



## 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, creating honey sandwiches for hungry bears or becoming historians and exploring ancient artefacts and objects. 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, Anthony Brown, C.S. Lewis, Ted Hughes, Roald Dahl and Julia Donaldson. Our teachers really know and love books and writing, and staff share their own love of creative writing and books with children.

We believe that children need opportunities to speak, explore and perform before they write. Our 'Drama into Writing' approach allows children to step into the world of a story or historical event, helping them to understand characters, experiences and emotions while developing the vocabulary they need for their writing. Drama is embedded across our topic plans, with children regularly acting out moments from literature and history and using subject-specific vocabulary as they explore ideas. We also create authentic opportunities for children to see themselves as writers. Through our Literacy, Writing and Poetry Weeks, BBC 500 Words competition, visiting authors and poets, Poetry by Heart and regular opportunities to share writing in assemblies, children are encouraged to develop their ideas, perform, write for real audiences and take pride in their work. This year we are introducing our new WOW Writing Book which will further celebrate and showcase the high-quality writing produced across our schools. We also 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 follow the Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS) phonics scheme, with all staff who deliver phonics attending a full day of training with ULS to ensure the programme is taught consistently and effectively. Our early reading books are matched closely to the ULS phonics progression, using ULS Reading Stars books so that children can practise the sounds and graphemes they have been taught in school. As children progress through the reading programme, our ULS Reading Stars books are carefully matched with our colour-banded Big Cat books. Our colour-banded reading books continue through to Year 4, ensuring that children have frequent opportunities to encounter and develop new vocabulary in an age-appropriate way. Once children become free readers, the books in Year 4 are colour-coded Bronze, Silver and Gold to indicate the different levels of challenge. We are committed to developing confident, fluent readers who can apply their phonics knowledge, build a rich vocabulary and develop a genuine love of reading.

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. We celebrate and encourage reading in a range of ways across our schools. Children are recognised for their reading through reading stickers and certificates, including our Champion Readers certificates celebrating children who have continued to read over the summer. We also encourage children to recommend books they have enjoyed for our weekly 'Pick of the Pages', giving them the opportunity to share their enthusiasm for reading with others.

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, with the school Librarians taking part in an annual visit to an independent book seller in Frome to get new books!

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. The librarians also help with the running of our school book sales! For this to happen, children are encouraged to bring in any books they no longer read. The librarian's price these books up then sell them in one of our book sales across the year. Children love these events, and it ensures that the reading of quality books is fun and accessible for all children

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 NFER reading tests.

Vocabulary development forms an important 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. Events such as our whole school 'Word Week', 'Writing Week' or 'Poetry Week' provide an opportunity to focus on exploring vocabulary and transferring it into speech and writing. They also help to develop skills of storytelling, expression, debating and arguing, speech and letter writing and performance poetry.

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.

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 the spring of year 2 begin following the ULS Spelling Program. In Year 3 and above spellings are sent home to be learnt.

We follow the ULS handwriting scheme which introduces cursive and 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, Spelling Detectives, 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 an information evening 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 35% of children exceed age-related expectations in year 4, and 92% achieving ARE.

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 (96%). Those who do not pass in Year 1 are given additional support to support them with passing the test in Year 2 (100%). Children use their phonics to break down new words when reading and segmenting for spelling.

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