

Southey Green Primary School English Policy



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Southey Green Primary School English Policy

The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation are addressed through the objectives detailed in the 2014 National Curriculum; this is the foundation for all of our English teaching.

Speaking and Listening

At Southey Green, we aim to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- Speak in a variety of forms for different audiences, purposes and situations (both formal and informal).
- Reflect on their speech and make appropriate choices.
- Talk in group situations, valuing the contributions of others and responding appropriately.

We recognise that having an oracy-focused curriculum is vital to developing confident, articulate and engaged learners. Oracy is at the heart of our curriculum, and we are committed to building and embedding a culture of oracy throughout the school through the explicit teaching of the four strands of oracy.

The principles of oracy underpin day-to-day classroom practice, such as the use of talk partners, varied groupings for discussions, and sentence stems. Children are taught that there are different purposes of talk (debate, argument, explanation, etc.)

Speaking and listening activities can include: P4C, drama, role-play, interviewing, hot-seating, conscience alleys, debates, discussions, group work, and sharing and celebrating learning.

Children use speaking and listening skills when sharing their home learning projects. They are encouraged to talk about their work with the class and answer questions, while others demonstrate good listening and questioning skills.

Additionally, we have introduced a weekly, thought-provoking 'sticky question', presented and discussed in class assemblies. This gives children the opportunity to engage with philosophical questions in the form of a sticker worn on their jumper. This encourages conversations to continue at home and throughout school.

By providing a high-quality oracy education, we empower students to find their voice and develop their communication skills, critical thinking, and social-emotional intelligence. Our goal is to ensure that all children develop the communication skills necessary for success in both their academic journey and future life.

Speaking and listening are essential foundations for literacy development, and effective teaching of English offers opportunities to promote oral skills. As our children often enter the Foundation Stage with communication skills below the expected standard, great emphasis is placed on promoting the acquisition of oral skills.

Phonics

At Southey Green Primary School, we use a synthetic phonics programme called *Read Write Inc.*, produced by Ruth Miskin. Children have daily phonics sessions in small groups, where they participate in speaking, listening and writing activities that are matched to their developing needs. Phonics teaching is explicitly delivered within the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. Children also have daily opportunities to read books that match their phonics knowledge.

If children in Years 3, 4 and 5 still require support with phonics, we adopt a diagnostic approach and provide tailored interventions based on their individual strengths and areas for development. For pupils requiring further phonics support in Years 5 and 6, the *Read Write Inc. Fresh Start* programme is followed. These children have three phonics sessions per week, delivered by trained staff, and tailored to their specific gaps in knowledge, identified.

Children's phonics knowledge is assessed on entry to Foundation Stage 2, and progress is tracked approximately every half term to ensure rapid development. Children work at their own pace through the phonics *Speed Sounds* sessions, learning to blend and segment until they become confident, fluent sight readers with a secure understanding of all the sounds taught. Additional phonics sessions and *Fast Track Tutoring* are included in the weekly timetable for children who may need to make accelerated progress in order to meet end-of-year expectations in phonics.

Reading

The teaching of reading provides opportunities for pupils to gain both understanding and enjoyment from a range of texts. To support them in this, we aim to help pupils to:

- Master the basic mechanical skills of reading
- Read with accuracy, fluency and expression
- Develop and use higher-order reading skills that contribute to overall comprehension
- Understand the value of information texts as an aid to learning
- Develop a love of literature and an appreciation of the pleasure reading can bring

Across the school, reading is at the core of our curriculum. Teachers ensure that their classrooms contain a wide range of high-quality texts, carefully selected to promote a love of reading, to link with curriculum topics, and/or to reflect pupils' individual interests.

Focused daily reading lessons take place from EYFS to Year 6, outside of the English lesson, for 15–40 minutes each day.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, these sessions are taught using *Talk Through Stories*, a programme designed by Ruth Miskin to extend and deepen children's comprehension and vocabulary in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. During *Story Week*, we help children to become familiar with the story—its plot, characters, and their actions and motives.

Children also explore specific aspects of the reading national curriculum, such as making predictions and inferring how a character might feel. In *Vocabulary Week*, we focus on eight Tier 2 words from the story. These are words that children are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation but are likely to encounter in written texts.

In Key Stage 2, reading sessions alternate half-termly between novel study and extract work. Explicit fluency strategies are also taught during these units. Throughout Key Stage 2, once children have become fluent readers, the focus shifts more towards comprehension. This draws on their linguistic knowledge, particularly vocabulary and grammar, as well as their general knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills are developed through high-quality discussion with the teacher and through reading and discussing a wide range of stories, poems, and non-fiction texts. Children are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them, to foster a love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. 1:1 reading continues to take place, with fluency remaining an important focus.

