



NANSTALLON SCHOOL

AD VITAM PARAMUS

17 October 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

### English Update

As we get stuck into an exciting new school year at Nanstallon, I write to reflect and update you on developments and next steps for our English curriculum.

#### Where are we now?

In July we received our SATS results and were so pleased with the progress that the children made. Our KS2 SATS results showed that 86% of the children met the national standard in reading, which was above national figures. 43% of the children reached greater depth, which was again above national figures.

#### Where next?

##### Writing

We are determined to help the children reach the same standard in writing as in reading by the end of Key Stage 2, so this will be our area of focus this year.

Our English lessons currently follow a personalised cycle. We introduce each new class text with a 'dazzling start' to excite the children about their learning. Children are then immersed into the new text through a range of activities, such as role play, close reading and vocabulary exploration. This leads to the children writing their own versions of the text in small chunks so that they can explore their own ideas and voice. The children have opportunities at the beginning and end of a unit to write independently so that they and their teachers can celebrate how much they have learned and decide on next steps together.

This year, we will continue to adapt and personalise our storytelling approach for the children to help them grow into creative, independent readers and writers. Our next steps for this term are:

- to continue to develop our approaches to teaching vocabulary;
- to roll out editing stations from Y2-Y6 to give children space, time and focus to edit their stories effectively;

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- to adapt our use of success criteria in the children's writing. We will do this by moving away from a restrictive checklist format that is made by the teacher and instead use 'boxed' success criteria. Using this format, the children will decide which features are needed in their writing by linking them explicitly to purpose and audience.

## Phonics and Spelling

Children in Reception and Year 1 are taught to read through Phonics. During daily 30-minute phonic sessions, they build on previous letters and sounds knowledge to practise blending in order to read unfamiliar words. The children have made great progress in this area this term already and have increased the fluency of both their blending and segmenting. They also read their high frequency words within this session and also have to read a sentence using their phonic knowledge before then writing it independently. The children practise reading in an additional daily Guided Reading session where they again develop their phonic knowledge through word games and reading stories based on their current phonic knowledge. They also take part in "book talk" sessions where they focus more in-depth on a story, learning about plot and characters, which helps to develop both their comprehension, vocabulary development and writing ability.

From Y2-Y6, we use 9 strategies to teach spellings and use a range of activities to encourage children to reinforce these. We will continue to focus on a spelling or phonics rule each week in school. In Key Stage 2, enquiry themed tasks related to the new rule will be sent home as part of your child's homework.

In response to feedback from parents, we will no longer send home a personalised list of high frequency words for your children in Year 2 to 6 to practise. These will now be incorporated into our weekly spelling dictation and tested at the end of each term. Instead, please support your child with the weekly or bi-weekly tasks.

## Reading

Our storytelling approach includes many opportunities for children to practice their reading skills, from learning sounds to understanding meaning and comprehension. We will continue to adapt our approaches to teaching reading this year.

Each class promotes a love of reading through a whole class book reading session and well-stocked reading area. In addition to this, each child has a reading buddy who they meet with once a week. They read and discuss books together and occasionally enjoy discovering new words together through vocabulary hunts around the school.

Reading diaries are handed out at the beginning of each term for daily reading to be recorded. Each year group diary is different, so that you, your children and their teachers can focus on the areas of reading they most need support with. As children move into KS2, we encourage them to take on the responsibility of recording their own reading, with you as parents and carers checking and signing it each week. All of the reading diaries have a 'How to' guide at the front if you are unsure how to fill them in.

Finally, following the success of our Y4 storytelling camp night, we will now make this an annual event. We think it is an important experience in many ways, but particularly for promoting a love of stories.

I am really looking forward to the year ahead and have lots of ideas for supporting and inspiring the children as they become confident readers and writers. If you have any questions regarding English, please don't hesitate to get into contact.

Yours faithfully,

*Miss Evans*

English Leader