



English

Intent:

Mendlesham Primary School recognises that teaching and learning in English is an essential part of the whole development of all children. It enables them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate effectively.

We are committed to ensuring all pupils leave Year 6 communicating, reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies, to take responsibility for their own learning, with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment and with an interest in words and their meanings.

Mendlesham is a small, rural, community which is made up of a range of different families. We are therefore aware that children start school with a vast range of experiences, knowledge and language, resulting in a considerable gap in some instances. These gaps in the children's experiences and knowledge are identified quickly and planned for.

Children develop as passionate readers, where reading is used not just to develop their subject specific knowledge, but widen their understanding of their own and other cultures and societies, build their emotional intelligence and grow their imagination. Children will experience the shared reading of a broad range of texts and be motivated to read widely both inside and outside of school. They will build a strong understanding that reading is for gaining information across the curriculum and for pleasure.

Teachers will directly teach ambitious vocabulary drawn from the carefully considered books and texts read, as well as the wider curriculum and the world around them so that children have a wide vocabulary when they enter secondary school and are able to make connections between texts, their lives and the wider world. Children's strong understanding of grammar and transcriptions skills enable them as confident writers.

Implementation:

We understand that children begin their journey as readers, writers and effective communicators in the Early Years and therefore strive to ensure that the children in our Early Years setting are provided with a language rich environment, both indoors and outdoors. We nurture a child's love of learning by expanding on his or her own inquisitive nature. We are responsible for creating an environment that allows children to develop their own ideas, express their feelings, take risks, make choices, and most of all, grow to be strong, thinking individuals. Our reception class is a single year group every year, which ensures we can devote time to each child in a smaller cohort and plan for their own individual steps in learning.

From the very beginning, a rigorous programme of systematic synthetic phonics (Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised) provides children with the tools to decode, before building fluency and the ability to comprehend and question independently. Throughout Early Years and Key Stage 1 (and Key Stage 2 if appropriate), phonics is taught in conjunction with discreet reading sessions and many opportunities for reading and writing.

Mendlesham School values the importance of reading for skill and pleasure. Our dedicated daily reading sessions, Daily Supported Reading and Destination Reader, provide a range of high quality texts. DSR is delivered in small groups, giving children ample time and space for building their skills, as well as for discussion and enjoyment. Informal comprehension begins here and in Little Wandle and then DR builds seamlessly on these skills in a larger group, in which the children are taught the skills of retrieval, asking and answering questions, summarising events, inferring what will happen based on their understanding, predicting events and behaviour, discuss meaning of words and events and making comparisons and links across texts. A real strength of our school is that the groupings and what is delivered in DSR and DR is very adaptable and ever changing, depending on the needs of the children. It is here that our mixed year groups provide an opportunity for children to read at their own level and have challenge, as there are a wide range of levels being provided for. We monitor reading as a staff unit and there is constant dialogue about the provision and next steps for individuals.

Writing at Mendlesham is taught using the Talk for Writing process as a basis. Each teacher then weaves in their own teaching style, provision and ideas, to create an adaptable, comprehensive approach that follows a clear progression of skills and knowledge (available within school). We provide creative stimuli for the children, which encourages them to develop and apply a rich vocabulary and skills. We invite the children to become immersed in a text, to understand and retell it with confidence and embed skills of recall. It is then that we build upon our learning to imitate, innovate and finally produce our own texts independently. This build-up of skills is planned for, according to the needs of the children, acquired by the teacher in a 'cold task' at the beginning of the sequence of learning. The journey is then mapped out in a way that allows each child to build on their vocabulary, practise transcription skills, build on grammar and punctuation knowledge and finally, promoting independence and stamina in writing. The children are then invited to reflect upon their successes by revisiting their 'cold task' and comparing with their final piece or 'hot task'. Show casing our writing gives it a real purpose and children are motivated to write up best pieces to share in class displays, with children in other classes and across the school.

Spelling is taught using Spelling Shed and focuses on orthographic mapping with activities such as syllable mapping, word sorting, unscrambling words and Elkonin Boxes. Children study the form of words through morphology, whilst etymology considers the origins of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history. This enables children to make links in their learning and helps too in the process of decoding unfamiliar words. Alongside this, handwriting is taught progressively utilising Twinkl handwriting.

Because our school demographic does not reflect a wide range of ethnic or cultural backgrounds, it is of vital importance that we ensure that our children are given opportunities to explore books that come from a range of different cultures and literacy heritage. We select high quality texts that promote inclusion and the celebration of difference. Through this, we teach empathy skills that are needed for life in the wider world, as well as an appreciation of themselves and of being unique. Our children are given time to respond to a wide range of texts and visual stimuli, considering how they would feel in a range of different situations and discussing the morals shown through the actions of different characters. This creative and vocabulary rich beginning to each new text/stimuli equips children with a range of ideas and skills that they can apply in extended pieces of writing. This also promotes critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of characters, events, wider themes and authorial intent.

Impact:

We use a variety of strategies to evaluate the knowledge, skills and understanding that our children gain as they progress from Reception to Year 6:

- CPD to ensure that teacher pedagogy and assessment is secure.
- Regular feedback marking and pupil voice feedback.
- Subject monitoring, including book scrutinies and learning walks.
- Regular low stakes knowledge assessments, using a range of creative approaches.
- 'Check ins' during reading sessions where snapshots of pupil's understanding is acquired.

- Cross-trust moderation to ensure secure teacher judgements.
- PIRA and PIXL tests to support our teachers' assessment.
- Half-termly phonics and reading assessments to ensure our children are provided with appropriate challenge and support.
- 3-weekly assessments for children in need of Little Wandle Keep Up or Catch Up

As well as these methods, we see the confidence in our pupils grow, with regard to their use and understanding of a wide vocabulary, their ability to explain themselves with articulacy and clarity and also their ability to reflect upon their learning in both reading and writing. All of these strategies culminate in pupils who are enthusiastic, eager and who enjoy their English curriculum.

Enrichment

English learning is practised and embedded across our curriculum. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills draw upon and enhance knowledge gained in other subjects. Our children build on these skills in each lesson, every day, whilst collaborating and learning from each other to achieve the best possible outcomes. Our school also provides book clubs and reading sessions across the classes, to promote that shared experience of literature. We praise and recognise achievements in English and all curriculum areas, with the use of golden coins and certificates, given specifically for the achievements of the individual.

Beyond the classroom, our children are given every opportunity to participate in a wide range of learning experiences. These include walks around the local area, trips to the local church, museums, the theatre, adventure centres and community projects, which provide children with stimulating real-life experiences to enrich their reading, writing and speaking development. They meet and work with authors, take part in drama workshops, create their own books and celebrate literature on World Book Days. These experiences are celebrated by use of displays in school, entries written about them in newsletters and photographs being shared with stakeholders directly and on the school website.