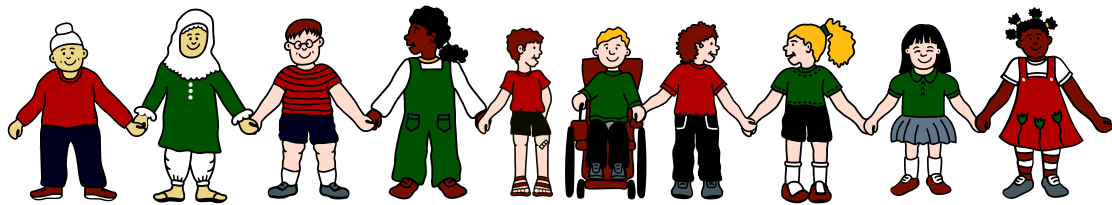


THE GILES NURSERY AND INFANTS' SCHOOL



English Report for Governors

2020 / 2021

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English Curriculum Leader: Miss Lisa Hill

Governor: Mrs. Stephanie Stevens

This report addresses the key areas for development in English, as detailed in the English Plan 2020/21, linked to the priorities of the School Improvement Plan. It focuses on the actions carried out in each area and the impact of these actions for the academic year 2020/21.

Priority 1:

To further secure an outstanding quality of education through supporting teachers to make sure that children learn the most important vocabulary in all subjects and understand what the words mean and use them appropriately in their work.

A root and branch review of the English curriculum took place during the spring 2020 lockdown. This included phonics, reading and writing. Teaching staff reviewed the curriculum to ensure it builds steadily and enables pupils to 'know more and remember more'. For example, children in nursery begin phase 2 phonics, and revise the letters and sounds at the start of reception. Reception pupils move on to phase 3 and phase 4 phonics. As pupils move in to Year 1, they revise phase 4 and begin phase 5 (new graphemes and alternative pronunciations). In Year 2, pupils revise alternative pronunciations and learn alternative spellings.

A summary of key vocabulary and key objectives of the English curriculum has been prepared using the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. Teachers agreed the key vocabulary from nursery through to the end of Year 2, and looked forward to Year 3 to know where pupils are going next on their learning journey. Each year group has a summary of key vocabulary. Parents can review the documents on the school website and support their child's learning at home.

Year group leaders include key vocabulary for new units of work in the weekly school newsletter, and parents are encouraged to discuss new vocabulary at home. Where technical vocabulary is used, teachers provide a definition, for example when Year 2 were using onomatopoeia to write rain poetry. In addition, key vocabulary listed on weekly remote learning plans during the early 2021 lockdown enabled parents to incorporate the vocabulary when working with their child at home.

Year group teams look at key vocabulary during weekly planning meetings and note on their planning. Previous year's vocabulary is also included, which has given pupils opportunities to catch up on learning missed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers share planning with support staff at the start of a new unit of work to ensure all adults are modelling key vocabulary to pupils. Learning walls include key vocabulary for the unit of work and ongoing key vocabulary, for example phonics vocabulary. Staff refer to the learning walls in their teaching to engage pupils and discuss word meanings, spellings, etc. For shorter units of work, vocabulary mats are available instead. Pre-teaching of key topic vocabulary is essential to enable pupils to write to the best of their ability, for example, when writing a non-fiction book about Native Americans in Year 2. Pre-teaching activities include creating picture glossaries, using indexes and finding the definition of words in dictionaries. Activities are differentiated appropriately for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), Speech and Language Base pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs (SEND).

Each of these actions has helped to embed key vocabulary, both technical and topic-specific, in all year groups. All staff model specific and correct vocabulary to pupils, following the English key vocabulary documents. This is particularly evident when observing a guided reading session or an adult modelling sentence composition to a pupil. Displays of pupils' work also include key vocabulary, to explain the new skill or knowledge that pupils are demonstrating in their work.

Modelling of key vocabulary is consistent across all year groups. It is deeply embedded, ensuring all correspondence with parents reflects the vocabulary used in school. This is evident in weekly newsletters, termly year group newsletters and topic webs, home reading record comments, targets and end of year reports.

Pupil voice sessions will take place in May 2021. The English curriculum leader will meet with small groups of pupils from each year group to discuss key vocabulary in the context of looking at their work. This will be an opportunity to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of key vocabulary.

Priority 3:

To ensure the school is prepared for future potential closure of school / bubbles through robust and dynamic risk assessment for the return of all pupils and their ongoing safety; effective contingency planning for future remote learning needs; recovering the school's curriculum including identifying gaps in pupils' learning and addressing them; and identifying pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

A careful and detailed transition took place across all year groups, following lockdown and school closures, which enabled staff to identify gaps and discuss missed vocabulary opportunities. Using this planning enabled the children to settle into school quickly and happily. The curriculum journeys planned out in 2019/2020 were adapted for the Covid catch-up curriculum and lesson planning reflected these changes.

