



English Policy

September 2023

Review Date: September 2025

The Aims of the English Policy

Using the Programmes of Study from the National Curriculum and Development Matters, it is our aim to ensure that pupils reach their full potential in all aspects of English by the time they leave Year 6. This will enable them to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, for varied contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion to learn and clearly explain their understanding and ideas
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making informal and formal presentations and participate in debate.

SCHOOL POLICY AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding:

In the early years the curriculum is guided by Development Matters. At KS1 and KS2, the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are used to ensure progression in the teaching of all aspects of English. We set work that is challenging and motivating and encourages the pupils to talk about what they are reading and their writing.

Breadth of Study:

Through careful planning and preparation, we aim to ensure that children learn in ways which maximise their chances of success and which give them opportunities to experience:

- quality daily phonics sessions in EYFS and KS1
- a range of quality reading texts, covering a range of genres
- individual, group and whole class reading opportunities
- a wide range of writing opportunities in English and across the curriculum
- appropriate levels of challenge which allow individuals to aspire to higher levels of attainment
- discussion, debate and presentations to practise and develop good oral skills
- and the benefits of commitment, perseverance and cooperation.

Literacy across the curriculum

Throughout the whole curriculum, there are varied opportunities to extend and promote Reading, Writing and Oracy. Teachers seek to take advantage of all opportunities so that children experience reading, writing and discussion about a range of topics and purposes.

Reading

Our aim is for children to become confident and independent readers who gain pleasure and insight from reading. Competence enables enjoyment and appreciation of literature and access to a world of information. Reading experiences at school include:

- daily phonics sessions for children in EYFS and KS1
- catch up phonics sessions for children in KS2 (where needed)
- Whole class reading, focusing on VIPERS (KS1)
- whole class reading (upper KS1 and KS2)
- shared reading
- 1:1 reading
- independent reading (including sustained silent reading)
- comprehension sessions
- class stories

Phonics

Phonics is taught daily in EYFS and KS1. To ensure quality teaching, good progress and consistency, we follow Read Write Inc, which allows children to be taught in small groups and at their own pace. (See separate **Phonics Policy**.)

Whole Class Reading

Whole class reading sessions are taught from years 1-6. From year 1, children are introduced to whole class reading sessions. In year one, these sessions are taught orally. Children will be exposed to a short text extract over the week, where they will have the opportunity to practise reading fluency and develop reading skills linked to VIPERS (vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, sequencing/ summarising).

Once children are ready in Year 2, whole class reading sessions continue, where a written task is introduced. Each teacher is responsible for planning these sessions in their class in consultation with, and with guidance from, the lead practitioner for English. These take place daily with children reading the same text. Each 30 minute session is carefully planned, so that children have experience of analysing a range of texts, from a range of genres.

Sessions start with a short fluency activity, involving everyone reading aloud together, to encourage expression, which in turn aids comprehension. Research shows that good fluency helps to bridge the gap between children being able to de-code (read) words and having a secure understanding of what they read. Whole Class Reading sessions focus on the teaching of new vocabulary, followed by a reading objective taken from the year group's objectives in the National Curriculum, to ensure thorough coverage of these vital skills, which are explicitly taught. Objectives taught are often linked to a VIPERS skill (vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, sequencing/ summarising). Sessions are

completed with a plenary, where children share their reading activity responses and justifications for their opinions. Children's responses are recorded in their reading response books. Reading targets are regularly updated by teachers, highlighting any gaps that need to be addressed.

Shared Reading

Shared reading opportunities happen in all subjects across the curriculum, as well as in English lessons, often with more precise discussion of meaning, synonyms and links to previous learning. Enjoyment of the text, language, unfamiliar words and key vocabulary are discussed as well as the effect on the reader.

Independent Reading (including SSR)

Independent reading incorporates sustained silent reading (SSR), which provides children with the opportunity to enjoy books and practise their reading skills at their own pace, whilst developing reading stamina. This is an invaluable opportunity for early readers to practise new phonics knowledge and begin their journey into a world of books. It also allows children to exercise more choice over what they read, and further develop a love for reading. All children are expected to read at home regularly with an adult, who fills in their child's individual reading record, in addition to being heard read regularly in school.

