' confidence in speaking aloud to an audience is developed through taking part each term in year group assemblies, poetry reading, debate and drama activities both in lessons and after school enrichment sessions. All staff ensure that their own speaking and listening support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary. Staff plan for and use a range of strategies to support the need for a range of identified learners. They use

guided work to teach and address specific language issues, which may arise. Staff provide spoken language advice and resources/activities for parents also.

Phonics and Early Reading

Our Nursery children develop a love of books through listening to stories, learning some simple stories by heart, and looking at books themselves. We provide a variety of books through the 1000 stories initiative for children to share each week with their family. The teaching of phonics is introduced to help prepare children as they move to Reception.

In Reception and Year 1, the teaching of phonics becomes more formal with daily phonics lessons for all pupils. We use a rigorous systematic synthetic phonics scheme for this; the DfE approved 'RWI' programme, which introduces the 44 common sounds in the English language and how to blend them to read and spell. The scheme includes both a reading and a writing focus.

Reading is the key that unlocks the whole curriculum so the ability to efficiently decode is essential. The R.W.I sessions occurs each day as the continuity and pace of the programme is key to accelerating the progress of children's reading development.

We aim to enable our children to:

- Apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read words.
- Segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- Learn that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes.
- Read high frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- Read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities as early as possible.
- Decode texts effortlessly so all their resources can be used to comprehend what they read.
- Spell effortlessly so that all their resources can be directed towards composing their writing.

Our pupils work within ability groups which are defined by their performance on R.W.I assessments. Pupils are assessed throughout every lesson when partner talk is used to monitor their progress. Formal assessments are carried out every half-term by the RWI Lead using the RWI assessments. Upon assessments, pupils are designated correct groups. The RWI lead speaks with the Head teacher regarding groups and a list of targeted pupils that need further support.

Those pupils who maybe making less than expected progress are identified early and given extra practice, either in a small group or one-to-one. This is consistent with the school's mainstream phonics programme and focuses on activities, which help to secure phonic knowledge that the pupils have not yet grasped.

In the summer term, Y1 pupils take the Phonics Screening Check, which expects them to read a combination of 40 decodable phonemes, nonsense words and real words. This progress check identifies those pupils not at the expected level in reading – these pupils receive further phonics teaching and will retake the Phonics Screening Check, the following summer in Y2.

Teaching Reading and Writing

Reading

Reading is an integral part of our English lessons and the starting point for units of work. Pupils will read, discuss and respond to texts in various ways e.g. through drama, illustration, comprehension tasks, writing in the role of a character, analysis of the features of a text. As well as developing reading skills, this learning also plays a crucial part in the development of their own writing. All texts are selected carefully for their exceptionally rich, high quality language and thought provoking illustrations. These include shorter texts such as a short story, picture book or poetry book, to longer texts such as complete novels.

All reading books including our phonetically, decodable books are colour banded to ensure an appropriate level and progression of challenge for all pupils both in school and at home. Our book provision is constantly evolving and as a result pupils are provided with books that not only challenge, but also interest them and encourage a love of reading. Through the range of texts used in reading lessons and available for pupils to select from, we aim to motivate, enrich and broaden their reading experiences.

Every classroom has a well-loved reading area and a class library of books where pupils and teachers make sure that there is access to interesting and meaningful reading materials including a well-stocked fiction and non-fiction area, latest favourite author titles, picture books, poetry books and current children's newspapers and magazines including digital resources. Displays, assemblies, book day celebrations and book fairs are all used to promote interest in favourite books, authors and genres.

Teachers promote book ownership and pupils are encouraged to recommend books to their peers. Classroom and shared area displays are language rich. Every classroom has a selection of reference books e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus, atlas' etc. The school has well-stocked dedicated library areas, an Early Years and Key Stage One Phonics library and a Key Stage Two Library area and a whole school library. Pupils have the opportunity to use and enjoy the library each week and are able to choose books to take home in addition to their home reading book. The school loan both fiction and non-fiction books from the SLSS to supplement the school's provision and to offer reading challenges.

All year groups have a daily timetabled reading lesson where pupils read with the teacher, carry out a reading task relating to the book they are working on, or have an opportunity to read for enjoyment in the class reading area.

In Reception, Key Stage One and Lower Key Stage Two reading is taught in small group guided sessions. The teacher reads with every group at least once a week. Teachers and teaching assistants model the reading process as expert readers and texts are selected to match the ability of the group, while still providing an element of challenge for progression. Group reading time is a forum for pupils to practice decoding and to develop fluency and comprehension skills.