All children have an individual reading log in school, which allows teachers to monitor and track progress. Children read to a trained adult at least twice a week in Key Stage One and at least once a fortnight in Key Stage Two. The books chosen closely match each child's reading ability, are age-appropriate, and are selected in discussion with their class teacher. Where timetabled, classes may also visit the *Discovery Hub* as part of their weekly reading provision. Children take home books that closely match their reading ability. Independent reading provides children with the opportunity to build reading stamina and to make their own choices about the texts they read. In Key Stage One, children also have access to *Oxford Owl*, an online platform that offers a range of decodable books similar. Home reading is closely monitored by teachers to ensure children are regularly reading and making progress.

Writing

Writing is encouraged from its emergent start, through developmental attempts to its final, independent stage. Within our English lessons, there should be a balance of shared, guided and independent writing.

Handwriting

Teachers model the expectations of handwriting through daily handwriting sessions before the start of an English lesson or during explicit handwriting sessions. This is practised in their English exercise book and spelling patterns and joins may be used as part of the handwriting session. All children then practise their handwriting by transcribing a dictated sentence. To ensure consistency and high fidelity in handwriting instruction across all year groups, the school follows the Read Write Inc. (RWI) handwriting scheme, providing a structured and uniform approach to letter formation and presentation. Further information about presentation and handwriting can be found in the school's handwriting booklet.

Sequence of Learning

Throughout school, children focus on writing for different purposes: 'to describe, narrate, explain, instruct, give and respond to information, and argue'. Across the different phases, pupils will produce many different forms of writing, as part of

applying the skills learned from the National Curriculum and while being exposed to a variety of texts. Immersion is used at the start of an English unit to engage and excite the children, with a key emphasis on developing vocabulary. Following this, the children focus on analysing forms of writing plus practising and embedding the skills needed to develop their own writing. They then spend time planning, writing and reviewing their own work. It is important that children have a purpose for writing and that they enjoy taking part in these sessions. Teachers are provided with a Progression of Skills document that links to National Curriculum objectives and the forms being taught within that year group. The children are given opportunities to apply these skills within the unit and then independently in written pieces towards the end of the unit. In Key Stage 1, transcription is used as a tool to ensure all children develop fluency in writing. This ensures the children can write and then compose fluent, legible sentences with the correct letter formation, in order to continue developing independence in writing as they move through Key Stage 2. Transcription continues to be used past Key Stage 1 where children need additional support with their writing fluency. Teachers should ensure that spelling, punctuation and grammar is integrated within the teaching sequence for English and that children have opportunities to apply the basic literacy skills into their independent writing and across the foundation subjects.

Spelling

Once children have a solid phonics understanding, they move on to Read Write Inc. Spellings. This is taught through daily, 20-minute sessions, using the work books and resources from the scheme. There is a focus on spelling patterns rather than a small bank of spelling words. There is also weekly practise of the common exception words taken from the National Curriculum, in the form of red and orange words. Spelling is assessed and monitored using the Read Write Inc. Spelling scheme, including orange words in Upper Key Stage 2. Additionally, in Upper Key Stage 2, the children spend 2 days per week investigating the etymology and morphology of words in order to further their understanding of words and spellings.

Resources

The majority of teaching resources for English are stored in the central resource rooms. These include teaching and training materials and resource sheets. Big books, linked curriculum texts, sets of texts for reading, class reading and Read Write Inc materials are also readily available. Staff also have links to Oxford Owl, where banks of interactive and printable resources are available. A library is available for timetabled class access with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, story sacks and listening stations.

Assessment and Monitoring

Progression and continuity are dependent upon teachers' assessment of present achievement in knowledge, skills and concepts as well as previous learning experiences. This knowledge then shapes the planning of future teaching for following days and units. Teachers mark in accordance with the school marking and feedback policy (see separate policy)

Teachers assess children's reading and writing against the National Curriculum objectives. Teachers mark against the assessment criteria throughout the terms with a

judgement made and inputted at the end of each half term; this assesses where a child is working within their year group.

Formative assessment is used to inform future teaching and a range of evidence is used to support the summative assessment including tests, work across all books and formative assessment. Formal written reports are provided each year and this information is shared with parents. Additionally, two other meetings are held each year with parents to discuss progress informally and to share targets for progress.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of English in school is the responsibility of the English coordinators and members of SLT. This takes the form of:

- Learning observations
- Book scrutiny
- Marking and feedback
- Review of planning and questioning skills
- Pupil tracking and gap analysis
- Pupil conferences
- Termly impact reports
- Evaluations and feedback

Parental Involvement

We ask for parents to be as involved with their child's learning as much as possible. At the beginning of every half term, parents are given a newsletter where they are informed of the basic reading and writing skills the children will be learning within the curriculum. This is also posted onto the school's website.

As a school we encourage regular home reading. Children should take their reading record and a reading book home which is appropriate to their reading level. Spellings, linked to the school scheme Read Write Inc and Read Write Inc. Spelling, are sent home to practise.

Throughout the year parents are invited to take part in English workshops. They can also see examples of learning taking place in the classroom by visiting the class page on the school's website. Throughout the year parents are invited to workshops to model how they may be able to support their child at home with phonics, reading writing and for SATs preparation.