



English at RNSF

Intent

At RNSF we believe every child should have the chance to be a writer, performer and a reader. We have the 'responsibility to light the spark' and give the children a taste of all the possibilities imaginable through drama, discussion, debate, poetry, performance, exposure to authors and illustrators. By the daily sharing of high-quality literature, we aim to develop readers and writers of the future who have a love for the spoken and written word.

We offer children opportunities which inspire them to read and write and develop their ability to create and innovate as confident imaginative thinkers.

At RNSF teaching and learning takes place within a creative and collaborative approach with shared themes across our two sites. The learning is always shaped by the children's fascinations and kicks off with one of our 'Inspirational Starters', for example, the discovery of a dragon's egg in the school grounds or a Facetime with a frazzled archaeologist in search of the Olympic Rings. Throughout each theme children and adults have many opportunities to explore, discover and create. A final end point for each theme is the creation of our 'Product', for example a performance, a festival, a film or an exhibition to share with parents and our communities. This provides numerous opportunities for the children to read and write.

The curriculum we have developed is based on a two-yearly cycle where each curriculum year is divided into five distinct topics. All topics are linked to a whole school theme creating a focal point for everyone's learning.

Alongside this creative offer we deliver rigorous daily phonics sessions in Reception, Year One and Two which are replaced by spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons as children's skills develop in year two, three and four. We recognise that solid literacy skills, gained early in life, are the key to unlocking knowledge and understanding in all other curriculum subjects as well as enabling children to fully understand and engage in society with confidence as an adult in the future.

Implementation

In our Federation we are powered by stories and creativity! Many of our topics are based around key fiction books or particular authors such as Lauren Child, Roald Dahl, Julia Donaldson. Our teachers really know and love books and writing, and staff share their own love of creative writing and books with children. The Literacy lead has trained with Bath Spa University in leading Creative Writing projects in schools. The whole school has taken part in the Paper Nations project 'The Year of Writing'.

In the Early Years we have adopted 'Helicopter Stories', scribing and telling stories. We have recently introduced 'The Poetry Basket' initiative in Reception and Year 1 enabling the children to develop a bank of poems they can recite by heart.

Recent achievements include developing Creative Writing Club, having poems and stories published and creating our own poetry anthology. Drama plays an important part in the writing process and we believe you need to 'speak it' before you write it. The children often write parts of our theatre shows. We offer distinct drama lessons across the year groups and have developed our 'Drama into Writing' initiative across our topic plans using peer coaching so that all staff 'become the expert'. We regularly work with 'Dramakarma' on projects and after-school clubs. We

are committed to producing a whole school theatre production every three years in a professional venue.

We have a rigorous and well-organised English curriculum that provides inspiring and purposeful opportunities for speaking, reading, comprehension and writing. Woven in with our cross-curricular topic themes. Each year group follows their English 'Progression Map' which details the core books and genre focus for each half-term and the reading and writing objectives being addressed. These maps include detailed information on specific phonics and SPAG to be taught progressively in each half-term.

Phonics and Reading

We currently follow the 2007 Letters and Sounds document for the phonic teaching order. Our early book band reading books follow this sequence. We use the Read Write Inc. grapheme flash cards, formation ditties, sounds mats, and alphabet friezes in classrooms. In the Summer term 2022 we will invest in training and resources in order to implement the 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' phonics scheme in September 2022.

Our teachers and teaching assistants are well-trained in Phonics and staff attend regular training with the Somerset Literacy Network.

Our colour-banded book stock is phonically decodable from pink to gold level and predominately consists of books from the Phonics Bug, Big Cat Phonics and Floppy's Phonics reading schemes. We have a wide range of 'free reader' book titles across both sites which we are in the process of grading into bronze, silver and gold.

Children read regularly either one-to-one with an adult or in small, guided groups. Children are encouraged to re-read their reading book in order to develop fluency and comprehension.

Various incentives are used in each class to encourage children to read at home including 'Read the Rainbow' in year 2 and 100-point charts in Year 4.

Quality books are given a high profile across the school, included in subject displays and corridors. Our libraries are well-stocked and include the latest fiction.

We have invested in multiple copies of certain books and encourage children to tick them off on the '100 Books to Read in Primary School' record sheet. This exposes them to all the best high-quality children's fiction and classic authors.

Year 4 children apply for the role of school librarians and help to manage the running of the library at Rode.

Every year we take year 1 and Year 3 children to the Bath Children's Literature Festival to meet authors. We also have author visits into school.

Vocabulary, Oracy and Comprehension

Great focus is put on encouraging children to read for meaning. Children are given numerous opportunities to discuss texts, use inference and explore characters motives using drama techniques. Comprehension skills are tested in our termly reading tests.

Vocabulary development forms an important part of most lessons, not just in English. Children are encouraged to explore the meaning and etymology of words in all curriculum areas and make links in their learning. Teachers have taken part in 'Vocabulary is Vital' training. Events such as our whole school 'Word Week' provide an opportunity to focus on exploring vocabulary and transferring it into speech and writing.

Across the school we use Voice21 resources to develop speaking and listening games and activities. We are in the process of mapping a progression of oracy skills across the school onto our whole school curriculum plans. 'Talk About It' Week provides opportunities to develop skills of storytelling, expression, debating and arguing, speech and letter writing and performance poetry. Ultimately, our aim is to provide children with the vocal confidence and sophisticated vocabulary to be able to express their ideas and opinions across all curriculum subjects and in their wider life.

Writing and Spelling

Across the school children follow the National Curriculum programme of study for their year group developing writing in a range of styles and genres.

Children learn to spell the common exception words for each year group and then in year 3 begin following the Westover Green Spelling programme. In year 2 and above spellings are sent home to be learnt. We hold a bi-annual sponsored spell-a-thon as the competitive element encourages children to learn the words.

We follow the Penpals handwriting scheme which introduces joined writing in year 2. We use non-cursive script in Reception and Year One focusing on correct letter formation and size.

We follow the school marking policy when marking literacy and from Year 2 and above use green pen for positives and pink 'to think' pen for self-corrections.

How we support all learners

From Reception we identify children falling behind in phonics and implement a 'keep up' not 'catch-up' series of daily interventions.

Every classroom has a collection of sounds mats, alphabet friezes, word walls and word cards or dictionaries to support independent learning.

Our SEND teaching assistants are well-trained and deliver a range of small group and individual interventions including Time to Talk, Talk Boost, Write From The Start, Toe by Toe, ILI and phonics programmes. They also deliver fine motor and sensory skills programmes to aid handwriting.

Across the year we run several parent information sessions including Phonic Workshops for Reception and Year 1 parents and a SATs information for Year 2 parents.

Impact

Our focus on sharing high-quality literature results in a school of children who love reading and books. Children can talk about their favourite books and authors and explain why they like them. Children can talk about poetry and write some themselves. Our reading results are strong across the school and on average 40% of children exceed age-related expectations in year 4.

Children are aware of a range of creative writing techniques and can use them effectively. Our youngest children can confidently re-tell a familiar story or create their own oral story.

Our children are able to speak and perform in front of an audience, growing in confidence as they move through the school. Our year 4 children flourish in our end of year performances.

By year 2 the majority of children are reading with fluency and expression. Children's inference skills and comprehension improve throughout the year and we track this using the NFER termly reading tests.

Children get a solid grounding in phonics in Reception and score well in the Year 1 phonics reading test (86-90%). Children use their phonics to break down new words when reading and segmenting for spelling.

Children in year 2, 3 and 4 are assessed 3 times a year using the NFER spelling, punctuation, and grammar tests.