In Upper Key Stage Two, the teaching of reading is undertaken through whole class guided reading sessions. Pupils work with their teacher, reading and discussing a range of texts. These sessions are also used to give pupils focussed support with developing the skills and techniques needed for effective comprehension, enjoyment of books, and answering comprehension questions in test situations. Pupils who require more support with reading, those who might have gaps in their phonic knowledge and pupils who are working below age appropriate objectives, continue to read in a small group each day. During these sessions, reading activities are planned linked to the ability and needs of the pupils.

In all year groups, adults read aloud to the whole class each day. This ensures that pupils experience some challenging texts beyond the current reading ability of the majority of pupils and enjoy the experience of being read to.

Reading at home is regarded as a very important part of reading development. Pupils are encouraged to read at home each evening if possible. Parents respond to their child's reading through home-school reading diary.

Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and extend reading in other subjects including science texts, maths problems and topic related work. Pupils also have opportunities to read text using digital media.

We ensure that workshops are held throughout the year for parents, which enable them to effectively support their children at home with learning and reading. Pupils are provided with reading books to take home along with a reading record that acts as a form of communication between home and school. Pupils will progress systematically through colour book banded reading books which match their reading in school. Most of our books used for the teaching of reading in school are available in digital online form to access at home as well.

Writing

At Butts, we have designed an ambitious and purposeful writing curriculum which has been trialled and agreed by staff and is aligned to the national curriculum statutory requirements. This ensures that pupils are able to access an effective writing curriculum that gives them all opportunities to develop their proficiency in the two interrelated areas of writing: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing.)

Transcription - Spelling

Fluent transcription skills are a main focus of teaching for the Early Years and Key Stage 1. During phonics lessons pupils are taught which graphemes can represent the separate phonemes they have identified in the word they want to spell. Pupils are also taught how to spell 'common exception words', sometimes referred to as 'tricky words' so called because their grapheme-phoneme correspondence are unusual or they have not yet been taught.

Teachers regularly use dictated sentences as a way of ensuring that pupils apply and practise spelling and handwriting. In Reception, teachers dictate sentences for children to write that contain only the taught letter-to-sound correspondence. In Year 1 pupils write sentences dictated by the teacher using GPCs and common exception words that they have been taught. Pupils are given the opportunity to practice fluent transcription skills as a foundation for their progress in writing.

In Key Stage 2 we use the programme called 'Rising Stars – Spelling' to teach spellings as set out in the National Curriculum.

Transcription - Handwriting

At Butts, we use the 'Twinkl' cursive handwriting scheme. The national curriculum specifies that pupils should be taught to correctly form letters of the correct size and orientation. This requires effort and attention, as well as suitable motor skills. The formal teaching of handwriting begins in Reception and children at the end of the EYFS should be able to 'hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

The National Curriculum requires children to learn un-joined handwriting before they 'start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters'. Delaying our teaching of joined handwriting gives teachers and children time to focus on other aspects of the writing process and forming letters correctly.

We work towards making handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for the use of different letterforms to help communicate meaning clearly. Teachers use neat cursive writing for all handwriting tasks, marking and comments in children's books.

Composition

At Butts, we believe that developing pupils' skills as writers is so much more than asking them to remember grammatical constructions or tricky spellings. We appreciate that writing is a complicated and intricate process. During writing lessons, when focusing on composition, teachers model the writing process. The teacher models how text is an important vehicle for recording ideas, thoughts and feelings by putting pupils' ideas into writing, modelling spelling and punctuation, or showing how a writer chooses appropriate words and sentence structure to convey an idea. Teachers ensure that the teaching of phonics, grammar and spelling is embedded in a meaningful context. In writing lessons, we use a wide range of well-chosen Literacy and Language texts and quality books which provide a rich language model and structure from which pupils learn how writing works and the effect it can have on a reader.

Literacy and Language's creative teaching approaches encourage pupils to explore ideas prior to composition. Art, drama and role-play, music and movement and small world play, provide many opportunities to write independently across a range of writing outcomes and then to develop these ideas into extended pieces. Writing is celebrated through authentic presentation opportunities. Publishing their work for an audience gives pupils a purpose for their writing. A range of writing is showcased in the school environment.

Writing in Early Years Foundation Stage

Writing, forms a central part of the Communication and language and Literacy areas of development. We believe the foundation for writing is built on children's oral work and children are encouraged to express their ideas at every opportunity throughout each of the Early Learning Goals. Staff model use of language and create opportunities for children to develop their talk in every lesson.

Daily, weekly and medium term planning clearly demonstrates this focus and includes techniques for developing early writing skills. In addition to cross-curricular opportunities, specific writing objectives are planned in order to begin giving children the skills they will need as writers. A wide range of writing materials are always available to children in the classroom and a specific role-play area which compliments the termly topic is used to provide a real purpose for children's early writing. We recognise both the importance of the teacher acting as scribe on occasions, in order to create stories and the importance of children writing freely as emergent writers.

