

Castle Primary School

English Policy

Review Date: Feb 2026

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure relevance, effectiveness and practicality. If at any time circumstances or situations should change in this subject area, the policy will be reviewed earlier than stated above.

Overview

English is a core subject of the 2014 National Curriculum. The fundamental skills, knowledge and concepts are set out and categorised into three main areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription, Composition and Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Daily English lessons, alongside a wealth of opportunity for pupils to practise and extend their English skills within other curriculum areas, provides the children with the tools they need to achieve in all areas of the subject.

Curriculum Intent

English is a fundamental and extremely creative part of the whole school curriculum at Castle, which develops pupils' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings in an inspiring and purposeful way.

Our pupils are taught in a safe, secure and stimulating environment enabling them all to achieve their potential in the areas of English regardless of their ability, gender or ethnic background.

Our pupils will:

- Read, write and speak competently.
- Express themselves through speech and writing.
- Foster a love of reading.
- Independently apply their skills throughout the curriculum and in real life.
- Have experienced a wide range of stimulating, memorable opportunities.

Curriculum Implementation

Our English curriculum is achievable for all.

Pupils in EYFS and KS1 are taught in small cohort groups and KS2 as mixed-age classes together on the same lesson content at the same time. This ensures that all children can master concepts before moving to the next part of the curriculum sequence, allowing no pupil to fall behind. If a pupil struggles to grasp a concept, this is identified quickly and early intervention ensures the pupil is ready to move forward with the whole class in the next lesson. Although the teaching of the concepts is the same for all, the outcomes in terms of application and scaffold may be different.

Quality first teaching along with setting high expectations for all pupils is found in every classroom. Scaffolding / resources of support are purposeful, enabling the pupils to develop secure levels of independence within the lesson.

Spoken Language:

At Castle, we ensure that the skills below are an integral part of all subjects throughout our curriculum.

Listening Skills

Following Instructions

Asking & Answering Questions

Drama, Performance & Confidence

Vocabulary Building & Standard English

Speaking For a Range of Purposes

Participating in Discussion.

Word Reading & Comprehension:

Our reading curriculum encompasses whole class reading, shared reading, modelled reading, guided or group reading and independent reading. At the heart of all these is the promotion of *Reading for Pleasure*.

Our extended reading curriculum also includes:

- Weekly Paired-Reading sessions where pupils from KS2 classes partner a child from KS1 and share books together.
- Choosing a wider variety of books from the school library to share with others at home.
- Volunteers in school who read with the children on a regular basis.
- UKS2 pupils are given the opportunity to become library monitors to assist in the organising and fostering a love and respect for books.
- Whole-school reading activities around *World Book Day* (March) and other events / activities to encourage *Reading for Pleasure*.

At Castle, we focus on the mechanics of reading initially:

Phonics & Decoding: taught through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* programme, beginning in EYFS and throughout Year 1. For those children who are falling behind their peers in Year 2 and beyond, we use *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Rapid Catch-Up* programme.

Prosody: an integral part of the reading process. Children develop reading with appropriate meaning, stress and intonation. It provides an opportunity to explore characters' feelings, what words mean and how punctuation adds to the meaning.

Fluency: developed and refined before moving onto comprehension-based reading. We continue with the 3-weekly read model that the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* programme uses within LKS2 where appropriate, to increase fluency and confidence.

Comprehension skills are taught and practised within the *Little Wandle Reading* programme, however the following skills provide the main focus of the reading curriculum within key stage 2.

We use the acronym VIPERS as an aid to teacher planning and pupil recall of the reading domains as part of the national curriculum. They are the key areas which we feel children need to know and understand in order to improve their comprehension of texts.

Vocabulary (V): enabling children to identify and explain the meaning of words in context. Supporting them in expanding their vocabulary and creativity skills in readiness for writing.

Inference (I) and Prediction (P): enabling children to read for clues / find evidence within a text and apply their own knowledge of the world and other books they have read.

Explain (E): enabling children to understand why and how authors make particular choices with language and structure of texts. They then explore the effect these choices have on them as a reader.

Retrieve (R): enabling children to locate key details from fiction and non-fiction texts. Encouraging the use of skimming and scanning a text at speed.

Sequence / Summarise (S): enabling children to fully understand a text by ordering events or main points. Putting longer sections of text into their own words in order to shorten or simplify them.

Writing: Transcription, Composition & Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Writing genres are taught through the use of text-based units of work based around Topic or Science subject areas where appropriate.

Film-based units are used to vary the text type and to 'hook' children in with a new genre or topic. We use Literacy Shed Plus as a basis for these units of work.

At Castle we focus on the following skills to encourage our children to express themselves creatively:

Spelling & Phonics: taught alongside reading. EYFS and Year 1 follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* programme. Year 2 – 6 use the *Spelling Shed* scheme of work alongside the *Rapid Catch-Up* programme within Little Wandle where required.

