



## English curriculum at North Star 265°

Our aim for English at North Star 265° is for all children to be confident speakers, listeners, readers and writers.

Our curriculum includes:

- Talk 4 Writing Lessons
- Cracking Comprehension lessons
- Reading for pleasure
- Little Wandle Phonics

### Rationale and Overview

#### Talk 4 Writing

With Talk 4 Writing, children first learn a text aurally to develop a long-term memory of vocabulary and sentence structures. This supports their confidence to read and write independently. Children can work independently because they become very familiar with the words and structures they are using.

The stages of Talk 4 Writing are:

1. 'Cold Write' – what can I already write without any help?
2. WOW lesson – a hook to get children excited about the text topic
3. The imitation stage includes: learning the text aurally, learning to use the text map, discussing key vocabulary, hot-seating characters, 'reading as a reader' - comprehension questions about the text, 'reading as a writer' - creating a toolkit and highlighting the text, bespoke grammar lessons.
4. The innovation stage – looking at what changes we can make to the text we now know well. Editing the text map to make it our own. Writing that new text with support.
5. The invention stage or 'Hot Write' – what can I now write without any help and is it better than the 'Cold Write' I did at the start. Make a plan (own text map) and write independently.

This process takes 3 weeks to complete so children will learn many texts over the year. Working this way helps pupils become more confident when writing in other lessons.

In addition to Talk for Writing, we have introduced spelling practice for children who have completed phonics. We begin by focussing on Common Exception Words, then move on to other words within their spelling year group as required. Spellings are practiced at the beginning of every reading lesson.

## **Reading**

We want every child to have a love of reading and books. Many children come to our school with a negative view of themselves as readers, struggling to access lesson. We use high quality reading books at the right level for the child. Children read regularly in school and at home. This gives them the skills and confidence to make great progress.

Reading lessons include weekly 'reading for pleasure' sessions where children are encouraged to choose a book they might enjoy from a selection of books in the classroom. This encourages children to enjoy books freely, explore books that appeal to them and develop an independent love of reading.

Children are read high-quality texts daily by a member of staff. Staff are trained in pace, exploring vocabulary and generating a small amount of discussion around the book, as well as encouraging enjoyment of stories.

Reading is a key life-long skill. We teach children to be able to read a text out loud, e.g to sound out the words and say them (phonics). We also teach them to understand the meaning of what they are reading (comprehension). Each child reads to an adult daily. We encourage the children to read at home with their parents and carers. Because we feel reading at home is so important, we award the pupils points for doing this. We check reading and comprehension progress termly.

Each year we take part in World Book Day, focusing on reading for pleasure and developing favourite authors and genres.

We use Star Reader to assess reading progress across the year.

## **Reading Comprehension**

Along with encouraging comprehension through questioning when children read aloud to adults regularly, we also teach reading comprehension skills explicitly to children who have completed Phonics. We follow the Cracking Comprehension programme. This includes group sessions in which adults and children answer questions together about a text on the interactive whiteboard; individual supported sessions where children complete a similar, written comprehension assessment with help from the teacher; comprehension quizzes online which children can complete independently and check their answers; and termly reading assessments to support future teaching.

Reading comprehension is also taught through Talk 4 Writing, in which we discuss vocabulary and answer comprehension questions about our key texts. Story time sessions where adults read to children often incorporate comprehension check-ins from the adults to check the students are understanding what is happening in the story.

## **Little Wandle Phonics**

Sometimes children find it tricky to acquire the phonic skills to become a competent reader. At North Star 265° we use the Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up programme to help children gain the phonic knowledge they need as quickly as possible. Children with more complex needs access the Little Wandle SEN programme.

Children are taught in successive phases and we have plenty of independent reading books clearly matched to each phase. We also have a selection of phonics-level books aimed at older readers which we use to practice reading with the children within the phonics lessons.

Children who are identified for needing support through this programme are taught daily in small groups.