Planning for writing was adapted to include missed learning, incorporated within previous year's planning and using pre-teaching. For instance, Year 2 pupils are usually asked to write instructions at the start of the school year, which is used as their baseline assessment. Year 2 teachers knew that pupils had missed the unit of work on instructions in Year 1, so planned an alternative baseline assessment (a piece of writing 'all about me') and then taught the unit on instructions without a cold task. In Year 1, teachers were mindful that pupils had missed a lot of child-initiated learning

so incorporated role-play and writing areas into their classrooms and learning time. Early assessments indicated that pupils' handwriting and stamina to write had been affected by lockdown, when pupils mostly used computers and did not physically write. In response to this, an increased number of handwriting sessions were planned each week.

Teachers across all year groups used the whole school phonics planning document to pinpoint where their class were up to, and then planned to revise previous learning while introducing new letters and sounds. Reading was noted as a key priority for all pupils. Individual assessments took place in the first four weeks of the autumn term and enabled teachers to ascertain pupil's decoding and comprehension skills.

The autumn term 'Big Write', based on the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' was used as an assessment piece to monitor ongoing gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils were highly engaged and enthusiastic as they watched a video of a beanstalk erupting from the playground. The theme inspired many opportunities for cross-curricular catch-up, for example growing bean plants (science) and creating beanstalks using art straws (design and technology). The writing pupils produced, in the form of an open-ended story, provided an excellent opportunity to see the progress made in the first half term and monitor how effectively gaps had closed.

Careful and meticulous assessments ensured teachers knew exactly how to plan to close any gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers skilfully adapted existing planning to integrate learning lost in the previous academic year and ensure key vocabulary was covered. The English curriculum lead reviewed the Herts for Learning 'Bank on Track' catch up programme with year group leaders, who decided it was more beneficial to our pupils to continue with planning based on cross-curricular learning, that teachers felt confident with and could adapt in the most flexible and effective manner.

The English curriculum lead and assessment lead reviewed the marking and feedback policy in light of adaptations made during the first school closure. Immediate, interactive feedback was evidenced as having the most impact on pupils' progress,

whilst also supporting staff wellbeing and best use of their time. CPD was provided for staff, who shared their best practice and evidence of impact. The second lockdown, along with avoiding potential contamination between class bubbles, meant that book scrutiny did not occur as planned in the autumn and spring terms. This will be incorporated within the pupil voice sessions taking place in May 2021.

In the autumn term, pupils had opportunities to discuss their wellbeing and share any worries or concerns, through displays, worry boxes and circle time sessions. This practice continued when pupils returned to school after the second school closure. Pupils learnt the vocabulary they needed to express their concerns and ways of improving their own mental wellbeing.

Staff CPD has focused on key training to enable staff to support gaps in pupils' learning, in response to ongoing assessments. CPD has included:

- Open Learn: What children and young people say, English grammar in context, Listening to young people: supporting transition
- Steps refresher training
- Phonological awareness assessment with children
- Securing Starting Points for Early Years children
- EY Moderation: Starting Points
- Making the last term count: closing gaps in English and maths learning - Key Stage 1
- New to Year 2 assessment
- Ofsted updates
- Year 2 Moderation
- Leading Remote Learning
- Achievement for All
- Supporting Pupils with EAL
- Autism Education Trust training: Good Autism Practice Tier 2
- ADHD Awareness

- Pie-Corbett 'Talk for Writing'
- Leuven Scale (AfA)
- Year 2 cluster moderation (end of year)
- EYFS cluster moderation (end of year)
- Getting Metacognition Practice into Everyday Teaching (securing best practice)
- Emotion Coaching (AfA)
- Talk for Writing

Although restrictions have been in place regarding visitors coming into school during the Covid pandemic, staff have come up with innovative solutions to ensure pupils could still take part in exciting cross-curricular learning opportunities. These included:

- Poetry Day – each class learnt a section of the poem 'The Alphabet' by Edward Lear and performed it as a whole school via Microsoft Teams.
- Big Write, The Mysterious Beanstalk (KS1) – an app was used to create a video of a beanstalk exploding from the Year 1 and Year 2 playgrounds, which pupils watched in their own class bubbles.
- Growth and Wellbeing week – pupils took part in a range of activities to enhance their self-esteem, including a socially distanced yoga session.
- Life in the Big House (Year 1) – organised as a remote workshop via webinar, with activities completed in class bubbles.
- Safari Stu visit (Year 1) – socially distanced in class bubbles.
- Florence Nightingale workshop (Year 2) – organised as a remote workshop via webinar, with activities completed in class bubbles.
- World Book Day – included remote learning activities and year group story sessions via Zoom, with pupils in school and at home encouraged to dress up.
- Big Write, Treasure Island (Year 2) – a socially distanced theatre production.
- Great Fire of London workshop (Year 2) – organised as a remote workshop via webinar, with activities completed in class bubbles.

