

English Policy

# Sinai Jewish Primary School

February 2021

**Intent**

At Sinai we want our children to have a thorough understanding of how the English language works, which enables us to create enthusiastic, lively readers and writers.

We recognise that mastery in phonics is fundamental to children being able to access a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts, across the curriculum. Our aim is for children to gain automaticity of their phonics to blend and segment when reading and writing. We aim to achieve this by teaching phonics systematically with a relentless drive to address the needs of all learners.

Our aim is for all our pupils to be able to communicate effectively and be confident readers and writers. Using carefully selected texts ensures that children are exposed to and use a wide range of vocabulary. Children will experience a variety of genres that stimulate them to write confidently and creatively for a range of purposes and audiences. They will reflect on their own and others' writing and have an understanding that writing has a real purpose and that word choice and style can bring about change. We strive to promote a love of books and high quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend a language rich environment and enrich their lives.

**Implementation**

**Reading**

At Sinai school we nurture children’s enjoyment of reading, as well as a strong focus on fluency and comprehension.

The children’s reading journey begins lower down the school with phonics, a system of teaching letters and their sounds in an order that enables children to grasp the basic fundamentals of reading. Many activities take place which promote pre-reading skills. Children become aware of print in their environment and match pictures and words. Language comprehension is developed by talking and reading to the children. Initially, as children learn to read, they are given a picture book with no words with the intention that they will share the book and take part in a conversation generated by the pictures. Gradually as the children's knowledge of letters and sounds develop they begin to phonetically decode words.

The first books given are fully phonetically decodable and linked to the phonics phase the child is on so their learning is practised and reinforced at home. During guided reading, children are able to read a book in a small group, which exposes them to phonics beyond their phase to share and read for pleasure and to challenge them, developing their comprehension skills and understanding as well as their fluency. Our reading books are organised into coloured Book Bands.

At Sinai we use the Department for Education’s ‘[Letters and Sounds](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds)’ programme, alongside ‘[Read Write Inc](https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/series/rwi/?region=uk)’, which is a whole-school literacy programme designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers. The phonics programme progresses naturally to reading books, which the children take home. This begins as soon as each individual child is ready. At Sinai school we use the [Collins Big Cat books](http://www.collins.co.uk/page/Collins%2BBig%2BCat/), which follow the letters and sounds that the children are learning in their phonics lessons. Other reading schemes are also used including Oxford Reading Tree and Floppy Phonics to supplement the children’s books. From a young age, children are given a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to read to expose them to different genres.

Children progress through the reading levels at their own pace, taking into account not just mechanical reading but a good understanding and enjoyment of the books. From as early as the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), children are encouraged to talk about what they have read, and their opinions on the stories and characters.

Further up in the school we continue to emphasise progression in the children’s reading journey, both inside the classroom and out. We continue with home reading books and encourage pupils to read for pleasure. From Foundation Stage children also participate in daily guided reading sessions which vary between the key stages. In EYFS and Year 1, these sessions are carried out in a group setting whereby children read a text and respond as well as focusing on a range of activities and skills to improve their reading. This then develops further in Year 2 & Key Stage 2 where children read a class text which has been carefully chosen for its content and high level vocabulary, this provides an opportunity for the teachers to model reading and to show and explain to pupils why the author has chosen to write in a particular style or chosen specific words and phrases. The teacher will also model their understanding of the text and how they know. These sessions encourage sharing a love of reading as well as deepening their understanding of what they are reading, it enables children to discuss a text using full sentences and building on each other’s points of view.

In addition, pupils complete weekly reading comprehension lessons to help them become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own understanding of what they read.

**At Sinai we believe in order for our pupils to develop as effective readers, pupils should be taught to:**

* Read a variety of texts for purpose and pleasure, accurately, fluently and with understanding.
* Understand and respond to a wide range of books and media texts on paper and on screen.
* Understand the variety of written language, and the differences between fiction and non-fiction.
* Improve their abilities to read, analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts, including literature from other cultures and traditions.
* Develop a range of reading skills and strategies to enable them to become independent readers.
* Develop their skills in reading for understanding including deduction and inference.
* Enjoy books and reading and develop a life-long love of books
* Develop research skills, using library and class texts, in conjunction with the ICT system
* Become informed and discerning users of the internet as an integral facet of their Literacy research skills
* Develop a critical appreciation of the work of authors, poets and illustrators in order to emulate these skills in their own writing
* Encourage care and ownership of books