## **Rationale**

### **Intent:**

Our overarching intention is to ensure our English curriculum prepares students for life in the real world so they are able to become independent individuals in society. To do this we intend to:

- Ensure all children have completed the Little Wandle Rapid Catch-Up scheme and are able to read at a level where they can access worksheets and activities before returning to mainstream schooling.
- Give our students secure functional reading and writing skills so they can understand and make sense of the world around them
- Give our students a secure functional reading and writing age so they are ready to build on these skills at KS3 and to apply them to learning in other subjects.
- Develop and apply key literacy and SPAG skills within their writing.
- Support the development of clear letter formation.
- Develop their writing for a purpose in a variety of forms (Letter, Email, Diary Entry, Poem)
- Expose our students to a range of texts/genres including fiction and nonfiction, designed to strengthen and embed the skills in reading and writing.
- Give our students the skills to explore different text types and enable them to develop their comprehension skills.
- Develop reading skills through Little Wandle, Cracking Comprehension and Benchmark programmes, exposing our students to high quality reading resources, opening up our student's imagination so everyone reads for pleasure.
- Develop clear speaking and listening skills, so our students can start and maintain meaningful conversation.

## **Implementation:**

### Overview

We communicate the high value we place on literacy and reading skills by teaching these daily.

- The English curriculum follows a developmental model, which is evidenced through planning, resources and assessment for each individual class and student.
- CPD is available to all teaching and non-teaching staff. We schedule regular refresher training for our key programmes (Talk for Writing, Little Wandle and Cracking Comprehension) throughout the academic year.
- Through regular formative and summative assessment, we track gaps in knowledge. This is then targeted through high quality teaching and learning. Planning cycles are adapted to match the needs of particular groups and individuals.
- Vocabulary and key writing skills are practiced within other curriculum areas.

### Writing

- We follow the Talk 4 Writing programme with all of our students. As students continue through the school their writing is developed using clear and specific performance objectives.
- Quality writing is created by first expanding and developing students' oral language skills, teaching the necessary steps for sentence, paragraph and text construction.
- The 'Talk for Writing' approach enables students to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different text types and themes. It offers a 'scaffolded' approach to writing that offers confidence to fearful writers and a creative springboard to those who enjoy language.

### Reading

- Early reading across the school is delivered through the Little Wandle phonics programme, with accompanying reading books.
- Individual reading books for students learning phonics are banded to match the Little Wandle levels.
- After phonics pupils move to reading books in line with Star Reader assessments.
- Reading is promoted daily with dedicated reading slots during the day.
- Daily reading at home is promoted through the admissions process, reading logs, daily reward for this activity and through regular contact with parents.
- Reading lessons include 2 dedicated comprehension lessons and a paired reading aloud activity and time dedicated to reading for pleasure. Comprehension is taught first as a group (we do) and then, when children are ready, independently (you do)
- Each Talk 4 Writing unit has a comprehension lesson that is based on understanding the model text and answering questions

### Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

- Some spelling errors are addressed through marking or verbal feedback.
- Correct spelling is supported through the use of phonics sound charts
- Children beyond Phonics practice Common Exception Words daily (once they are secure in these, they practice other spellings for the appropriate year group)
- Talk 4 Writing starter activities are used to generate text specific vocabulary.
- Talk 4 Writing starter activities are be used to practice elements of punctuation and grammar
- Teachers use 'My Turn, Your Turn' to offer students multiple opportunities to hear, see and use new words.
- A punctuation and grammar focus links to the objectives of the current attainment year for the group. They are also linked to the focussed text style.
- Staff are trained in phonics and students are encouraged to use this within their reading and writing in all subjects.

### Speaking and Listening

- Our curriculum offers opportunities for hot seating, role play and discussion-based activities.
- Teachers model effective communication skills within all lessons and everyday encounters.
- Teachers select questions that are open-ended to allow for opportunities for authentic student response.
- Teachers use 'the power of the pause' to develop students' responses.
- Teachers use Rosenshine's questioning principles to encourage greater participation and more in-depth answers

### Assessment

- We are able to assess the accuracy of assessment through regular moderation as a teaching team.
- The subject lead will meet with subject leads across the trust to moderate a selection of books.

### **Impact**

- Our students will leave with the literacy skills they need to access their next stage of education, having built confidence in their abilities.
- Our students can communicate with clear meaning, they can make requests, voice their own needs and ask and respond to questions
- Our students can apply their knowledge to different situations in everyday life, for example, reading something on TV, road signs, online information, listening to the radio.
- Our students are able to read information to develop their subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum and further education.

