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1. Curriculum Overview

In English, our aim is to equip students with advancing skills in reading, writing, and verbal communication, enabling them to evolve from beginners to proficient communicators. During Phases 1 and 2, we emphasise the development of fluency in reading, writing, and spoken language to free up students' mental capacities for tackling tasks with growing complexity.

At Phase 3 and 4, we continue to promote these skills with more advanced and broader texts, marrying the skills of fluent reading and answering comprehension questions that extend to comparisons, structure and evaluation (in line with KS4 programme of study for English Language).

To achieve this, we implement the following principles:

- Tailored instruction for diverse needs.
- Multi-sensory techniques for engagement.
- Structured literacy, through Read Write Inc, for foundational skills, evolving to a 'teaching through text' model.
- Personalised small group instruction.
- Immersive language-rich environments.
- Specific and Targeted interventions.
- Book choices that grow in complexity
- Ongoing progress monitoring and celebration.

Phonic Development

We implement Read Write Inc. as the ideal choice for our school due to its structured approach, multi-sensory learning techniques, and emphasis on small group instruction.

With our school context in mind, this model allows us to personalise learning through individualised instruction, ensuring too that pupils who are older with phonic gaps can be supported through the Fresh Start programme.

The structure in which it lays foundational skills, such as phonemic awareness and comprehension, provides the perfect springboard for our reading model that follows. And by integrating ongoing assessment and

progress monitoring tools, the program allows us to track students' growth and provide timely interventions, ensuring that every pupil receives our necessary support.

Reading

We embrace a 'teaching through text' philosophy as to expose our pupils to a rich, diverse and engaging array of literature. We are acutely aware that many pupils do not read whole novels, so miss out on engaging with characters, settings and plots in depth, preventing the capability to extend contextual understanding and comprehension.

Furthermore, this approach develops stamina and facilitates attention over longer periods which is well suited to the cohort of pupils we serve.

To improve fluency, we'll tailor strategies to each age group, ensuring they're developmentally appropriate. For younger students, activities like repeated readings and interactive games will be implemented, while older students may engage in reader's theatre performances and timed reading exercises. Personalised targeted interventions will address individual needs, providing additional support as necessary.

Comprehension is undertaken through the reading domains, with a particular emphasis on **vocabulary** acquisition, which we achieve by integrating differentiated vocabulary instruction across all subjects, engaging students in active learning activities such as word games and collaborative discussions, and fostering a language-rich environment with constant exposure to new words through displays and diverse texts.

Writing

The foundations of writing will begin with explicit teaching of phonics, spelling patterns, and grammar rules, providing clear explanations and ample opportunities for application.

Scaffolded activities, taught through 'mini lessons' in our 'writing for pleasure' approach, will gradually increase in complexity, allowing students to build confidence and proficiency over time. This philosophy, developed by 'The Real-World Writers', ensures that pupils can write for a variety of purposes to a variety of audiences. We will ensure that writing tasks are sequenced coherently so that connections can be made between the reading, writing and spoken language curriculums, ending up at an aspirational point whereby pupils can articulate coherent, imaginative and compelling pieces across descriptions, narratives and non-fiction which are the demands indicative of the GCSE English Language programme.

Personalised interventions will address individual writing challenges, providing tailored support to enhance accuracy.

Furthermore, we integrate writing across other subjects to offer real-world contexts for applying transcriptional skills and grammar knowledge, emphasising their practical relevance. Through these strategies, it empowers students to become increasingly accurate and confident writers.

Spoken Language

We'll integrate speaking and listening activities across all subjects, providing regular opportunities for students to engage in meaningful oral communication. Explicit instruction in vocabulary development, syntax, and discourse patterns will be embedded within language-rich environments, fostering a deep understanding of spoken language structures and how they differ in different contexts. This is particularly relevant in our wider personal development goals, so that pupils can grow in their ability to convey their ideas in difficult times too.

