



English Policy

September 2025

Review Date: September 2027

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 (reading, writing, speaking and listening) 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 and Foundation Stage, 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 provide tasks that are both challenging and motivating, fostering engagement in discussion about what they are reading and 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 oracy skills
- the benefits of commitment, perseverance and cooperation.

Literacy across the curriculum

Across the curriculum, pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to extend and promote Reading, Writing and Oracy skills. Teachers take every opportunity to help children to explore texts on different themes and purposes, making learning meaningful and enjoyable.

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 the synthetic phonics Programme Read Write Inc, which allows children to be taught in small groups and at their own pace. (For further information, see separate **Phonics Policy**.)

Whole Class Reading

Whole Class Reading sessions are delivered daily from Year 1 through to Year 6. These sessions are carefully planned to develop pupils' fluency, comprehension, and a love of reading, using the VIPERS framework (Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, and Sequencing/Summarising).

In **Year 1**, children are introduced to Whole Class Reading through oral sessions. Over the course of a week, they explore a short text extract, focusing on reading fluency and early comprehension skills. These sessions are entirely discussion-based, allowing children to develop confidence and understanding through guided talk.

From **Year 2 onwards**, written tasks are introduced alongside oral discussion. All pupils read the same high-quality text, and lessons are structured to ensure a deep and broad understanding of a wide range of genres. Each session follows a consistent format:

- **Fluency Starter** – Pupils read aloud together to develop pace, expression, and intonation, supporting comprehension through improved fluency.
- **Vocabulary Focus** – Key new vocabulary is explicitly taught to deepen understanding and extend language.
- **Reading Objective** – A focused reading skill is taught, taken directly from the National Curriculum and aligned with a VIPERS strand.
- **Independent Task** – Pupils respond to the text through written activities, demonstrating understanding and applying the taught skill.
- **Plenary** – Children share and justify their responses, encouraging thoughtful discussion and critical thinking.

Teachers are responsible for planning these sessions, in collaboration with the English lead practitioner, to ensure consistency and progression across the school. Children's responses are recorded in Reading Response Books, which provide evidence of their learning journey. Reading targets are reviewed and updated regularly to address individual needs and ensure that identified gaps are swiftly addressed.

Shared Reading

Shared reading occurs across the curriculum, with a focus on discussion, vocabulary development, and making links to prior learning. Pupils explore language, meaning, and authorial effect to support deeper comprehension and enjoyment.

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. In addition to being heard read regularly in school, all children are expected to read at home regularly with an adult, who fills in their child's individual reading record.

Comprehension

Comprehension (the ability to read and understand the meaning of a text) is taught explicitly in weekly lessons, starting in Early Years with oral discussion and progressing to more complex texts and questions aligned with National Curriculum objectives. These skills are reinforced across subjects.

Class Story

Teachers read aloud to their class regularly, modelling fluent, expressive reading. This supports vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and a love of stories and language.

Writing

Our aim is for all children to communicate clearly and meaningfully when writing 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 to communicate clearly. The teaching of writing involves the processes outlined below.

Talk For Writing

Writing is taught through Pie Corbett's **Talk for Writing** approach, which follows three stages:

- **Imitation** – Learning and internalising model texts
- **Innovation** – Adapting and co-constructing new versions
- **Independent Application** – Creating original writing using learned structures

There is a key focus on oracy (i.e., memorising written models and orally practising sentences) which supports children to internalise language patterns. This leads to improvements in grammar, sentence construction and overall text cohesion.

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 in front of and with the children as a precursor to the class writing more independently. It is the key moment at which writing is taught.

Teachers model key skills based on assessment of pupils' needs, using co-constructed success criteria ("writing toolkits"). Focus areas may include composition, punctuation, or writing behaviours (e.g. planning a plot).

Guided Writing

Guided writing takes place during the independent phase of lessons. Teachers work with small groups to target specific needs, address misconceptions, and extend writing skills.

Independent writing

Pupils have regular opportunities to produce longer, independent pieces across fiction and non-fiction. Writing targets (aligned with National Curriculum objectives) are included in pupils' English books and updated regularly.

Spelling and Grammar

Spelling is taught from EYFS to Year 6. Children begin by learning spellings linked to their phonics lessons, embedded within their daily phonics teaching. As they progress, they are introduced to a structured spelling programme appropriate to their year group. Weekly spellings are set in line with the curriculum expectations, and dedicated spelling lessons focus on the specific spelling rules covered each week. Children are given regular opportunities to practise their spellings both in school and at home, supported by online platforms where appropriate. A weekly spelling test is conducted, typically through a dictation activity, to assess understanding and application.

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 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. 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 model the expected handwriting consistently.

Scaffolding and Adaptive Teaching

All Reading and Writing lessons must be inclusive, with support carefully planned for individuals and groups, including SEND pupils. Planning will indicate the main activity based on age related expectations from the National Curriculum objectives and must show clear differentiation, with 'top-down' scaffolding to help all pupils access the objective.

Adaptive teaching includes:

- **Seating:** Strategic grouping to support discussion or focused adult help
- **Resourcing:** Word banks, writing frames, and visual aids
- **Challenge:** Daily open-ended extension tasks to deepen understanding

Regular collaboration with the SENCO ensures provision meets individual needs.

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 is assessed through a range of ongoing and formal approaches to ensure accurate tracking of pupil progress and to inform next steps in teaching:

Phonics:

Half termly phonics assessments are carried out by the phonics lead to ensure consistency and monitor progress. This will determine ability grouping, and allow phonics leads to recognise those not making expected progress, and put into place provisions for those children, allowing swift intervention to close the gap. (See separate Phonics policy.)

Teacher Assessment:

Teachers make regular, formative assessments of reading skills during Whole Class Reading sessions, including the use of VIPERS (Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summarising) questioning. This allows teachers to monitor comprehension skills in real time and address misconceptions promptly.

Individual Reading Assessments:

Once children have completed the Read Write Inc Phonics scheme, they are assessed at least once per term using the Big Cat Collins individual reading assessments. These ensure that pupils are reading within the correct book band and progressing appropriately through the reading scheme.

Standardised Assessments:

PIRA (Progress in Reading Assessment) tests are carried out termly to provide a summative measure of attainment and progress. The results are tracked on Arbor and are used to support teacher assessment.

Together, these assessments provide a comprehensive picture of each child's reading ability and progress, ensuring that teaching is responsive and targeted.

Writing:

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

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 across 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 close monitoring 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 additional learning needs are assessed using target sheets but may need to use targets relating to a different year group.

Standardised Tests:

GAPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling) tests are carried out termly to provide a summative measure of attainment and progress. The standardised scores are tracked on Arbor and are used to support teacher assessment as well as identify gaps in knowledge.

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 shared activity which has a significant impact on a child's reading skills and general education. Spellings are also set for years 1-6 using 'Spelling Shed' online; these can be printed to enable access for all children. See individual schools' 'Homework Policy' for further guidance. Reading is 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.