



English

OUR CORE AIM FOR ENGLISH

To enable our children to become fluent readers, writers and thinkers, who are prepared for learning at secondary school and beyond; they will have access to a wealth of immersive experiences which will fuel a passion and purpose for reading and writing. A love of reading that helps to create confident writers and articulate speakers.

What do English lessons look like at Swiss Gardens Primary School?

Reading

Reading forms a very important part of each day, from stories being enjoyed together with discussions and predictions, to focused individual and Guided Reading sessions. ERIC and reading for pleasure also feature daily. As Swiss Gardens develops its' curriculum topics around specially- chosen core texts, children have a rich experience to draw from to stimulate curiosity and a passion for learning.

In EYFS, daily phonics are taught through the 'Song of Sounds' programme, with story time and opportunities to read books from a range of sources – the outdoor library, in role-play areas and within the classroom. During free-flow sessions, children are encouraged to take part in a range of reading activities. As soon as children can blend, they are given a carefully matched reading book for them to practise their early reading and decoding skills.

In KS1, daily phonics lessons are also taught, again through the 'Song of Sounds' programme, daily reading for pleasure, guided reading time and individual reading. Shared stories help the children to develop their vocabulary knowledge, develop their comprehension, prediction skills and understanding of plot development. Matched readers continued to be used to develop children's accuracy, confidence and fluency in reading.

Throughout the school, additional support is provided for disadvantaged children, or those who have specific learning needs in English, through targeted 'priority reader' individual reading and through the 'Reading Rockstars Parent Partnership' where identified children in each year group read with an adult from the community regularly.

At home, in both Year R and Key Stage 1, we ask and expect families to further support the lessons that occur in school, by reading daily with their children and practising the sounds that are sent home. Parent/carer meetings are held to demonstrate how children may be supported in order to consolidate the learning that is happening in school. Reading records are used as an open dialogue between home and school so both parents and teachers can make comments, ask questions and offer support about an individual's reading.

At KS2, all children read a carefully chosen matched text, which not only suits their reading ability but also their interests and passions. At Swiss Gardens we believe that all reading is good! We encourage children to read a range of texts (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) – from magazines to sports match reports and graphic novels. Through differentiated Guided Reading groups, ERIC and the end-of-the-day story book, children read or listen to reading every day for at least 45 minutes. Children discuss and review the books they have read with an adult or their peers – posting reviews to encourage others to read their chosen text. Again, 'priority readers' are heard regularly over the course of the week. We

are also developing further in each year group a range of texts to be covered over the year to reflect diversity and breadth of range.

To enrich all children's vocabulary, not only are topic-based words discussed and their meaning clarified, but also within any lesson – children and adults in the class can question a word's meaning. These unfamiliar words are then added to the 'What does it mean wall?' with a quiz at the end of the week to stimulate recall and develop an enriched language. Children with an impoverished language also benefit from this discussion and 'putting the word in context' sessions.

GDS readers in each year group will also have access to the 'Magic Box of Books' which includes both classic and modern texts - to challenge and entice pupils to read books they may not have come across before. 'Song of Sounds' phonics booster sessions occur for children who continue to require this support in developing their reading abilities and the fidelity to this programme is vital for those children who need extra support to close the gap in their phonics knowledge .

Reading regularly at home 4 times a week is celebrated with a move up the class 'Reading Ladder', and is rewarded with a medal of achievement at the end of each half term. Disadvantaged pupils who are unable to read at home for whatever reason do not miss out – as their diary includes all their additional reading they have completed in school.

In Reading at Swiss Gardens, we would expect any observers to see:

- A developing range of texts to represent our diverse nation
- Celebration of reading and reading for pure joy
- Encouraging children to read a range of texts and genres – both modern and classics, including 'Young City Reads' in UKS2
- Story time and modelling by the teacher
- Engagement, empathy and enthusiasm
- Vocabulary discussions
- Pupil voice choice of texts
- Teacher Guidance when choosing texts
- Book reviews and responses from pupils
- 'Magic Box of Books' in each class
- Resilience and perseverance when reading an unfamiliar genre or author
- Pride in moving up the reading ladder
- Cyclical revisiting to embed knowledge and understanding
- Learning based on NC expectations

What do English lessons look like at Swiss Gardens Primary School?