Collaborative discussions, debates, and presentations will encourage active participation and critical thinking, honing students' oral communication skills and rhetoric. Feedback will be given, based on the spoken language objectives, so that pupils know their strengths and what skills they can work on. This can then inform targeted interventions will support students who may require additional assistance in developing spoken language proficiency.

In devising our English curriculum, we acknowledge the importance of a balanced approach that blends both cumulative and hierarchical progressions of skills and knowledge. We understand that certain aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary development, reading comprehension (VIPERS), writing fluency, and language conventions, benefit from a cumulative approach. Students continuously expand their vocabulary, refine their comprehension abilities, enhance their writing skills, and master language conventions as they progress through the curriculum, building upon prior learning to achieve greater proficiency.

Conversely, skills such as phonics and phonological awareness, sentence structure and syntax, text structure and organisation follow a hierarchical progression. Students begin with foundational concepts and gradually advance to more complex skills, systematically mastering each stage before moving on to the next. For instance, phonics instruction starts with basic letter-sound relationships and progresses to more intricate phonics patterns, and we appreciate that complex sentences are not going to be able to be constructed until simple sentences are understood and applied in a fluent manner.

We also understand that achieving high levels of automaticity in reading, writing, and spoken language is paramount to facilitate students' ability to answer disciplinary questions, undertake key practices, and make independent connections. We therefore employ structured practice and explicit instruction to develop fluency and proficiency in language skills, gradually releasing responsibility to students as they gain mastery. We use regular reinforcement, feedback, and integration across subjects to support skill development, while teaching metacognitive strategies, to empower students to monitor and regulate their own learning. By prioritising automaticity in language tasks, our curriculum enhances students' working memory capacity, equipping them with the cognitive resources needed for academic success and independent inquiry.

Additionally, content in our English curriculum is carefully selected for memorisation based on its significance in building foundational language skills and knowledge. High-frequency vocabulary, key spelling patterns, grammar rules, literary devices, and oral communication strategies are identified for memorisation to provide students with a solid linguistic foundation. The curriculum structure supports memorisation through strategic revisiting of topics, chunking of information into manageable units, and retrieval practice in line with our wider curriculum intent. By systematically reviewing and reinforcing learned content over time, students consolidate their understanding and commit essential elements to long-term memory.

For pupils who struggle with processing, memorisation of components necessary for complex actions like writing and reading is supported through differentiated instruction and targeted interventions. Extra practice is prioritised for these students, with additional opportunities provided to strengthen memorisation skills. Scaffolded activities, multisensory approaches, and personalised learning strategies are employed to accommodate diverse learning needs and ensure equitable access to memorisation practice.

2. Pedagogical Principles

In reading, we implement a 'teaching-through-text' pedagogy, using whole novels from Phase 1 – 3, in readiness for close and analytical extract work that becomes the primary focus in Phase 4.

This literature is central role in the teaching and learning process, with 7 key principles:

Immersion in Authentic Texts

Teaching through whole novels involves immersing students in authentic, complete literary works rather than fragmented excerpts. This approach allows students to experience literature in its entirety, engaging with the narrative, characters, themes, and language in a holistic manner. Although excerpts become the focus in Phase 4, we hope that we have built a solid love for reading so that pupils leave us having experienced an array of novels across multiple genres/contexts.

Comprehensive Understanding

By studying entire novels, students develop a comprehensive understanding of the text, its context, and its deeper meanings. They explore complex characters, intricate plotlines, and multifaceted themes, fostering critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness.

Contextual Learning

'Teaching through text' provides rich contextual learning experiences. Students explore the historical, social, and cultural contexts of novels, deepening their understanding of the world and connecting literature to broader themes and issues.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Development

Whole novels offer extensive language exposure and immersion, supporting language acquisition and development. Students encounter diverse vocabulary, syntax, and writing styles, expanding their linguistic repertoire and enhancing their reading, writing, and spoken language skills.

Critical Analysis and Interpretation

Studying whole novels encourages critical analysis and interpretation. Students analyse literary elements such as characterisation, setting, plot, and symbolism, developing analytical skills and literary appreciation.