Writing in Key Stage 1

We continue to provide a wide range of planned and incidental opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the whole curriculum. We ensure that activities are purposeful and linked to other areas of the curriculum which provide contexts, for pupils to apply their skills. We ensure pupils develop their writing skills across a wide range of genres.

Through using a variety of techniques much emphasis is placed by us on pupils developing their oral skills as a prerequisite to writing. A wide range of speaking and listening and drama techniques are used to provide pupils with opportunities to explore and extend their language and vocabulary as preparation for writing. The links with pupils' reading skills and texts are used as a basis for developing writing skills, reading and writing objectives being clearly linked in teacher's planning. Pupils take part in a range of text-analysis activities and discussion before they write.

Teachers plan for modelled writing activities and guided writing groups. Writing frameworks and WAGOLLs (What a good one looks like) provide structure for the pupils as they begin to write in a variety of genres as well as plentiful opportunities for independent writing. Pupils are involved in daily phonics lessons to aid the development of spelling throughout KS1, interwoven carefully into the English sessions. Grammar and punctuation feature throughout as well as being taught discretely.

Writing in Key Stage 2

We continue to use the English New Curriculum, Literacy and Language and quality texts as the basis for planning. This guides us in the variety of genres we need to ensure pupils have access to. It also provides a model for the sequence of teaching whilst enabling us to achieve equal coverage across the key stage.

All pupils cover fiction and non-fiction units each term. Whilst focussing on developing key skills, teachers' planning also integrates links across the curriculum and uses topic themes, as well as educational visits and special events to provide real contexts for writing for real audiences. We recognise that where pupils see a purpose they will be motivated and the quality of their writing will be enhanced. Grammar and punctuation feature throughout writing lessons, as well as being taught discretely.

4. Assessment

Assessment for learning is a strong feature in all English lessons and ensures we support the development and progress of individuals and groups, effectively. A range of assessments, some school-based, others statutory take place at key points, throughout the year which provide us with information about each pupil, groups and cohorts:

- EYFS – Reception Baseline Assessments on entry
- Phonic assessment- ongoing record, RWI assessment
- Phonic Screening Check Y1 and Y2 if required – end of year
- Reading SATs – End of KS1 and KS2
- SPaG – End of KS2
- Half-termly Teacher assessments
- End of term PiRa and PuMa assessments - reading and maths
- Reading and writing assessment (statement trackers) for each year group – these provide ongoing pupil progress information

Teachers input data and the Assistant Head collates and analyses data/information to identify areas of development and works with teachers to organise intervention groups etc. This enables appropriate consolidation work to take place as well as inform whole school tracking of attainment and progress of each pupil. Leaders use data to inform whole school and subject development priorities, for the next school year.

5. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring the active participation and progress of all pupils in their learning. All pupils will be given equal opportunities to achieve their best possible standard, whatever their current attainment and irrespective of gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation or the progress of which they are capable.

6. Role of the Phase Leads

The Phase Leaders supported by the SMT are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through monitoring and evaluating English: -

The team members will:

- Provide support as required as part of the staff members continued professional development
- Ensure classroom environments are conducive to learning, through effective use of displays and accessibility and availability of resources
- Monitor progression and continuity of English throughout school through observations and regular monitoring of outcomes of work in pupils' books.
- Ensure that all staff have access to year group plans and the relevant resources which accompany them.
- Monitor pupils' progress through the analysis of whole school data. This will be used to inform the subject development plan which will detail how standards in the subject are to be maintained and developed further.
- Organise, audit and purchase English resources.
- Ensure that all staff have access to professional development including observations of outstanding practice in the subject.
- Keep up to date with recent developments in the curriculum.

7. Parental Involvement/Home Links

At Butts we recognise that parents and carers have a valuable role to play in supporting their child's learning.

- An overview of the English curriculum is readily available on the website
- Reading, phonics, spelling activities are suggested for parents and carers
- Pupils are given homework at least once a week from Reception to Year 6. In addition to this they are encouraged to access reading materials at home to practise and consolidate the learning they have done in school.
- Parents are informed of their child's progress at Parents Evenings and this is also communicated in written school reports. Information about their child's standards, achievements and future targets in English is shared during these meetings, as well as ways that parents/carers may be able to assist with their child's learning.
- The year group expectations are shared with parents so they are able to support them at home.
- Year 2 and Year 6 parents are invited to attend an informal End of Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs meeting during Spring Term during which they are given relevant information and have the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns they may have.

The Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English. This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.