

The English curriculum

The English curriculum at Wyndham is broad, balanced and creative; it does not stop in the classroom or indeed just in English lessons. We want our children to develop into confident, aspiring and determined individuals and we firmly believe that the teaching of English plays a central role in this. Our creative curriculum is rich and English is a strong feature of all lessons in order to develop key skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The importance of English is outlined by the National Curriculum 2014,

“English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.”

English Lessons

Discrete English lessons are taught daily with EGPS (English grammar, punctuation and spelling) being taught in culmination with writing. This allows children to understand the uses, rules and impact associated with EGPS and apply such features in their writing in a purposeful context. Lessons often have a hook for the week which aim to make children excited about their learning and give them a purpose for their learning. For example, this could be through a fictional scenario such as a classroom being broken into or an alien landing in the playground. Lessons allow children to study a range of genres to explore how writing is composed in order to develop their knowledge of text types and authors. An emphasis is also placed on vocabulary and encouraging children to express themselves through the use of a broad range of vocabulary relevant for their age. Children are encouraged to identify any words that they do not know and enhance their vocabulary, both at school and home, by placing them in a word bucket. This is then discussed as a class where dictionaries are used to explore the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Phonics Lessons

Quality phonics teaching is a high priority at Wyndham. Based around the Jason Wade programme, phonics lessons allow children to learn about how letters link to sounds, how to blend sounds to read and how to segment letters to write words and sentences. We are passionate about our children and understand that they are most engaged in their learning during fun and active lessons and so offer well-planned and varied sessions which challenge children to make GREAT progress. Phonics bingo, outdoor grapheme hunts and a range of ICT programmes such as Phonics Bug and Education City are just a few of the innovative ways we use to ensure that children get the most out of their learning. This learning is then applied across the curriculum in order to embed the principles of phonics and to enable children to achieve their full potential. It is taught three times a day to FS and KS1 children for 20 minutes per session in phase groups. This allows teachers ensure children have time to learn, practise and independently apply their phonic skills.

Children are also regularly assessed to ensure they are accessing learning at the correct level using our tracking system. This allows teachers to understand which sounds children require more support in and interventions are swiftly put in place in order to target such areas. Subsequently, children are able to learn, practise and consolidate their phonics knowledge in order for them to become confident readers and spellers during their time at Wyndham. Children are also assessed in year 1 using the 'Phonics Screening Check'. This is carried out nationally and is a short assessment to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. It will identify the children who need extra help so they are given support by us to improve their reading skills. To ensure children pass the 'Screening Check' we hold regular parent meetings to offer parents resources and strategies on how to support their child with phonics.

Spelling Blast

At the beginning of each school day in KS2, children are taught spellings through a 'Spelling Blast'. On a Monday, children use an investigative approach to understand what a selection of words have in common and the rules associated with specific words, for example, prefixes. Throughout the week, such rules are then built upon and children are able to develop their knowledge of spelling rules, patterns and exception words. This is taught through group activities, games and dictionary work. This enables children to spell words they may not necessarily know through their application of rules as opposed to the rote learning of spellings.

Reading

Reading is an essential part of everyday at Wyndham as it enables children to understand and explore the world around them along with communicating with others. All reading experiences are closely linked to the reading strands from the National Curriculum and we have 'Masters Magnifiers' in order for children to understand what strand of reading they are looking at in order to deepen their understanding. These strands are:

- Retrieving and recording information
- Making inferences and justifying with evidence from the text
- Giving the meaning of words in context
- Summarising the main ideas from one or more paragraphs
- Predictions of what might happen
- Explaining how the meaning is enhanced through word choices of authors
- Explaining how the content of texts contributes to the meaning

Reading comprehension

From Years 1 to 6 we use a scheme called 'Cracking Comprehension' once a week to help develop our reading skills across a range of text types and genres. We use the four stages to help us to 'crack' the comprehension questions in order to answer them effectively:

Read it, zap it, scan it, crack it!

The sessions aim to improve our fluency in reading as well as skills across the different strands of reading outlined in the National Curriculum and linked to our Master's Magnifiers.

Guided reading

Guided reading runs across a 2-week period (6 lessons in total) and is based around a different text type. The text type is linked in with the extended writing opportunities for the week to give context to learning and check pupil understanding. It is taught using a range of activities which link in with our mastery principles of 'Explain it', 'Prove it', 'Use it' and 'Convince me' as well as a guided reading session with the teacher. This means that children develop independence through completing the other activities through supporting and discussing their learning with each other as well as increased understanding and fluency as they respond to texts.