Handwriting: taught discreetly and within spelling sessions. Guidance of the letter formation within *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* is followed within EYFS and Year 1. Cursive writing is taught from the Spring term in Year 2 and throughout KS2 following the Spectrum programme from Level 3 onwards. Once a fluent, legible style of handwriting is consistently used children in KS2 can gain a 'pen licence'.

Planning, Writing & Editing: enabling children to understand the whole writing process. Children are made aware of their own mistakes and taught to proofread; the concept of correcting and improving their own work is modelled as a positive stage of writing.

Awareness of Audience, Purpose & Structure: taught through the use of language and text structure, children's experience of writing is put into a context. Real-life experiences are used where appropriate.

Sentence Structure & Tense: taught within SPaG sessions. Developing the use of Standard English within pupils' writing and learning how that differs from spoken language.

Use of Phrases & Clauses: taught within SPaG sessions. Extending sentences, experimenting with syntax and widening vocabulary choices, enabling children to become creative writers.

Punctuation: taught within SPaG sessions, enabling children to understand and follow rules of demarcating sentences correctly

Terminology / Vocabulary: highlighted and shared with pupils from the start of the sequence of lessons, encouraging pupils to use the correct terminology when discussing concepts. Displayed in all classrooms (and books, where appropriate)

Assessment of English

Our assessment of pupils' progress informs future planning, teaching activities, pupil groupings and reporting.

Our Assessment for Learning procedures include:

- Informal notes on teaching plans
- Comments on guided reading or individual reading record sheets
- Peer and self-assessment activities
- Marking of children's books
- Whole-school CPS marking procedure (see Marking Policy).

More formal / summative assessment tasks are used at the end of each term to monitor progress in Reading, Writing and GPS. All formal assessments from the summer term are passed to the receiving teacher at the end of the academic year.

Our Formal / Summative Assessment Tasks are:

- *Little Wandle Letters & Sounds* half-termly assessments (All Reception & Year 1).
- *Little Wandle Letters & Sounds Rapid Catch-Up* assessments (relevant pupils every 4 weeks).
- Reception Base-Line Assessments (Autumn Term)
- YARC materials used on a one-to-one basis at the beginning and end of each academic year to monitor children’s progress against standardised scores in reading.
- NTS reading assessment tests are used for Y1- 6 at the end of each term (Reception included in the Summer Term). This highlights any gaps the child might have; gives a reading age; and a standardised score.
- Rising Star GPS Tests are used for Y1 – Y6 at the end of each term. This highlights any gaps the child might have; gives a grammar age; and a standardised score.
- Pupils’ progress in writing is assessed regularly through independent writing tasks against the appropriate learning objectives as detailed in the 2014 National Curriculum. Half-termly assessment pieces are displayed in separate ‘writing anthologies’ and moderated at staff meetings. Success criteria are marked against the yearly objectives for WTS, EXS and GDS, to enable gaps in learning and misconceptions to be identified.

National Statutory Assessment:

- Y6 and Y2 undertake the Reading and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling Tests (May)
- Statutory assessment of writing occurs through the writing and spelling elements of the SATs at the end of each Key Stage using the Teacher Assessment Frameworks. The Pre-Key Stage Teacher Assessment Frameworks may need to be used for those children who have not met the ‘*Working Towards*’ statements.
- Y 1 pupils (and Y2 who did not achieve the year before) undertake the statutory Phonics Screening Test (June).

Termly data analysis of pupil progress highlights children who are either performing below or above the expected standard. This information is shared at whole-staff meetings.

Pupil progress is entered on the school tracking system on a half-termly basis for Reading, GPS and Writing. Colours and numbers correspond to the child’s standardised score or teacher assessment outcome.

They are as follows:

Standardised Score	Castle Tracking / Colour	Curriculum Outcome
< 80	1	SEND
80 - 99	2	Working Towards (WTS)
100 - 109	3	Expected Standard (EXS)
110 +	4	Greater Depth of Understanding (GDS)

Curriculum Impact

When our pupils leave each key stage, they will be fully-equipped with the knowledge, skills and vocabulary necessary to progress to the next stage of their learning.

Because of high-quality teaching, pupils will make sustained progress in English and develop the competence to speak, read and write confidently and efficiently.

Their memorable experiences here at Castle will enable them to become lifelong learners that enjoy their education and who can work through challenges.

Monitoring Impact

The Head Teacher, English Subject Leader and Governing Body manage a programme of monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning at Castle School. They use a range of strategies to assess the quality of achievements:

- Monitoring of planning and / or children's books
- Lesson observations
- Learning Walks
- Pupil Voice
- Analysis of SAT results
- Monitoring of standards in writing and subsequent setting of targets

Class teachers have a key role in the monitoring and evaluation of their work and that of the children in their class. The Headteacher works with the governing body to inform them about the work carried out within the school.