Writing

By giving children exciting, engaging starting points for writing – from drama and role play, film stimulus, discussion, visitors or visits, to a powerful topic core text – we aim to ignite children's imaginations. Writing for a purpose and audience is key to our curriculum delivery – children see themselves as writers when their writing is published and celebrated. Writing is seen as a process – sometimes skills developed just to draft form, exploring vocabulary, sentences types and figurative language, whilst other writing becomes part of a draft, edit and improved more 'honed' piece, which is written up and published for all the class to enjoy. 'Pink Pen' editing is encouraged from Year 2 upwards. Other curriculum areas also provide starting point – from Science investigation and hypothesis, to geographical-based fact files or newspaper reports linked to key events in history. Whilst skills are taught in daily English sessions, this is also applied in other areas.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation is taught both discretely and within the context of a lesson. It is vital that English is planned as a progressive subject throughout the children's time at the school, building on and making links with previous learning. Children build their skills throughout their lessons and the whole key stage to enable writing to become a fluent means to record and communicate their ideas. A skills that is essential for them throughout their school life and beyond.

In EYFS, the children focus on strengthening their fine motor skills to enable them to hold a pencil effectively and to begin to form all letters correctly. They have daily fine motor and handwriting sessions. The children are encouraged to segment and blend words for writing as soon as they know SATPIN. The children have access to writing materials, magnetic letters, letter cards, so they can apply what they know and have learnt.

By the end of Year R, most children are beginning to write independently simple sentences, which are phonetically plausible and can be read by others.

In Key Stage 1, writing lessons support children to become independent writers, who are beginning to make choices about their writing to impact upon the reader (e.g. through their choices of interesting, appropriate vocabulary). Writing is taught through a strong and powerful stimulus (often a high quality text) and through discrete phonics, spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting lessons – all of which meet together to enable the children to become writers.

Teachers use guided sessions as well as whole class modelling and shared writing to exemplify the writing process. Children build their skills throughout their lessons to enable writing to become a fluent means to record and communicate their ideas. Importantly, we teach children to understand that writing has a purpose and is not just a lesson that is taught in school; it opens up a whole world to them.

In KS2, writing builds on learning in KS1 to develop skills further. Regular spelling is taught each week, using the "Read write inc" spelling programme this works to improve writing, including their developing vocabulary, along with common exception words linked to handwriting skills. Phonics is taught in addition to spelling for those who still need it.

In KS2 there is more focus on widening vocabulary for emphasis and effect, guided work alongside shared writing encourages high quality outcomes.

In writing at Swiss Gardens, we would expect any observers to see:

- The use of the classroom displays, washing lines, drama and other starting point stimulus to develop writing for their purpose and audience
- Class-generated Success Criteria linked to 'Can I' statements
- Children see writing as a process, not being afraid to improve their writing with editing and proofreading 'pink pens'
- Resilience and Perseverance
- Independence
- Periods of silence for 'big writes'
- Periods of conversation 'Think, Pair, Share partners' and whole class discussions
- Application of skills and knowledge, often on "wipeboards"
- Decision making and pupil voice
- Planning opportunities, use of notes around the focus
- New learning, but also cyclical revisiting to embedded skills
- Free writing during Guided Reading sessions
- Learning based on NC expectations for each year group
- Children reading their writing to their peers to see the effect, edit and improve

What does the children's learning look like in reading?

Primarily, children's learning in reading is reflected in verbal responses, discussions with peers. Achievements and progress are also reflected in children's development of empathy and social understanding. Children's achievements in reading are also reflected in their writing – e.g. specific responses to written questions, their daily writing through their improving application of phonics and new vocabulary.