Comprehension

Comprehension skills are explicitly taught in a weekly lesson, and children have many opportunities to practise and develop these skills across the curriculum. The teaching of comprehension skills begins in Early Years, with children discussing stories they have had read to them. The texts and questions become more challenging as children move through the key stages, using the objectives from the National Curriculum.

Class Story

Hearing stories being read fluently and with good expression is vital if children are to develop a love of books and language, extend their vocabulary and improve their own reading and comprehension skills. Teachers read aloud to their class daily, modelling fluency and key reading skills.

Writing

Our aim is for all children to communicate clearly and meaningfully when writing in English lessons and across the curriculum, for a variety of audiences and purposes. Our aim is for all children to become confident, independent writers who are able to express themselves creatively and communicate clearly. Oral skills are also fundamental. The teaching of writing involves the processes outlined below.

Talk For Writing

Our writing strategy is underpinned by Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing approach. This helps children hear and say grammatically correct sentences, with increasing sophistication as

they progress through the school. Talk for Writing is an approach to teaching writing that encompasses a three-stage pedagogy: 'imitation' (where pupils learn and internalise texts, to identify transferrable ideas and structures), 'innovation' (where pupils use these ideas and structures to co-construct new versions with their teachers), and 'independent application' (where teachers help pupils to create original texts independently). These tasks aim to improve writing ability by giving pupils an understanding of the structure and elements of written language.

Modelled and Shared Writing

Modelled and shared writing lies at the heart of teaching writing and is a fundamental part of our writing approach. This is the term for writing with and in front of the children as a precursor to the class writing more independently. It is the key moment at which writing is taught.

The teacher uses the assessment of children's writing to decide on the key teaching points that need to be focused upon during modelled and shared writing. At this stage, the children would have co-constructed their writing toolkit (success criteria) and these skills will be modelled during this process. These may be aspects of composition (e.g. using a short sentence for impact), transcription (e.g. using specific punctuation), or a more general aspect of writing behaviour (e.g. using a plan to develop plot).

Guided Writing

Guided writing takes place within the independent section of the lesson. It is a short session, focusing on a specific group of children, dedicated to developing specific writing skills in order to correct common errors/ misconceptions and to move children forward.

Independent writing

Independent writing provides children with time and opportunity to practise, develop and consolidate the skills they have learnt. Teachers ensure children have opportunities to complete longer pieces of work, focusing on both fiction and non-fiction. Writing Targets are included in the children's English writing books, taken from the National Curriculum for their year group, and are regularly updated by teachers.

Spelling and Grammar

Spelling is taught from EYFS to Year 6. Children initially learn spellings linked to their phonics lessons (within the lesson), before being introduced to the Spelling Shed scheme. Using the Spelling Shed programme, weekly spellings are set linked to the children's year group. Weekly spelling lessons are delivered, focusing on the spelling rule of the words set for the week. Children have the opportunity to practise their spellings, both in school and at home using the Spelling Shed website. A weekly spelling test takes place, using a dictation activity.

Grammar is taught as part of the daily writing lesson. Children are set a 'grammar starter activity' recapping previously learnt skills and/ or teaching relevant grammar skills that will be needed for the upcoming lesson. In addition to this, children receive a weekly grammar lesson, linking closely to the LTP and grammar progression document. This will often link to the focus of the upcoming writing lesson.

Handwriting

Handwriting is modelled from EYFS. In EYFS, handwriting focuses on correct letter formation, moving into a cursive style when children are ready at the end of year 1. Children are taught using the interactive Letter-join programme. Handwriting should be taught daily, in a short session and the expectation is that children leave KS1 able to use neatly joined handwriting, with neat presentation. Practise and polishing of this important skill continues throughout KS2. Teachers are expected to use the same handwriting style at all times.

Scaffolding and differentiation

The needs of individuals and groups (including children with SEND) should be carefully considered in all Reading and Writing lessons.

Planning will indicate the main activity based on age related expectations from the National Curriculum objectives and differentiation/ scaffolding will be shown accordingly. Lessons will be pitched towards age related expectations and differentiation will be provided for other children on a 'top down' basis to ensure that they also achieve the objective. This may be done by:

- Seating: although children will be seated in broadly mixed ability groups to foster discussion and sharing of ideas, there may be some children who are specifically grouped together. This may be done in order to best meet their needs through teacher or other adult support or a different task which covers the same learning objective.
- Resourcing: carefully selected resources (such as word cards/word banks, writing templates, visual coding etc) can be used to help scaffold and support writing for children needing extra help to reach their potential.
- Challenge activities: a challenge activity will be planned for every day and displayed during each lesson. Challenges are usually open-ended and extend the lesson's objectives. They generally encourage any child who has met the main objectives, to show increased sophistication in their writing or reading responses. At times, a challenge may be differentiated for groups of children.

