

ENGLISH POLICY





Fishergate Primary School English Policy



Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of the English taught and learnt at Fishergate Primary School.

The school's policy is based on the 2014 Primary National Curriculum. It has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff.

Key principles:

That...

- ✚ Children at Fishergate can articulate their ideas clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners, making effective use of a widening vocabulary.
- ✚ They talk to explore, develop and sustain ideas.
- ✚ Children listen with interest and understanding, able to comment on a speaker's use of language.
- ✚ Drama activities are used to enhance learning in all areas of the curriculum, and dramatic skills are valued in their own right.
- ✚ Children learn to read fluently and with confidence (initially using their phonic knowledge and skills in blending as a prime approach to decoding).
- ✚ They become enthusiastic and reflective readers through exposure to varied, challenging and longer texts, able to discuss, for example, text structure and organisation and writers' use of language.
- ✚ Our children write purposefully in a range of genres, often presenting work creatively.
- ✚ They see themselves as confident writers with the skills to shape and adapt their writing, making appropriate punctuation, grammatical and stylistic choices.
- ✚ They recognise features of, and to use, different registers, including Standard English.
- ✚ Children learn to evaluate their own work, using drafting, peer and self-marking to edit and improve their work.
- ✚ They tackle the spelling of unfamiliar words confidently, drawing on a range of strategies.

- ✚ Fishergate children use clear, fluent, joined handwriting.

Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the national curriculum. We use the **English Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1 and 2** as a basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Planning is not driven by coverage of objectives, but is flexible and responsive to the needs of pupils. The school's 'Essentials Passports' are a constant reference when planning, ensuring a rigorous focus on pupils' solid acquisition of key skills.

In the Early Years Unit the emphasis on the teaching and learning of English is based on children's first hand experiences. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills.

To develop early reading skills, we introduce children to environmental print, a variety of texts, oral storytelling and deliver a daily phonics programme. To support the mechanics of reading, consolidate and extend reading fluency we use the Pearson Bug Book scheme which directly links to the Letters and Sounds phonic programme we deliver. Both printed and cursive letters are shown to the children.

To develop early writing skills, we encourage children to experience writing as an integral part of their learning through mark making, watching adults recording their thoughts and play contexts as well as supporting further with the daily phonic programme. They then continue to develop their skills and understanding of writing through various play contexts so they become secure and can transfer and apply their skills and understanding in different contexts.

Inputs are limited to 10-15 minutes at the beginning of the year, then progressing to 20-25mins by the end of the year, as they become able to use a whiteboard & pen. Phonics is taught each morning. Then before lunch, we have an English input, which focuses on developing understanding of sentences and of texts, linked to any topics currently interesting the children.

From Year1, we carry out curriculum planning in English in three phases (long term, medium term and short term):

- ✚ Our long-term plan (see appendix 1) is comprised of a list of non-fiction genres which each phase will teach over an academic year. In addition to this, poetry is taught each term, and each half-term's planning will incorporate both fiction and non-fiction. The class story also forms the basis of a unit of work. Beyond this, specific units are not prescribed, as we want our curriculum to reflect the interests of the children, and to maximise cross-curricular links. We also undertake a whole school topic, with every class studying the same text and sharing the resulting writing across the school.
- ✚ Our weekly plans give details of the main teaching objectives for the unit planned. Often, a unit will begin by immersing pupils in the text type to be studied, largely through reading, speaking and listening, *Talk for Writing* and dramatic activities, then through experimentation with writing that shows a developing understanding of the relevant language features and modelling by the teacher, culminating in the planning, drafting and editing of an extended piece of writing. Weekly planning will also provide other opportunities for independent writing: pupils will revisit other genres taught, often through topic work in other subjects.
- ✚ Daily plans break learning down into progressive steps and are adapted in the light of pupils' understanding of the previous lesson. Daily plans indicate the specific learning objectives for each lesson and layered success criteria to be discussed with (or agreed by) pupils. Layered success criteria provides challenge for every pupil who strives to meet it, not just the highest attainers. Daily plans also outline the organisation of the lesson. Teachers at Fishergate are encouraged to take a flexible approach to the structure of lessons: pupils may begin with an independent investigation of text; they may spend an entire lesson involved in drama or debate; the lesson might be broken up by mini-plenaries. Targeted work for SEN pupils will be indicated, as well as adult support and timings for different parts of the lesson. The class teacher keeps these individual plans and are available for monitoring by the subject leader.

Teaching English

Teaching time

To provide adequate time for developing English skills each class teacher will deliver a daily, hour-long English lesson. English skills are, of course, being developed through other subject areas and at other times of the day.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening is a key aspect of any English lesson. Talk partners are used throughout the school to involve all children in discussing ideas, evaluating texts, and preparing to contribute in a larger group. Response partners are key to helping children identify the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, as well as providing a first audience for written work.