What does the children's learning look like in writing?

English writing is recorded in their cross-curricular topic book, but evidence of writing can also be seen across the curriculum subject areas. There will be evidence of progression with teaching of specific skills, analysis of other writing in that genre, including previous pupil's examples, followed by planning and writing. Audience and purpose will be discussed and evidence, after drafting, of editing and improving. As the children move through the school, their writing will show greater confidence in using grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Equally, their creativity continues to grow, with a development of individual style and 'author voice'. Children are encouraged to 'think outside the box' and writing from different chosen viewpoints are encouraged and embraced.

Teachers talk to the children about their writing, giving immediate verbal feedback, along with individual more detailed 'conferencing'. Teachers will also read each child's writing at some point to give written feedback and 'Next Steps' to improve. It is important the every child sees themselves as a writer and is respected as a writer. Praise for the progress made and then 'Next Steps' give children encouragement and then small steps to improve further.

The majority of writing is marked alongside the children, in order for misconceptions or inaccuracies to be addressed through immediate dialogue and modelling with the teacher, teaching assistant, or peers. Therefore, the books will not provide reams of written feedback from the staff to the children, as most feedback is provided orally for immediate impact within lessons. In English 'conferencing' with individual pupils over the course of a week will provide insight into why pupils have chosen certain vocabulary, style and content.

How do the teachers plan for English?

First and foremost, the teachers are always striving to deliver – and for children to achieve – age appropriate expectations, adhering to national curriculum requirements in conjunction with the school's English progression document.

To ensure NC expectations are met, teachers study previous teachers' highlighted progression statements to ensure no gaps are left unaddressed and to build upon what has gone before. With teachers passing on a summary of prior learning year-on-year, staff have a clear overview of what the children already understand and what they should learn next. English is planned in a cross curricular way, linked to carefully-chosen varied core texts, which may change over a period of time – to ensure diversity and range of authors, as new texts are published. Core texts are continually being assessed and changed, linked to the previously mentioned point, but also can be changed linked to a certain cohort. Where one core text might suits one year group cohort – it might not suit the next so well - and changes will be made. English is always planned in the best way to enable the best learning and these decisions are made by the year team teachers, under the guidance of the subject leader, as necessary.

There is a long-term overview of planned units of learning for the year, to ensure full coverage of the learning, with the year team agreeing which English learning will be taught and when in the term. The medium-term plan then details finer specifics and the short-term plan sets out the fine details of the learning that must occur, the activities and tasks through which the learning will occur, the adult roles within the lessons, the key vocabulary focus, etc. Formative and summative assessments are used to adjust planning for best accelerated impact on progress and attainment.

The school has set planning documents used by staff throughout the school for long, medium and short term planning.

How does the school know whether children are making good progress and attaining high standards in English?

The English subject leader (supported by SLT as necessary) monitors provision, progression and attainment e.g. via planning, lesson observations, book looks, pupil interviews, teacher interviews.

What happens if a child is finding English difficult?

We use a “mastery” approach to English, which means we are always striving for the vast majority of children to attain the same age-expected standards of learning at the same rate as each other. However, some children find English learning more challenging than others (whether due to a SpLD, EAL or through delayed developmental issues). For these children, the subject is made accessible by a variety teaching approaches, pedagogy and individual tailored support. This might be through 1:1 support, in small groups or by our SEND staff who also provide support and Speech and Language tailored programmes with help from Speech and Language specialist). The “Jump ahead” programme is used to help develop fine motor skills for handwriting, listening and sequencing sessions for chronology of stories etc. Adult support, scaffolding and differentiation is provided to ensure each child’s individual needs are supported. Personalised provision may also be given, in small groups away from the classroom (e.g. in order for children to achieve personalised EHCP targets, or to accelerate learning in particular areas such as phonics, or to read more often with an adult to support progress, etc.).