**What does reading look like at Sinai?**

* **Guided reading**
	+ Taught daily throughout the school
	+ Pupils grouped according to reading level in EYFS and Year 1
	+ Children are introduced to a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts
	+ In Key Stage 1, when children are not reading with an adult they are engaged in activities that promote and support reading
	+ In Year 2 & KS2 children are reading a class book to promote class discussion and rich vocabulary. The teacher models how to read and the importance of ‘picking apart’ a text to gain a deeper understanding. Pupils then do the same with a partner, encouraging discussion using full sentences. Children are then provided with questions on what they have read which link to VIPERS and the Key Stage 2 domains.
* **1:1 reading**
	+ Throughout the school it is expected that all children are heard read each week, each day the class teacher/TA should hear 5 or 6 children read
	+ In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children who are reading below their expected age are heard read daily, in KS2 we have recognised children who are reading below their expected reading age through Accelerated Reader
	+ We ensure that reading books are sent home for parents to read with children.
* **Reading comprehension**
	+ Comprehension skills which are based on VIPERS (vocabulary, inference, prediction, explain, retrieval, summarising/sequencing) are taught during guided reading sessions throughout the school.
	+ Comprehension lessons are taught once weekly in KS1 and KS2
	+ Teachers use a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and resources related to all subjects.

**Phonics**

We use synthetic phonics and follow the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme; this is a method of learning letter sounds and blending them together to read and write words. ‘Read Write Inc’ materials are used alongside ‘Letters and Sounds’ to support visual, kinaesthetic and auditory learners. In addition to this, children are taught sight words linked to Letters and Sounds and the National Curriculum.

Children have daily phonics sessions from Reception to Year 2 where they participate in speaking, listening and writing activities that are matched to their starting points and developing needs. The teachers draw upon observations and continuous assessment to ensure children are stretched and challenged and to identify children who may need additional support. Children work through the different phases, learning and developing their phonics sounds and knowledge, whilst allowing time for revisiting and reviewing previous taught sounds.

Children in Nursery begin with Phase 1, which provides a range of listening activities through play, to develop their listening skills and in the Spring Term are exposed to Phase 2. This is taught weekly and recapped frequently throughout the week. Progress is tracked at the end of each term.

As children move into Reception they continue to build upon the listening activities and recap Phase 2, which marks the start of systematic phonic work. Grapheme-phoneme correspondence is introduced. The process of segmenting whole words and selecting letters to represent those phonemes is taught, writing the letters to encode words. Phase 3 completes the teaching of the alphabet and then moves on to cover sounds represented by more than one letter, learning one representation for each of the 44 phonemes. At this stage just one grapheme (spelling) is given for each phoneme. The children are taught letter names and introduced to Phase 4. No new phonemes are introduced in this phase.

Children enter Year 1 with a solid foundation in Phase 3/4 enabling them to quickly progress into Phase 5, where they start to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants. Whilst in Year 1, children will complete Phase 5, broadening their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will learn alternative pronunciations and spellings for graphemes they have been taught in previous years.

It is expected that children entering Year 2 will recap Phase 5 and begin Phase 6, which develops a variety of spelling strategies including homophones (word specific spellings) e.g. see/ sea, spelling of words with prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters where necessary. Also the accurate spelling of words containing unusual grapheme-phoneme correspondences e.g. laughs, two. This is taught through ‘Letters and Sounds.’

On entry into Nursery, and then again in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed into school and supported through parent teacher workshops on phonics and early reading. Supplementary resources and guidance are provided and parents/carers are directed to the school’s website for further information, such as links to activities and recommended apps, websites and games.

**How do we assess phonics at Sinai?**

* Formative assessment takes place within each phonics lesson, from Nursery through to Year 2. For example: teacher observations, questioning and discussions. These outcomes are fed forward into timely teacher intervention and subsequent planning to ensure gaps in phonological knowledge are closed and progress is not limited.
* Summative assessment takes place at the end of each term from Reception to Year 2 whereby the children complete a Phonics Assessment for the Phase they are up to. It gives the teachers an opportunity to see where the gaps in the learning are, to plan future lessons accordingly. The assessments follow a similar structure to the Phonics Screening Assessment, to ensure children are familiar with the layout. Additionally, in January, the children in Year 1 and any children in Year 2 who did not pass the Phonics Screening test will complete a mock Phonics Screening Assessment. This helps teachers to assess whether there are any gaps in learning that need to be addressed.
* Children’s progress is continually reviewed to allow for movement between ability groups, and children move phonics phases when it is felt necessary to meet their needs.
* The National Phonics Screening Check is performed in June of Year 1. The purpose of the screening check is to confirm that all children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. The children who did not meet the required standard for the check in year 1 enter again in year 2 with additional support. As children enter KS2, provision is made for those children still requiring daily phonic interventions and support.
* Pupil progress will also identify precise actions and objectives for targeted focus children, including the lowest 20% who are not likely to meet the required standard of the Phonics Screening Check.

