

READING INTENTION:

We strive to ensure that all children at Elmlea develop a life-long love of reading. Therefore, at the heart of our curriculum are high-quality, engaging books and stimuli to facilitate rich talk and thought. We are committed to providing continual opportunities for children to develop their vocabulary and understanding of a wide range of text types and quality authors. Through this language-rich environment, we encourage children to draw upon their own experiences, to ultimately become confident, reflective and independent readers.

IMPLEMENTATION:

In EYFS/KS1, Phonics and reading is taught daily in order to enable children to develop fluency and understanding. We are currently in the process of transitioning to the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' scheme which will provide our school with a systematic synthetic phonics programme that is progressive and supportive of both word reading and comprehension. Children are taught phonemes (sounds) for graphemes (letters) and how each letter is written. Oracy and phonological awareness, where children begin to blend sounds together and segment sounds in words to spell, starts in the Reception year and builds as the children move through each key stage.

Within each year group, there are specific sounds that are learnt and children are exposed to these new sounds within a range of books where they can consolidate their learning. The books that the children take home to read with parents/carers link to their current reading stage and provide daily challenge and practise. Children also learn to sight read common exception words that they cannot use their sounds to decode and these progress as they move between key stages in the form of spelling lists.

Daily story times, as a whole class or small group, enable children to become immersed in a wide range of literature (such as traditional tales, poems and rhymes). The texts we choose are usually above the children's independent reading capability, in order to expand their vocabulary and facilitate rich talk with peers. Children develop the ability to infer meaning from stories, predict what they think might happen next and ask questions on character and storyline within our supportive learning environment.

By KS2, children continue to develop their reading fluency and comprehension predominately through whole class Guided Reading lessons. Each week a particular text is explored during two guided reading sessions and a comprehension lesson. Teachers select extended texts which are slightly out of independent reach in order to build stamina and provide challenge. Teachers also create opportunities for the children to build links in their learning through text selection. Texts will be selected to link to the children's writing theme and/or the other areas of the curriculum in order to provide an immersive experience of a particular genre or topic. This topic-based approach enables children to draw upon prior learning and their wider knowledge. We encourage children to identify and learn from individual authors' style and to then apply similar writing structures in their own written work.

Whole class reading sessions provide opportunities for reading aloud and quality discussions which help to develop children's understanding of language and expand their vocabulary as well as build upon key reading skills. We promote active reading and text marking during guided reading sessions as a strategy to promote independent reading for meaning. Through this, the children are supported to make sense of new, unfamiliar words and identify the most important bits of the text. Reading skills are taught through the 'reading detectives': Deducer, Retriever, Summariser, Link-Maker, Predictor, Comparison Maker, Word-Finder and Style-Seeker. Each week children focus on specific skills and discuss questions that develop these areas of comprehension.

In addition, each class enjoys a class book every term. This is read several times a week and provides opportunities for reading for pleasure and for the teacher to model how to read aloud with expression.

ENRICHMENT AND SUPPORT:

During their time at Elmlea, our children benefit from a huge range of opportunities that further enrich their experience of our English curriculum.

- We make continual use of our fantastic, well-stocked onsite libraries and in class book corners
- We collaborate with Shakespeare for Schools' to provide in-house workshops where each year group is immersed in a particular play, enjoying drama and performance
- Work with Toby Hulse to hold a 'Shakespeare Festival'
- Productions feature highly at Elmlea! EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 enjoy performing in the Nativity and their class assembly performance once a year linked to their topic area. Each year in KS2 the children take part in an all-singing-all-dancing musical spectacle, a wonderful opportunity to develop their performance and oracy skills through creative storytelling.
- In Reception our role-play areas provide independent reading opportunities linked to our termly topics that are chosen by the children.
- An annual Book Week jam-packed with guest speakers and authors as well as book recommendations, writing and illustration competitions and World Book Day celebrations
- An annual Book Fair in which the children can discover new authors and purchase new books and the school adds a vast quantity of new books to its ever-growing onsite libraries.

- Regular teacher book reviews and suggestions.

