English

Intent

The intent of the English curriculum at Howbridge Church of England Junior school is to cultivate a love for language, foster strong literacy skills, and nurture confident and fluent communicators. We believe that reading and writing is the foundation to our curriculum. Therefore, we intend to capture the hearts and minds of our children to promote a love of reading and writing to inspire and to give them the tools they need for success in the wider world. As a result, we aim to provide our students with a solid foundation in reading, writing, speaking and listening, enabling them to become lifelong learners and effective communicators in an ever-changing world.
At heart of our intent, our aim at Howbridge is to instil a love of reading, writing and discussion in our children that will have a positive impact on their development during their time here, and a lasting impact on their lives.

Implementation

To effectively deliver our intent, we implement the following strategies and practices:
* English lessons are taught in units that are planned around high-quality, challenging model texts. The children are immersed in this engaging narrative/non-fiction text, over several weeks, exploring characters, settings, storylines and themes. These units are planned using the Talk for Writing' programme. The writing skills developed in these lessons are carefully selected so that they form part of a whole-school skills progression. This allows children to master age-appropriate skills quickly and enables teachers to provide timely challenge or support where it is needed.
*Teachers plan their lessons using cold assessment tasks to provide targets for their children and address gaps or misconceptions within a unit. Children are then reassessed with a hot task to measure their progress. When marking this work, teachers leave next steps in books so that children know exactly what they need to do to make progress. During shared and independent writes, children are given feedback and respond to these marking prompts in purple pen. Anyone identified as working above or below age-related expectations is given support or challenges to help them take the next step on their learning journey. Staff provide opportunities throughout a child's writing journey to have 1:1 writing conferences or supportive editing sessions with a partner.
*Grammar is taught within lessons using short sharp bursts of writing, games or focused learning intentions within a lesson.
*Our teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable in delivering the English curriculum. They consistently provide high-quality teaching that is engaging, well-paced, and adapted to meet the needs of all learners. They use formative assessment strategies to inform their planning and adjust instruction accordingly. Our teachers model and foster a love for reading and writing, acting as positive role models for their students.
* We explicitly teach vocabulary across all subjects, recognising its essential role in students' literacy development. We provide regular opportunities for students to explore and expand their vocabulary through activities such as word walls, word banks,

and the use of context clues. We teach strategies for effective word learning, such as using dictionaries, word roots, and etymology. We encourage students to use ambitious vocabulary in their spoken and written communication.

* Reading is an integral part of most English lessons at Howbridge, especially in the early stages of the writing process where children are taught to read as readers, but it also taught in additional reading sessions that take place at least three times a week. Teachers provide whole-class teaching, discussion and shared reading activities. These guided lessons provide a deeper understanding of what characters are thinking, how they are feeling and why they act the way they do. Through careful questioning, children learn how stories and non-fiction writing is constructed and in doing so, develop their comprehension skills and their ability to better understand and interpret the books they read.

* Our school use the 'Take One Book' scheme to engage and challenge learners with their reading and ultimately their writing. This ensures that children are exposed to a variety of genres and texts aimed to challenge and engage all readers. In addition to this, we also intend to promote reading across our curriculum using a variety of different reading resources such as secondary sources, recounts, letters, diary entries, newspaper articles, information texts and pictures. This is to challenge every learner to reach their potential.

* During our reading sessions, children are provided with opportunities to gain greater confidence in their fluency and automaticity of the texts that they read using a variety of teaching strategies. These strategies are then embedded through all areas of the curriculum to help support children in their reading and develop their confidence in reading tier 2 and 3 vocabulary as well as their comprehension.

*Together as a school, we have developed a reading spine focusing on a range of classic, diverse and engaging texts for teachers to read aloud to pupils at the end of the day. Teachers read to their children at least four times a week to support the development and love of reading at our school.

* Reading is fundamental to everything we do. We are aware of the impact it has on the development of children in all subjects. On top of the consistent, rigorous focus in lessons, we use vibrant displays, reading areas, reward schemes, library sessions (book club), celebration events and exciting reading initiatives such as a half termly raffle.

* We place a strong emphasis on phonics and early reading skills development. Our systematic and structured approach to phonics instruction enables students to decode words fluently and efficiently. We use a range of resources, including high-quality phonics schemes, decodable books, and real-life reading materials, to reinforce and extend these skills. We provide daily guided reading sessions for our year 3 children and early readers to develop comprehension skills, vocabulary, and fluency.

* We utilise the 'Spelling Shed' resource in all year groups to plan and deliver spelling sessions. This is universally popular with our children, who love the challenging, competitive nature of the online activities. It also allows teachers to track the progress of individuals or groups of children and tailor the content of spelling sessions to suit their needs.

Impact

By immersing children in high quality texts and focusing on skills and the enjoyment of English, children develop an enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy talking about their favourite books, discussing the stories they're writing, and sharing their achievements with other children.

Children's books show that they continually adopt new writing skills as they progress through the school while drawing inspiration from the books they read in class.

Children's writing is assessed at the start of the year and at the end of each unit. This formative assessment complements the day-to-day assessment that takes place in classrooms and in books.

Children are also encouraged to assess their own work. Evaluating their own progress often feeds their eagerness to reach new targets and enables children to talk freely and enthusiastically about their next steps.