Personal Development

Whole novels often resonate with students on a personal and emotional level. Engaging with characters and themes over the course of a novel allows students to connect deeply with the text, fostering emotional engagement, empathy, and reflection.

Sustained Inquiry and Exploration

Teaching through whole novels supports sustained inquiry and exploration. Students delve deeply into the text, posing questions, generating discussions, and exploring multiple perspectives, fostering curiosity, creativity, and intellectual curiosity.

In writing, we implement a 'Writing for Pleasure' pedagogy, emphasising collaborative writing experiences and individual growth. Key principles include:

- Encouraging students to share and discuss their writing fosters peer support and constructive feedback.
- Direct instruction on writing processes empowers students to navigate their writing journey independently.
- Maintaining a balance between composition and transcription, with high expectations for accuracy.
- Conducting daily mini lessons to teach writing strategies and self-regulation skills.
- Cultivating a supportive community of writers where each student is treated as a writer with high expectations.
- Pursuing purposeful and authentic writing projects collaboratively, with students actively involved in decision-making.
- Ensuring consistency in classroom organisation and instruction routines.
- Encouraging personal writing projects to promote independent exploration and skill development.
- Modelling writing as a pleasurable activity and providing individualised feedback through pupil conferences.
- Integrating reading and writing instruction to foster a love for both literacy skills.

We implement this because it promotes:

Student Engagement

By creating a collaborative and supportive writing environment, students are actively engaged in the writing process, leading to greater enthusiasm and motivation.

Individual Growth

Through direct instruction and personalised feedback, students develop their writing skills at their own pace, fostering confidence and independence.

Meaningful Learning

Purposeful and authentic writing projects encourage students to connect with their writing on a deeper level, making learning more meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Community Building

A focus on creating a community of writers fosters positive relationships among students and teachers, enhancing the overall classroom atmosphere.

Life-Long Literacy

By integrating reading and writing instruction and modelling writing as a pleasurable activity, we instill a love for both literacy skills that extends beyond the classroom and into students' lives.

3. Summative Assessment

The Read Write Inc. phonic assessment framework provides the foundation in measuring reading competence.

Rising Stars is then used as the key summative assessment tool for English (Reading / Spag) in line with our 'teaching-through-text' pedagogy.

Teachers are required to use the QLA results from Rising Stars to make in-class intervention decisions and adjust future planning accordingly to target learning areas of need.

For instance, if prediction is a weakness for a particular group/individual, the subsequent scheme of work will incorporate this as a priority with text choices made to support this.

Further use of Rising Stars allows teachers to make an accurate judgement on the pupil's academic progress and current working level. Teachers are required to record their progress and current level on each pupil's tracker.

Writing is assessed summatively in a **composite** sense against age related outcomes, as well as the context of the individual **components** that are covered throughout the 'mini-lessons'. Each project has a written outcome, so these pieces can be collated over time to measure progress. When applicable, these are then assessed against the writing AOs / grading of the ELC > GCSE English Language syllabus.

4. Reading Culture

7 key principles sit behind establishing a positive reading culture:

Diverse and Inclusive Book Selection

We curate a wide range of books that reflect the interests, backgrounds, and experiences of our pupils. By offering diverse literature, including books featuring characters from different cultures, abilities, and identities, we ensure that all students feel represented and engaged in reading.

Access to Varied Reading Materials

We provide access to a variety of reading materials, including fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, audiobooks, and digital resources. This ensures that students have choices and can select reading materials that cater to their individual interests and preferences.

Reading Environment and Resources

We create inviting and comfortable reading environments within our school, including dedicated library spaces, cosy reading corners, and displays of recommended books in classroom settings. Additionally, we provide resources such as book clubs, author visits, and reading challenges to promote enthusiasm and engagement with reading.

Role Modelling and Promotion

We promote a culture of reading through positive role modelling by teachers, staff, and peer influencers. Teachers regularly share their own reading experiences and recommendations with students, and we celebrate reading achievements and milestones to foster a sense of accomplishment and pride in reading.

