QRA
English Policy

EDUCATE. EMPOWER. INSPIRE.

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1	Original	Sept 2023
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QRA English Policy & Practice

At Queens Road Academy, we endeavour to teach English with conviction, joy, skill and enthusiasm, and to feed the children with rich literature experiences at every opportunity.

English provides the main instrument of learning right across the curriculum. The National Curriculum is composed of three main areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

Our teaching is based on the recommended primary English Curriculum. Staff are encouraged to exercise their creative judgement and to be flexible in the teaching and learning of English, based on the differing needs, interests and abilities of the children.

Reading

Reading is an exciting and rewarding activity and is much more than the decoding of marks on the page. It is a search for meaning, which requires the reader to be an active participant in the process.

There is no one method or simple approach that holds the key to successful reading; children need to be equipped with a range of strategies to be able to tackle unfamiliar texts. They need to be able to recognise on sight a large number of high frequency words, to be able to use phonic and other linguistic cueing strategies, and probably most important, they need to understand and be able to infer and deduce from the text that they read. The children must have plenty of opportunities to practise the strategies they need for fluent, expressive reading. They are encouraged to read regularly both at home and at school and have access to a wide variety of quality texts, some of which they may take home. Parents are encouraged to help, to listen to, and to discuss books with their children on a daily basis, and are given assistance from school in possible methods to use.

Our aims are that all children should become confident readers of a variety of texts, and regard reading as a life-long pleasure.

Practice:

- Reading objectives are taken from the English Curriculum and are mainly taught through daily whole class LIRA sessions and phonic lessons.
- Daily reading sessions focus on children answering a range of Literal, Inference, Reader response and Author Intent questions in order to develop comprehension skills.
- Reading trackers are used to formatively assesses and target next steps.
- Individual reading trackers are updated termly to monitor progress
- Biannual assessments are used to support summative judgements.
- Each classroom has a designated reading area and there are also shared reading areas throughout school to promote reading for pleasure.
- Parents have access to reading workshops and resources to support their child with reading at home.
- Targeted support for children with individual needs in reading. E.g. toe by toe, phonics intervention, inference, catch up, NELI

Phonics

Synthetic phonics has been proved to be the most effective approach to developing early reading proficiency and at QRA we believe this is the best way to introduce children to the joy of reading.

We follow the Read, Write, Inc Progamme that enables all children to make connections between the sounds they hear and the letters that represent these sounds. We have developed a consistent approach across the school that

utilises a range of resources and pedagogy based on fidelity to the scheme. Daily phonics sessions are introduced in FS1 and continue in FS2 and Key Stage 1. Each session challenges every child to read and write using phonics strategies and apply these skills in writing. Parents are invited to phonics training sessions when their child joins Foundation Stage. Children are well prepared for the statutory Phonics Screening Check in the summer of Year 1.

However, at QRA we do not believe that scoring well in the phonics test is an end in itself and strive to encourage a rounded approach to reading where phonics skills are applied to increase fluency and improve comprehension. Reading books are levelled to match the progression in phonics in order to offer children a range of fiction and non-fiction texts to challenge them at an appropriate level to ensure accelerated learning.

Our aims are that all children should use phonics as their primary strategy for decoding words in order to read and subsequently use this strong foundation and other strategies in order to develop a life-long love for reading.

Practice

- Daily Phonics sessions in FS and KS1 utilising Little Wandle Letters and Sounds resources.
- Phonics displays in every classroom.
- Regular assessments track progress in phonics and identify vulnerable pupils.
- Reading books are decodable and levelled to match phonic progression.
- Phonics and reading interventions at KS2 provide targeted support for pupils with individual needs in reading.

Writing

In order to help pupils to succeed as writers, they must be encouraged to read as writers. This means they need to explore the structure, style, vocabulary in a wide variety of text types.

Writing should be introduced in meaningful contexts, where there are audiences other than the teacher. It is also essential to provide a balance between narrative and other forms of writing.