Drama is used to bring aspects of texts to life and to help explore and clarify pupils' ideas before the writing process. Pupils also develop their skills in debate and in formal presentations of their learning.

We regularly use strategies from *Talk for Writing* to provide pupils with a model for their own work, as well as to enable them to expand on their ideas orally first.

Reading, including Guided Reading

We use *Pearson's Phonics Bug* and *Bug Club* as our principal reading scheme, supported by other schemes. Every Reception pupil is assigned a log in to the *Bug Club* interactive resources available, including e-books. Access for our families is unlimited, and activities are targeted at the child's individual needs. Pupils are taught synthetic phonics daily from Reception until the end of Year 2. Regular phonics teaching continues in Key Stage 2 only for those few pupils who still need it.

We also have more specialist reading material for children with reading difficulties (see resources). These are sometimes kept with our SEN resources. In addition, we use sets of guided reading texts for every attainment level, stored centrally. Other adults support us in hearing targeted pupils read regularly. A booklet for helpers, including students, is available to outline strategies to support pupils when they are reading.

Children always have a reading book and a library book. Every pupil has a planner which also acts as a home/school reading record in which adults in

school and carers note observations and communicate about children's progress. Classroom Monitor is used to track pupils' progress in reading, both formatively and summatively.

As children move up through school, they are increasingly independent in their choices of reading material. We use a simple sticker system to guide 'free' readers to appropriately challenging material.

Guided reading is timetabled daily (outside English lessons) in Key Stage One and in Year 3/4. In Year 5/6, attainment groups are chosen for guided reading at different times during the year. Guided reading may be led by teaching assistants, as well as class teachers. This time is used to help children develop their decoding skills, where appropriate, and/or to develop their comprehension of a range of texts, through questions and book-talk. These sessions provide valuable evidence for the class teacher in making judgements about a pupil's strengths and weaknesses.

We lay great emphasis on the importance of the class story, which forms the basis of in-depth work and presents valuable and exciting opportunities to expose pupils to a range authors and styles. Work on these topics is recorded in separate reading journals.

Writing, including Guided Writing

Pupils write purposefully for real audiences where possible, often 'publishing' their work for others to appreciate. All pupils in Key Stages One and Two have the opportunity to write at length each week, sometimes during the English hour, but also during dedicated extended writing time or as part of work in another topic.

We encourage emergent writing: children use their understanding of phonics to make the best representation of the word they want to write, alongside high and medium frequency words they have memorised.

In Key Stage Two in particular, teachers make use of some of Ros Wilson's strategies and materials e.g. 'VCOP'. The school also uses the work of Pie Corbett and Sue Palmer. Standard English is expected in writing by all pupils when appropriate. Examples of non-standard grammar are dealt with explicitly, and alternatives suggested. The teaching of grammar is embedded in the English curriculum. Aspects are taught discretely at times, but we try wherever possible to make meaningful connections with the genres being studied.

In each phase of school, we teach agreed sentence types, using codes understood and used by pupils. (see attached list of sentence types) Guided writing takes place during the English Hour. Pupils are usually grouped by attainment or common need, and supported either in the main task, or in an area identified by the teacher as a specific target for those pupils. Pupils of all attainment levels are supported, at times, in this way.

Handwriting

At Fishergate School, we use our own agreed handwriting style (see attached). Our aim to join as many letters as possible to avoid confusion, with x and z being the only exceptions. In the Foundation Stage, children are taught to form their letters with exiting flicks straight away. They are taught the relevant joins as they learn each digraph and are encouraged to join in their independent writing too. We consider it a 'non-negotiable' that the overwhelming majority of pupils be able to use a fluent, joined script by the end of Year 2. We begin the academic year with very regular handwriting practice throughout school in order to communicate the high expectations we expect pupils to maintain throughout the academic year. Handwriting practice is often linked to spelling patterns being studied. As the year progresses, only pupils needing additional support have regular handwriting practice, usually through an intervention group. All children have experience of writing with different pens and pencils and on different kinds of paper (plain, lined, squared.) For pupils who struggle with handwriting, class teachers use a range of strategies to support them in communicating their ideas: shared writing; word-processing, particularly using Clicker 7; scribing; using sound buttons to record their words.

Spelling

We believe in developing children's spelling intelligence: their ability to draw on a range of strategies and skills which enable them to tackle unfamiliar words successfully.

In Key Stage One, and in the Foundation Stage, phonics is taught daily, using *Letters and Sounds*. Children are grouped according to which phase of phonics they need to learn next. In Key Stage One, this work takes place outside of the English Hour. Pupils are given individual spelling bookmarks which are based on tricky words from the different stages of *Letters and*

Sounds and the common exception words for Year 1 and 2; they are quizzed weekly.