The phonics screening check did not take place at the end of Year 1 because of the Covid pandemic. Instead, it was postponed until the second half of the autumn term for pupils in Year 2. Once pupils had settled into their new classes after the summer break (longer for some, as they had not returned to school in the summer term), early baseline assessments were completed with individual pupils to identify gaps. Class teachers used the assessments to amend their phonics planning accordingly and set up small intervention groups for pupils who required extra support. Twice daily phonics sessions were timetabled to make up for missed learning time during lockdown. A parent information session about the phonics screening check was hosted on Zoom. It was recorded and uploaded on to the school website. Information packs and differentiated resources to support pupils to practise their phonics skills at home were sent out to all pupils. As a result, pupils made rapid progress, with 80% of pupils (full cohort) and 81% (mainstream cohort) reaching the expected standard (2019 national average – 81.9%). The results of pupils who did not meet the threshold mark were analysed to ascertain common / individual gaps and class planning / interventions groups were adapted accordingly. The Project X Code reading intervention was also used to support pupils with their phonic knowledge and skills.

The English policy has been reviewed and is up to date. It provides clear expectations of English teaching and learning across the school, including communication and language, phonics, reading and writing. It reflects the updated curriculum journey at our school and our approach to phonics teaching. It has been shared with staff members and governors and is available for parents on the school website.

Year group leaders were asked to conduct an audit of non-fiction topic books and put together a 'wish list' of current, age appropriate non-fiction books to support teaching and learning in each topic. New books were ordered and pupils now have access to modern, inspiring books that enhance our topic provision. Teaching and learning is improved as teachers have a range of texts to refer to during teaching sessions.

A whole school phonics planning document was introduced to staff at a training session at the end of the last academic year. It provides week-by-week planning from Phase 1 through to the end of Phase 6 to ensure there is consistency, coverage and progression across the whole school and Nursery. The planning includes the teaching of high frequency and tricky words in all phases. It also encourages application of phonics in writing, including full sentences. The planning stipulates the letters and words to be taught each week but allows teachers to choose different resources and games to suit the pupils in their class. The Reception team decided to adapt the Twinkl phonics scheme for Phase 2 and Phase 3, which they used for effective phonics teaching during remote learning and when pupils returned to the classroom. After completing assessments with pupils, practitioners and teachers can pinpoint gaps in phonics learning and address them appropriately using the planning. During the training, staff shared a range of exciting phonics activities. A bank of ideas were recorded for staff to enhance their teaching and ensure pupils are motivated and enjoying learning.

Staff have continued to use strategies from APAD (phonological awareness) training across the school. Pupils who are making below expected progress are in phonics are assessed swiftly in order that gaps can be addressed and alternative provision put in place if necessary. For instance, using the older Oxford Reading Tree book that contain lots of repetition of sight words and do not rely solely on phonic decoding skills, or providing interventions specific to the pupil's needs such as practising distinguishing the final sound in a word.

It has been a priority for the whole school to ensure reading and reading at home remains a key focus during the Covid pandemic, whilst maintaining health and safety. Staff have come up with innovative solutions. Book returned from home are quarantined for 72 hours. Book boxes have been allocated for table groups in classrooms. Additional and varied opportunities have been provided for pupils to read in school, including listening to high-quality stories, reading on a 1:1 basis with adults, reading as part of a group, discussing stories and having time during the school day to read for pleasure. Staff have used the Bug Club reading scheme online to ensure

pupils can access reading books at their level from home. In the summer term, guided reading was reintroduced in Year 2, with staff being mindful to ensure pupils sanitised their hands before and after reading. Reading bears were also reintroduced during the summer term, going home each Friday and being returned on Monday to be quarantined before going out again. The head teacher has conducted a whole school assembly live via Microsoft Teams every Friday afternoon and other staff members have recorded themselves reading, which can then be played in class bubbles.

With restrictions in place regarding movement between bubbles, the spring term lockdown and additional workload caused by the pandemic, it has not been possible to provide staff with up-to-date training on reading with pupils on an individual basis or to review the delivery of effective guided reading and guided reading carousels. This will be a priority for the autumn term. Year 1 in particular will need support to embed guided reading across the year group, and use the carousel model effectively to support the delivery of reading and phonics interventions.