Focussed teaching on the objectives indicated in the curriculum will facilitate pupils' progress and ensure continuity and progression. However, this may be extended and adapted to pupil/class/school needs.

We believe that to raise standards:

- Children need to see models of good writing, through access to high quality literature, and teacher and pupil modelling.
- Multi-sensory techniques and stimuli should be used to enliven lessons, maintain pace and involve all children whatever their learning style.
- Children have the opportunity to develop their writing with regular, extended writing time, which may be practised in topics.
- Children are able to apply what they have learnt across the curriculum, in a variety of contexts.

Practice:

- Writing objectives from the English Curriculum are primarily taught in literacy sessions (reading objectives used to support writing).
- Teachers use the *Year on a Page* and *Gather, Skills, Apply* documents, alongside weekly plans to strategically plan for skill building in Literacy.
- A variety of strategies and teaching tools are used to support skill building and teaching of writing objectives.

- There is a focus on speaking and listening due to the language needs of the school and pupils.
- Formative assessments of pupils' writing is tracked using *Pupil Writing Portfolios.*
- Teachers will collect a minimum of two pieces of independent writing per term in order to make judgements about attainment and progress.
- Writing Trackers are used to identify next steps in writing.
- Writing moderation meetings are held in year groups, across and throughout Key Stages and across the locality to ensure consistency of levelled writing.

Oracy

Oracy development underpins all activities. The development of pupils' understanding of the spoken word, and the capacity to express themselves effectively in a variety of speaking and listening activities, matching style and response to audience and purpose is central to the learning process across the whole curriculum. Purposeful talk, and careful listening are the main ways through which children construct and refine their understanding of the language.

We aim to encourage confidence, expression, focus and clarity in speaking, as well as concentration and understanding in listening.

Speaking and listening skills are embedded throughout the English Curriculum. It is important that these skills are developed in cross curricular activities through the Curriculum to ensure relevant and meaningful contexts of vocabulary.

Practice:

- Drama and role play activities e.g. *Hot Seating*
- Dialectic Talk (learning through discussion)
- Question and answer sessions
- Circle Time
- Verbal presentations
- Assemblies
- Sharing work (Class, year group and whole school)
- Talk Partners
- Debate and discussion
- Interventions to address individual needs (e.g. NELI, talk boost, Time to Talk)
- Specific personalised schemes of work from SALT
- Specialist support from Resource Provision.

Adaptations

At QRA our curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those children with SEND. Curriculum designers and teachers have high expectations of what SEND pupils can achieve and the curriculum is not diluted or unnecessarily reduced for SEND pupils.

Every pupil is different and so what works for each pupil varies. Pupil's individual needs are considered and adaptations are planned to ensure the success of pupils in all subjects.

The way that our curriculum is designed ensures that chunks of learning are sequenced in a coherent way to enable all pupils, including those with SEND, to build on prior knowledge. Too much information at once can be a barrier to learning which is one of the reason why we have chosen half termly curriculum drivers.

Where pupils are identified with having complex needs it may be appropriate to provide a personalised curriculum which will be based on individual needs and will retain ambition for the pupil.

Where working memory is an issue for pupils, including those with SEND, we look to reduce extraneous load as much as possible as well as identifying key information when teaching. This helps pupils to pay attention to the content which they are expected to learn.

Adaptations to support individual pupils will be recorded on personal school support plans.

At QRA we do not assume that pupils with SEND learn content better through practical work as this can cause distraction and cognitive overload rather than increase clarity or accessibility. The curriculum is not narrowed for any pupils. Knowledge is taught and then pupils are provided with opportunities for scientific enquiry to test and investigate the knowledge taught. Pupils specific needs determine the types of adaptations which are required. These adaptations are in how the subject is taught rather than the content pupils are expected to learn. Where appropriate, learning will be chunked into smaller steps and pre learning and consolidation time in planned in to support need. Time is also planned to ensure pupils with SEND are pre taught vocabulary to support their understanding. Adaptations may include supporting pupils to pay attention to key aspects as well as reducing excessive or unhelpful demands on working memory.