We recognise that quality first teaching in phonics is the essential first step in improving outcomes for all children. In response to monitoring, evaluation and review outcomes, weaker areas in staff subject knowledge and pedagogy are developed through the school’s coaching/mentoring programme.

**Spelling**

The school spelling program complements the phonics learning from Reception through to the end of KS2. The spelling of high frequency and tricky words are taught continuously throughout the phases.

Each Phonics and Spelling lesson from Reception – Year 2 has an element of new learning, revisit and review, reading, writing and application. Children in Year 1 and 2 have weekly spelling tests which incorporate the sounds learnt that week and some tricky/high frequency words.

In Key Stage 2 children have a 30 minute weekly spelling lesson, these are broken down into:

* Recap - seeing what children remember about the previous rule they have learnt.
* Prediction - giving children the opportunity to recognise the new rule for themselves and if they are able to explain it.
* New Learning - where the new rule is introduced, we encourage children to then explain the rule themselves.
* Investigation - an opportunity to independently complete activities linked to the spelling rule, this is a chance for the teacher to assess what the children have learnt but to also explore whether children understand the meaning of words that follow the rule.
* Challenge - to develop children’s learning further and require a more in depth understanding from the child.

It is then extremely important that the rule is embedded throughout the week and will be recapped as a do now in English lessons across the week and in morning work.

Children in Key Stage 2 are then tested regularly on words that include the spelling rule, not on words they have specifically learnt. This assesses children’s understanding of the rule taught.

**Writing**

Throughout the school we believe the importance of teaching the children about the different audiences and purposes for writing. Teachers model writing in a variety of contexts and then pupils practice these skills themselves. They use a variety of stimuli for writing such as class texts, clips and school trips and write in a wide range of genres including both narrative and non-narrative forms.

KS1 has a strong focus on sentence structure, allowing pupils to develop the basic skills they need as writers. Then in Key Stage 2, children are taught more complex rules of grammar and syntax and are encouraged to use these in their independent writing. Pupils are encouraged to use a more sophisticated range of vocabulary and imagery by accessing dictionaries, thesauruses and reading more challenging texts. All pupils are encouraged to take an active part in editing their own work before the teacher marks it, this includes editing their spelling, punctuation and grammar as well as improving vocabulary.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 we have adopted Talk for Writing as a model to improve our achievement in writing. It advocates that children imitate the key language needed for a particular genre orally, before reading and analysing it. Through fun and engaging activities they rehearse retelling the text, then through shared writing they are shown how to craft their writing in the same style. This approach includes imitation, innovation and independent application.

In Key Stage 2 writing lessons happen over a two-week cycle which gives children the opportunity to fully immerse themselves into a specific genre focusing on the features, SPaG, drama, planning, writing and editing. It is encouraged where possible that the writing taught links to their class text of the moment and their topic too, encouraging writing across the curriculum.

**At Sinai we believe in order for our pupils to develop as effective writers, pupils should be taught to:**

* Express themselves clearly and precisely for enjoyment.
* Use knowledge acquired through reading to write in different styles and genres.
* Write for an increasing range of purposes, matching their language and style to the needs of the appropriate audience.
* Understand the appropriate use and purpose of an increasing range of written forms on paper and on screen.
* Develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader, using a wide-ranging broad vocabulary and effective style.
* Given time to experiment and expand on their own writing style.
* Write neatly using the cursive script, with accurate spelling.

**What does writing look like at Sinai?**

**Transcription (Handwriting and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)**

* + Handwriting is taught weekly throughout the school using the Nelson Handwriting scheme.
	+ Children are taught to join letters from year 1.
	+ Handwriting is practised in handwriting books with line guides.
	+ SPaG is taught as a weekly lesson from Year 1 to Year 6, each lesson focuses on a specific punctuation/grammar topic which is relevant to their year group (following the Curriculum Support Document). Each lesson has a clear structure which is broken down into 6 parts (review, new learning, discussion question, further extension to their learning, independent task which involves an element of writing and then putting their learning into practice with the use of SATS style questioning) to encourage an engaging and active lesson.
	+ Throughout the school a weekly spelling lesson is taught based on a certain rule. The school spelling program complements the phonics learning from Reception through to the end of KS2. The spelling of high frequency and tricky words are taught continuously throughout the phases. Each Phonics and Spelling lesson from Reception – Year 6 has an element of new learning, revisit and review, reading, writing and application. The children from Y1-Y6 have weekly spelling tests which incorporate the sounds learnt that week and some tricky/high frequency words.