In summary, tailored support is planned and put in place for those who require a slightly different pathway of learning to the rest of the children. Sometimes, parents/carers are asked to further support their children’s learning with additional, small tasks at home, such as the ‘Toe by Toe’ Programme. No matter where each child is with their learning, we always strive for them to attain their full potential and they will always be rewarded with praise for trying their hardest and achieving their best.

What happens if a child is achieving very high standards in English?

Where children are attaining particularly highly in English teachers extend their knowledge further through higher level questioning and/or task expectation. The teachers deepen these children’s knowledge so that their learning does not “stand still”. Enrichment opportunities are also explored – such as visits to Chichester Cathedral for writing workshops, or author visits to inspire.

Teachers are supported by their colleagues within year teams and by the English team to identify ways in which children achieving highly in English may continue to be challenged. Informal discussions will be had about extending these children to provide extra challenge.

In writing, encouragement for able writers to make choices and choose a different approach to a piece of writing is encouraged and celebrated. Teachers expand these children’s decisions further through ‘decision conversations’ during conferencing, where the children explain why they have made particular choices and are encouraged and supported further to develop their ‘author voice’. The teacher is able to advise and support with differentiated author content to extend their potential even further.

In reading, teachers introduce GDS readers to new authors and wider reading materials, to offer these children the opportunity to expand their vocabulary and reading experiences beyond their present experiences, including poetry and plays. Once a child has reached a really high standard with their reading and writing, the aim is for them to feel comfortable, entirely fluent and totally independent in exploring their craft.

How do opportunities for English extend beyond each year group's lessons?

English is central to all learning and its importance and status in the school is celebrated widely through many things - banners showing what each year group are reading as their main texts during each term, to writing being published and shared during class collaboration sessions.

The broader curriculum is a powerful tool in enhancing children's English skills as speaking, reading and writing play their roles across all subjects – from debates about Climate Change and the impact of Palm Oil production on Orang-utans in year 6 to Year 3 Space and exploration linked to Science and the planets. Having the same expectations for English standards across all subject areas provides opportunities for children to continue to achieve progress in English and continue to develop their engagement in the subject. In class collaboration, shared reading is being developed, promoting books, sharing success during our FREE awards assembly and Golden assembly allows for children to speak up to an audience and share their ideas.

Reading ladder awards are issued to promote success and develop a sense of determination and pride. English is also extended through national and local days or events - such as World Book Day (when children and all the school community dress as their favourite book characters and various activities are planned, along with bringing their favourite book of the moment in) or the local library's summer reading challenge, and 'author visit' days – which are promoted by the subject leader due to established links with local librarians. Year 5/6 also visit the local library. When local or national competitions arise, along with West Sussex Yearly Writing Challenge, we always try to promote these and encourage participation, e.g. Shoreham WordFest.

Is there anything else Swiss Gardens Primary School would like to tell me about English?

Should you have the chance to walk around our school, you will see that our English ethos is well established, through the various reading and writing areas and displays throughout our corridors and classrooms. This shows how passionately we feel about the importance of English teaching, progress and attainment, and how we share work publically so the children may view each other's achievements and share in each other's successes.

Is there anything else parents can do to support the learning in English?

Children may continue to learn about English, in all its forms – written, read and spoken - at home as well as in school. Speaking, reading and writing are all equally important and we would encourage any parents/carers to support their child by reading to them and with them at all ages of the primary years. Reading with an adult or sibling is extremely valuable (even when their children are chapter book free-readers – the importance of reading with an adult to discuss plot / vocabulary and predictions cannot be understated), discussions about world events, maths strategies, chronology of history, different geographical locations whilst on holiday and biodiversity, science, diverse cultures and all the other subjects - again is invaluable for your child's development and curiosity leading them to a greater understanding of the wider world and its links and connectivity.

Who to contact

If you have any questions you would like to ask about English, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or the English subject leader:

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