After the first lockdown (spring and summer terms 2020), many teachers noticed that parental engagement with reading at home had diminished. Reading records showed that parents were not reading regularly with their children. A reading workshop would usually be held in the autumn term, but this could not take place due to Covid restrictions. Instead, teachers recorded videos of themselves teaching phonics and uploaded them on to the school website. Videos of staff reading stories were also uploaded. Pupils were encouraged to access Bug Club reading books as part of their homework. In the autumn term, next step targets were provided in reading records. A reading advent tree, where pupils entered a raffle to win a book, took place over Christmas. In the summer term, we were able to reintroduce the reading bear incentive. Staff comments in reading records and information to support parents will be reviewed during pupil voice sessions in June 2021. Next academic year, there will be a focus on providing support with reading to parents through the school website, for instance, using presentations, short video clips and web links.

Vulnerable groups in Year 1, particularly disadvantaged pupils, have benefitted from a new writing initiative set up by Mrs Hayhurst. The Boggle Box, which contains a theme that is changed each week, encourages pupils to widen their vocabulary, to describe what they can see and then to write in full sentences. It has provide very motivational for reluctant writers. It will be introduced in Year 2 next academic year. Following on from whole school training on the Talk for Writing initiative, a Mighty Writer training webinar has been scheduled for 14th July 2021. This will enable staff to support vulnerable groups to access Talk for Writing and develop their own stories.

To encourage a wide and varied vocabulary across the school, Mrs Wordsmith resources have been provided to all classes. These include a 'word a day' flip book and vocabulary dictionaries in Year 2, which are similar to a thesaurus, providing synonyms for pupils to use in their writing. In Year 2, pupils are introduced to the word of the day and are encouraged to use it as many times as possible.

The Big Write has continued to be used an effective monitoring and assessment tool in KS1. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoyed 'The Mysterious Beanstalk' theme in the autumn term. They watched a video clip of a beanstalk erupting from their playground and took part in a range of beanstalk related activities, including growing a bean plant. At the end of the week, pupils wrote a story about their adventure at the top of the beanstalk. This provided a baseline assessment and enabled teachers to know pupil's next steps and incorporate into their planning. Unfortunately, the spring Big Write could not take place due to lockdown and school closure. The summer Big Write focused on Treasure Island in Year 2 and lifecycles in Reception and Year 1. Writing progress books were reviewed during a governor book look in June. Governors noted that the books showed clear evidence of progress and were a fantastic record of a pupil's achievements during their time at our school. Looking forward, next year's Big Writes will be linked to Talk for Writing, for example, pupils will work on writing a journey story in the weeks prior and will then have the opportunity to apply what they have learnt independently during the Big Write.

Following on from school closures during the Covid pandemic, it was apparent that pupils' fine motor skills and handwriting had been affected, including hand strength, dexterity, letter formation and stamina for writing. These were identified as key targets for all pupils. Staff agreed to teach three discrete handwriting sessions each week to boost pupil's letter formation. Observations of staff have shown that the teaching of handwriting is secure and consistent across the school. All staff are using the agreed letter formation patten. It has been embedded very successfully, with staff using the patten in phonics and writing lessons as well as discrete handwriting sessions. Additionally, fine motor skills interventions have been set up and there has been a focus on cutting, colouring and building activities in other curriculum subjects to increase hand strength and dexterity. During the Talk for Writing training, staff learnt about the importance of short burst writing tasks to build pupil's confidence using sentence structures, and also to increase their stamina for writing.

Pupil voice sessions will take place in June 2021. The English curriculum leader will meet with small groups of pupils from each year group to listen to their opinions about their work, and how they feel about learning following school closures during lockdown.

English Monitoring Schedule 2020-2021

Observations	Planned date	Date achieved
Phonics	Autumn 2 – LH all year groups	Delayed due to Covid pandemic and lockdown
Individual reading	Autumn 2 / Spring 2 / Summer 2 – SLT all year groups	
Writing	Spring 1 – LH all year groups	
Guided reading	Summer 1 – LH all year groups	
Monitoring	Planned date	Date achieved
Writing (planning and pupil books)	Autumn 2 – Reception Spring 1 – KS1 Spring 2 – Reception Summer 1 – KS1	Scheduled for summer 2
Reading folder and reading records	Spring 1 / Summer 1 – all year groups (SLT)	Scheduled for summer 2
Pupil voice / book discussion	Planned date	Date achieved
Reading	Spring 1 – LH all year groups	Scheduled for summer 2
Writing	Summer 1 – LH all year groups	Scheduled for summer 2
Moderation	Planned date	Date achieved
Reading	Termly in year groups to moderate assessments	December 2020 / May 2021
Writing	Termly across year groups to moderate Big Write	November 2020 / May 2021