**Composition**

* Every year group covers and teaches a range of genres. In EYFS and Key Stage this is taught through Talk for Writing and in Key Stage 2 this happens through a well-structure two week cycle.
* Teachers complete modelled writing, showing the thought process to building an independent piece of writing.
* Shared writing takes place with the teacher and pupils, this helps develop children’s ideas and allows them to build on someone’s idea.
* Children plan their independent piece of work which involves them independently drawing on classroom resources and displays to support their ideas. In addition, they use clear and simple steps to success to inform their writing.
* After completing their writing children are expected to independently edit or redraft their work against the steps to success which is in response to self, peer or group evaluation.

**How do we assess writing at Sinai?**

The writing that children produce for assessment should be part of their normal classroom practice in writing. Discussion of ideas and “immersion in vocabulary” is all part of good teaching and in no way disqualifies the writing produced. The key point about independence is that children are making their own choices about how to apply the things they have been taught and the ideas discussed.

Children plan their independent piece of work which involves them independently drawing on classroom resources and displays to support their ideas.  In addition, they use clear and simple steps to success to inform their writing.

After completing their writing children are expected to independently edit or redraft their work against the steps to success. Dictionaries and thesauruses may be used independently to up-level student work.

Writing is not considered to be independent if it is a result of:

- Slow writing;

- Over detailed steps to success;

- Direct feedback. For example, if a teacher had said to a child “have a think about the adjectives you have used” and the child went on to identify some areas to improve, that would be OK. But “change the word ‘nice’ to something more interesting” would be too direct.

-  Spellcheck is enabled on digital devices.

After each piece of work teachers complete a checklist to identify what has been included in each piece of work and to show whether they are working towards age related expectations, at the expected age or working above the expected age. At the end of each term, it is expected that each child has completed at least six pieces of writing which covers a range of genres. Writing moderation happens in each year group with a member of SLT to ensure consistency across the year and to see the progression between year groups.

### Marking, feedback and Assessment

All work is assessed and marked according to the school’s assessment and marking policy. Please refer to these documents for more details.

There are a variety of teacher and standardised assessments in use across the school. These provide a summative record of what each child has achieved as well as informing ongoing planning.

Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed and plans made to aid progress and attainment.

* Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly.
* Formal assessments of Reading Comprehension ability are carried out, tracked and monitored termly.
* There are no formal written assessments which take place, however teachers are expected to assess each piece of written work using a checklist of the expected objectives for that year group.
* Moderation takes place between phases and year groups at least every term.
* End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the English Lead, SLT and Head teacher and feed into the school SEF, SIP, and performance management

**SEND**

Through on-going formative and summative assessments, the class teacher identifies pupils who need support with literacy skills at the earliest possible stage. Within the classroom, the teacher targets children with difficulties and attempts to address them by differentiated activities and extra support where possible. Teachers may also make use of different techniques to help individual learners in their unique learning style using visual, kinaesthetic and written materials in different formats. Where a child has a greater need the school’s SEND policy is implemented. A child’s ISP may include specific targets relating to English as appropriate. These are reviewed on a termly basis.

**Intended Impact**

* Pupils will enjoy learning about and writing across a range of genres.
* Pupils will have a wide vocabulary that they use within their writing
* Pupils will have a good knowledge of how to adapt their writing based on the context and audience.
* Pupils will leave primary school being able to effectively apply spelling rules and patterns they have been taught
* Pupils discuss books with excitement and interest.
* Pupils are proud of their writing
* Skills (grammar and punctuation) progress throughout the school and is evident in children’s books.
* For pupils to acquire strategies to enable them to become independent learners in English (spelling rules and patterns and how to tackle unfamiliar words when reading).
* For pupils to enter into discussion and to present their ideas to each other by talking, being able to elaborate and articulate themselves clearly
* Pupils to be encouraged to read for pleasure by using Accelerated Reader, Bug Club and the Library Bus.
* There is evidence of a clear teaching sequence in books
* Next steps marking provides positive support and directs the pupil on their next steps to improve their writing
* Pupils respond to feedback effectively
* Teachers moderate pupils work in school and with other schools to ensure accurate assessments are made
* Intervention sessions enable a greater proportion of pupils to be on track to meet year group expectations or in the case of those working significantly below, to support their individual needs and progress.

#### Review

This English policy will be reviewed by the English Curriculum Leader and the Senior Leadership Team.

Ratified by Curriculum Committee: 03.02.21

Date for next review of this document: Feb 2024

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