



Bolton Primary School

English Policy



English Policy

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. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are disadvantaged.

Aims

The overarching aim for English within school is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately, and coherently, adapting their language and style, in and for, a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion to learn; they should be able to elaborate and clearly explain their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others, and participating in debate.

The teaching of reading and writing takes place over approximately seven structured hours in each Key Stage each week.

Spoken language - We understand the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. We ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils develop a capacity to explain their understanding of texts and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils are also taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama and through performances with audiences. Pupils adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama or recite performance

poems for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama, theatre and poetry performances.

Reading - The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- **word reading**
- **comprehension** (both listening and reading).

We understand the importance of reading fluency and taking meaning from texts. Reading is the key to opening up the whole curriculum to a child and is prioritised. We focus on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words, thus phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. **Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.** As part of this, we use a whole class text to draw in all readers and ensure high-quality literature to all, irrespective of ability. Children have access to copies of the class texts.

In Class 1, the children follow The Little Wandle accredited reading scheme (September 2022) and are given an ebook that matches their phonic learning and development that they can read with around 95% accuracy. They also have a 'practice reading book' that is also well matched and a 'choice book' when they first begin school, and this continues until the end of Y1. As they move into Y2 and beyond, class 2 (Y3/4) and class 3 (Y5/6), they are given a banded reading book (hatcher) that is in line with their reading ability. Staff assess children termly using running records to check that children are reading books at the correct level. Older children are also encouraged to have a choice book that they can read with an adult at home.

The banded books ensure that children have the right level of challenge and can enjoy success decoding and comprehending a text. When children reach a certain level, they can select books from home, if they choose, provided that this is checked by school staff; we encourage children to read a variety of genres, non-fiction and poetry. Children are given guidance on choosing books and their reading is monitored throughout school. We have access to the schools' library service and these books are replenished on a termly basis.

Teachers/ adults regularly listen to children read and share books with them in school. Each child in school is given a reading log and the expectation is that parents/carers assist with carrying out and recording home reading. As reading competency develops, this shifts to older pupils recording and making comments about their own reading, texts and authors. They are given guidance on this in school. Reading a minimum of three times per week is a compulsory part of the homework in varying amounts of time depending on the age and ability of the student. The school encourages children to 'Strive for Five' reads per week and this is celebrated in our celebration assembly on Fridays.

Reading in school may be either independent, with a peer, with an adult or may be whole class or in smaller guided reading groups. Texts are selected for their quality and themes and/or links to other curricular areas or topics. A range of texts are regularly shared with children and children are given guidance on selecting texts.

Writing - The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- **transcription** (spelling and handwriting)
- **composition** (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

We understand the importance of writing in our society and the need to develop the literary skills of our pupils. Writing equips us with communication and thinking skills. We will develop pupils' competence in the two dimensions: transcription and composition. In addition, pupils will be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Writing down ideas fluently, depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating, and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. Where possible, writing links are made to the reading and analysis of modelled texts and there is a strong link between reading and writing in English. The children regularly experience structured scaffolded sessions to improve their writing skills, use a drafting/editing code, and are encouraged to complete 'sentence up-levelling' activities with purple improving pens. The children also have 'Class Non-negotiables' for writing in English and across the curriculum. These are displayed in each classroom. Time is allowed within each session to check whether they have met 'The Non-negotiables' and to edit and set targets for the next session.

GAPS – At Bolton, children have a discreet GAPS lesson (grammar, punctuation and spelling) each week. We also embed the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling into all literacy sessions. Strategies such as 'Kung-Fu punctuation' are sometimes used to reinforce learning. We follow the National Curriculum for the content and coverage.

Spelling and Handwriting – Both spelling and handwriting matter to us at Bolton School. We use the Penpals Handwriting Scheme; children have regular handwriting lessons from Reception upwards. It is expected that by the time the children reach Y5 or 6, they are developing their own fluent and legible handwriting style. Y5/6 children are encouraged to write in pen. There is an expectation in Y3 that all children 'attempt' to join in all their writing which complements their handwriting sessions, and this is a 'non-negotiable,' along with expectations for underlining and setting out work. Children that have handwriting difficulties are given additional sessions and tasks in a small group or individually.

Our spelling focus is mainly from or based on the English National Curriculum Appendices and we also use 'The Spelling Book' by Jane Considine from Y2 onwards. Children have weekly discreet spelling activities that are based on patterns, root meanings, sounds and adding prefixes and suffixes. There is an expectation that children spell 'given' words accurately (words that are available on sheets/ resources or on the board) and this is a 'non-negotiable' along with accuracy with their non-negotiable half-termly spelling lists that are a mixture of high frequency, common errors and key Y3/4 and Y5/6 words further up the school. We also ask that sometimes children complete spelling homework activities to reinforce spelling accuracy.

Teaching English to children with SEND:

At our school we teach English to all children and we keep them with their year groups irrespective of ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against age related expectations.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style,

adaptation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the needs of the child.

Some children will have a Support Plan with English related targets. The plan may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to reading, writing or GAPS. These children may also have a timetabled 1 – 1 with an adult weekly or in a small group. Support Plans are set and reviewed termly and involve the pupil and parents.

Weekly Clinic or Support Sessions are offered to children in all three classes – children can ask for time with an adult to help with current learning and understanding or homework challenges. All children progress through the phonic stages at the same time; pupils experiencing difficulties are given one to one intervention. The Little Wandle programme includes keep up and catch up sessions which many children benefit from.

Disadvantaged - The school is committed to raising achievement for disadvantaged young people. Teachers and teaching assistants will ensure an equitable approach and give more support, guidance and challenge to our disadvantaged in all our lessons.

FEEDBACK AND SHARING:

- Pupils are informed of their individual progress through constructive discussion, target setting and the effective marking/ assessing of work.
- Feedback is also given on longer written pieces relating to learning objectives and to individual targets. They make clear the next steps for improving further – see Assessment, Marking and Reporting policy.
- Paired peer assessment is introduced in KS2; all children are encouraged to thoughtfully self-assess against the learning objectives.
- The school celebrates and promotes high quality hand-written and word-processed work on displays.
- The school provides opportunities for all pupils to read or deliver spoken presentations to the class or whole school.
- At least twice each year, the school organises performance of improvised and scripted dramatic productions.

ASSESSMENT: Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils in English. It involves identifying each child's progress in each aspect of the subject, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning. Formative assessment is carried out formally and informally by teachers during their teaching and, in accordance with the Assessment, Marking & Reporting policy. This could include:

- Hearing children in a one to one or small group context to assess their book bands (running records).
- Group discussions around texts and themes.
- Tests (SATS and sample SATS, NTS reading, GAPS, Phonics Screening) to provide a standardised score.
- The Writing Challenge – a cold write on a theme termly to use for analysis.
- One piece of independent writing relating to a unit of work assessed in detail at least termly.
- Individual discussions with the teacher in which children are encouraged to appraise their work and progress and setting new targets/ next steps.
- Regular 'Assessment for learning' – children self-evaluate/ peer evaluations.
- Regular Little Wandles Assessment and follow-up actions.

RESOURCES: Together the staff take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources and are constantly keeping up to date with developments in Literacy.

Review – This policy was reviewed in Summer 2025 by the staff and governors. It will be reviewed again in Summer 2027

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