



## English and Literacy

### A guide for parents and carers

This leaflet gives information about the way in which English and Literacy are taught at Rowdeford School.

In all of our lessons we aim to provide enrichment, creativity and enjoyment for all pupils through a varied curriculum and range of experiences, with high expectations for all.

Our curriculum encompasses all the statutory elements of the 2014 National Curriculum for England. We have also included many of the non-statutory elements that benefit our pupils and have further adapted the curriculum, as recommended, to match the needs and interests of our pupils.

Currently, each key stage 3 class has 5 English lessons every week, and each key stage 4 class has 4 English lessons every week. Most lessons are one hour long, and teachers use these lessons to cover aspects of literacy as well as exploring different genres of literature and to develop writing skills.

#### **Literacy lessons.**

The aim of these lessons is to develop the speaking and listening, reading and writing skills of the children. It may involve work on

- Spelling - particularly finding ways to remember "tricky" words.
- Reading – usually from a school reading book, but for more able readers, from a book of their choice which may be one brought in from home. All reading is recorded in our Rowdeford Reading Record book.
- Handwriting

#### **Other Tutor Time**

Tutors also use the time before daily registration and Class Assemblies to work on reading and speaking and listening skills with the members of their class. Sometimes, a Literacy Volunteer, an adult who comes to school for a couple of hours to work with a teacher or teachers, will support the development of reading by working with individual children. All these adults work to the direction of the tutor, within the classroom. Literacy Volunteers have undergone DBS screening and an induction process.

*If you, a friend or relation have two or three hours to spare on a regular basis and would be interested in becoming a Literacy Volunteer here, please contact the school office.*

#### **Spelling**

Spelling homework may be set in the Pupil Diary. The words may relate to topics, our values, special interests or be tricky words. Please encourage your child to practice these each evening, and to write a sentence using some of the words.

#### **Reading**

Most children will be reading a book provided by the school which suits their reading stage and interests. Some children may prefer to bring in a suitable book from home. Your child should be taking their reading book home every day – and bringing it back to school every day! All support they get from you at home to reinforce their reading is valuable. Please use the Reading Record Book to note down any reading done at home.

We hold a Book Fair in November/December and May. Alongside these, we often run special reading challenges, with prizes of free or reduced price books.

Adults at school will aim to read with each child at least twice a week and check the Reading Record book. Please rest assured that when this is not possible, reading within English lessons still takes place, perhaps by children reading information on worksheets, by working on group reading books or reading from set texts.

## **English lessons**

The aim of these lessons is to build on existing skills, and at Key Stage 4 to prepare students to sit Functional Skills papers in English at Entry Level.

Functional Skills are qualifications in English, maths and ICT that equip learners with the practical skills needed to live, learn and work successfully. This means that students learn how to fill in simple application forms, read instructions and timetables, use a dictionary and write invitations and requests.

Functional Skills English is made up of three parts

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing

Testing is done as and when the teacher feels the student is ready for the tests. The tests may be taken in the ordinary classroom in normal lesson time, or in the more formal setting of the Arts Centre. In order to gain a full certificate, students must pass all three parts of the test suite. Recognition is given for each part of the test that is passed.

English lessons also provide the opportunity for students to read a wide range of quality literature. This includes the study of some of the plays of Shakespeare, classic and modern fiction and poetry. Lessons may focus on developing grammar, composition and editing skills, and in responding to literature.

Progress in English is carefully monitored and additional support and intervention is provided when necessary. You are kept informed through the Annual Review process and at Tutor and Subject Evenings (usually in October and January).

If you have any concerns about your child's progress in any aspect of English, please contact the school office.

Please refer to the Curriculum pages on our website for details of the topics/themes followed by each year group each term.

## **Drama**

Drama is taught within English at key stage 3, and as a separate optional subject at key stage 4.

## **Reading Tests**

*In July 2017 we started to use the YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) as our test to show progress in reading accuracy and comprehension as reported at Annual Review meetings. We have found this test to be more challenging for our students than the previous tests we used (which have now been discontinued) and the results appear to show that many children fell back in their reading progress or made very little progress over the past year. We feel that this is largely due to the nature of the new test, which is much longer, has no picture clues and has a mixture of fiction and non-fiction passages.*