Impact

Our children have a positive attitude towards reading and are able to make ambitious and achievable book choices to facilitate reading for pleasure. By the time our children leave Elmlea, they have experienced a broad, diverse range of literature, supplementing their appreciation of the world around them and have embedded the comprehension skills to enable a deep engagement in a text. We trust this provides our children with the greatest opportunity to enjoy a life-long love of reading.

WRITING INTENTION:

At Elmlea, we want all children to be passionate about writing and appreciate the power of their words. Through our culture of reading, we foster a language-rich environment where children are eager to express themselves effectively in both the spoken and written word. Our progressive and creative English curriculum enables children to become skilful and confident writers who are eager to express themselves effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Our largely story-based curriculum ignites our children's creativity and provides the inspiration for a range of written and spoken outcomes over the course of every year. Units always begin with an exciting 'hook' be it a glimpse of the story, a thought-provoking illustration or meaningful experience such as a workshop or trip.

From mark-making at the beginning of their Reception year to writing simple sentences to writing narratives and beyond, children build the skills they need to become successful writers. Alongside our Phonics teaching, children learn to write letters linked to sounds, spell phonetically and confidently whilst writing sentences and develop their own writing style linked to our termly topics. Opportunities for writing across a variety of genres is a key feature of our English curriculum at Elmlea and develops as children progress through key stages.

Following the exciting writing 'hook', children then explore the text genre and work together to identify its features. These features we call 'tools' which form the 'toolkit' of what's needed to write successfully in a particular genre. It allows the teaching of key grammatical skills to be woven purposefully into the curriculum, equipping children with the confidence to write independently and successfully.

A typical writing cycle involves planning, drafting, editing and improving, and publishing or sharing of their work. Teacher feedback forms a significant part of the writing journey and enables children to independently improve and adapt their writing.

Whether it's holding an in-class climate summit, submitting an explanation text to Spin Science magazine, or simply sharing their suspenseful story writing with their buddy in another class, here are some examples of our beautiful, purposeful and successful outcomes:

Each term, children complete a fully independent write, an opportunity to show off what they have learnt over the course of the unit. These outcomes are published into special Writing Progress books which stay with the children over their time at Elmlea. They inform teacher judgements, enabling best support and 'next steps' to move the children's writing forward. Children take huge pleasure in the process and love to see their writing progress.

We promote high standards of presentation and alongside writing lessons, children also have a weekly handwriting lesson to develop a neat and efficient handwriting style.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar:

Spelling is taught through discrete weekly lessons which follow a progressive series of spelling patterns and is assessed through weekly and termly (NFER) spelling tests. Children are provided with personalised weekly spelling lists to ensure that they are consistently challenged and are offered a range of tools and time each day in which to learn and practice their spellings and the meanings of words they have been given. Vocabulary and spelling are a central focus of feedback across the curriculum, and lists of key topic vocabulary are displayed and utilised in all classrooms. Spelling is also celebrated across the school with an annual Spelling Bee, which takes place in class as spelling games and tasks in KS1 and as a Spelling Bee competition in year groups in Key Stage 2. Grammar and punctuation are also taught both through discrete lessons, and as part of students' regular writing lessons. For more information about our spelling programme, and examples of word lists and spelling tools that we use, please have a look at the documents in the links below:

Enrichment and Support:

- Visiting theatres and shows (e.g. Shakespeare)
- Poetry recitals in assemblies
- In Reception our role-play areas provide independent writing opportunities linked to our termly topics that are chosen by the children.

- Productions feature highly at Elmlea! EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 enjoy performing in the Nativity and their class assembly performance once a year linked to their topic area. Each year in KS2 the children take part in an all-singing-all-dancing musical spectacle, a wonderful opportunity to develop their performance and oracy skills through creative storytelling
- Writing opportunities take place where children can write to their buddy classes

Impact

Our approach to writing fosters independent writers who are motivated to express themselves effectively for their given audience. The purposeful process encourages children to continually strive to achieve their best and makes for a real celebration of final outcomes, be them beautiful publications, performances or the simple pleasure of reading aloud their story with a friend.