Teachers have regular opportunities to work with the SENCO to discuss children's individual needs and plan accordingly.

Marking and Feedback

(See Marking and Feedback Policy)

Assessment and Record Keeping

Teachers are expected to make regular assessments of each child's progress in Reading and Writing and to record these systematically:

Reading:

Reading Targets are in every Reading Response book and are regularly updated to highlight progress and gaps. Reading Targets are used from Year 1 upwards, following the objectives for each year group in the National Curriculum.

Writing:

Writing Targets are in all English Books, from Year 1 upwards, which are regularly updated. Written work in other subjects is also used to inform assessment judgements, especially to check children working towards or at Greater Depth. Work in other subjects provides good evidence that children can apply their writing skills to a range of contexts. Moderation across the trust takes place at least termly to support teachers in assessing accurately.

Age related expectations:

The work set, combined with a scrutiny of children's recorded work, helps to review how well children achieved the objectives taught and identifies any remaining misconceptions. A record of each child's attainment against age related key objectives is recorded on target sheets in the front of children's books. Objectives are assessed (within the context of daily lessons) as:

- 'Working Towards' – the child needed additional support during the lesson and should be considered for attendance in an intervention group.
- 'Mostly Achieved' – the child showed understanding of the main concepts of the lesson but required some level of prompting or support in order to meet the objective.
- 'Achieved' - the child demonstrated the necessary skills and understanding of key concepts *independently*.
- 'Greater Depth' – the child demonstrated the necessary skills and understanding of key concepts *independently and* was able to show increased depth of knowledge by competently completing the 'challenge' with a secure level of independence (evidenced in books).

Children with SEND (who attend regular interventions) should also be assessed using target sheets but may need to use targets relating to a different year group.

Formal Assessment:

During the school year, children are formally assessed as part of the School's Assessment Procedures. Children complete termly PIRA Reading papers and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling papers, which result in standardised scores. GAP Analysis is undertaken for the grammar and punctuation test, to assist teachers with finding the gaps in their knowledge, allowing them to alter their planning accordingly. Writing is assessed continually against the year group objectives the child is working towards. Moderation across the trust takes place at least termly to support teachers in assessing accurately.

EYFS complete a baseline assessment to indicate attainment on entry. This is also repeated on a termly basis to assess progress.

Half termly phonics assessments are carried out by the phonics lead to ensure consistency. This will determine ability grouping, and allow phonics leads to recognise those not making expected progress, and put into place provisions for those children.

Reporting to Parents

Reports are completed mid - year, and also in more depth before the end of the summer term. Parents are also given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at parents' evenings.

Teachers use the information gathered from their assessments to help them comment on individual children's progress.

Parents may also make appointments to speak to teachers at any time during the school year in order to discuss the child's progress.

Staffing and Resources

Development of Staff:

Opportunities for teachers to review the scheme, policy and published materials are given during staff meetings and INSET sessions. English leads may receive further CPD, which will then be cascaded amongst staff within their own schools during in school INSET training. These sessions will also be used in order to inform staff of any key developments within the curriculum and to provide training opportunities for teachers to discuss and improve their practice. Additional training sessions for individuals may also be organised by other outside agencies. Staff should receive opportunities to observe practice in other classes. These may take the form of peer-to-peer observations, team teaching or model lessons run by the lead practitioner for English.

Homework

It is school policy to provide parents and carers with opportunities to work with their children at home. These activities may only be short, but are valuable in promoting children's learning in Reading and Writing. Every child is expected to read to an adult at home daily - a wonderful shared activity which has a huge impact on a child's reading skills and general education. Spellings are also set for years 1-6 using 'Spelling Shed' online, this can be printed to enable access for all children. See individual schools' 'Homework Policy' for further guidance. Reading is the key to educational success. Books should be sent home that link to the child's ability and for KS1, the phonics sounds that they have learnt that week. In addition, a reading for pleasure book that is chosen by the child should be sent home each week.