In Key Stage Two, and when pupils are ready in Key Stage One, spelling rules and patterns from the National Curriculum are taught discretely twice during each week. One English lesson a week is devoted to developing skills in spelling, with a brief revisit at one or two other times during the week. Generally, there are four or five spelling activities over a two-week period, reinforcing the same rule or pattern. We use the strategies originally outlined in *Support for Spelling* to investigate new rules. The spellings in the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 word lists of the National Curriculum are taught through a series of bookmarks, which children tackle at their own pace by practising at home. When ready, pupils ask to be quizzed in school and earn stickers on their own certificate.

Children are often organised into attainment groups, but work in a wide range of other ways too. Pupils in Key Stage Two who have gaps in their phonic understanding are taught in catch-up groups, using *Letters and Sounds* or *Fresh Start*.

Grammar

The teaching of grammar is embedded in our planning. We seek wherever possible to make links with particular genres so that pupils learn to recognise and to use the grammatical features associated with different kinds of writing. *Grammar for Writing* and *Developing Early Writing* are still relevant, useful documents which teachers use to support their planning. Grammar is often taught and practised through games and warm-ups which the children enjoy. At times, it is also taught discretely. We use the framework provided by the national curriculum, including the lists of grammatical terminology pupils should know. Pupils are familiar with a range of sentence types, reflecting varied grammatical constructions, and these are displayed in every classroom. Standard English is expected in all writing where this is appropriate to the tone of the piece. Standard grammar is modelled by all teachers. In Early Years and Key Stage One, teachers will rephrase what a child has said, using standard grammar, rather than correct them. Key Stage Two pupils are asked to correct their work where there are errors in the use of Standard English. Pupils are taught to recognise and use different registers and make informed choices about the tone which is appropriate to the task.

Cross-curricular links

We seek, wherever possible, to make relevant links between different subject areas. Skills developed in English can be applied to work in other areas. Often, objectives from other subjects (e.g. researching a history topic) are taught through English lessons. High quality writing is insisted upon in work across the curriculum.

Computing is used in many ways to enhance and develop learning. Choosing the best phrasing for a search or scanning a website for relevant information are two examples of how the internet supports the development of English skills. Our pupils develop transferable skills to support learning when using Ipads, Chromebooks or laptops. They learn to create their own word-processed documents using *Word, Publisher, Google Docs* and *PowerPoint*, becoming increasingly competent typists and using tools to aid in the drafting and editing process. Ipads and digital cameras are used by the children to create or capture images from drama in many ways. We use a range of other software to support pupils' learning, including *Photostory 3* and *2 Simple*. The interactive whiteboard is used daily in many ways by teacher and pupils.

Teaching and learning styles and differentiation

Our policy ensures that all pupils have equal access to the broad and balanced curriculum we offer. In our selection of resources, our planning, and our teaching, we are careful to consider the needs, current attainment, gender, social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds of all our children.

At Fishergate School, we understand that children learn in different ways. Teachers' planning will cater for auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learners, recognising their differing needs.

Work is matched to the attainment of each child, with an appropriate level of challenge. Groups might be given different activities, might self-select from tasks of different levels of challenge, or the class might all participate in the same activity, but with the use of a layered success criteria which enables pupils to reach higher, and understand next steps in learning.

Growth mindset: We strongly believe that neither pupils nor teachers should put limits on expectations of progress. If our pupils are to enjoy being life-long learners, we practitioners need to foster an appreciation of

the benefits of hard work and perseverance, of learning goals rather than performance goals, and of the lessons which can be learned through failing, and trying again. Our layered success criteria enable all pupils to challenge themselves, regardless of current attainment. Sometimes, pupils devise success criteria themselves. Teaching assistants are used to support targeted pupils during each part of the lesson. Some pupils may be part of a planned intervention to help plug gaps in their learning, and these will always take place outside of English lessons. These additional sessions may also involve pre-teaching of a text to be studied in class to give pupils greater confidence in the lesson, and to enable them to overlearn something they may find challenging. These pupils will not necessarily be on the SEN register, but may have a specific area e.g. punctuation that needs focused work. Interventions will be run by class teachers, the SENCO and by teaching assistants.

Children of all attainment levels learn to work independently, with a partner, as part of a group (whether same or mixed attainment), and to contribute to whole class work.

Children with English as an Additional Language will have access to extra support, help and activities through conjunction with the class teacher and the school's EAL support teacher.

Assessment

In every lesson, teachers ensure that children know what they will be learning, why they are learning it and how they can make progress. Learning objectives are displayed clearly and shared with the pupils, alongside the success criteria to meet the objective. At times, learning objectives are dictated by the children's own interests; teachers make time to enable pupils to pursue their own lines of enquiry. Success criteria can be drawn up with the class. Children regularly review their own progress and set themselves further targets, using layered success criteria which indicate appropriate next steps.

Assessments are used to inform teaching in a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessment. Daily assessments are an informal part of every lesson to check children's understanding and give the teacher information, which will help to adjust day-to-day lesson plans. These assessments will

help teachers judge when pupils are ready to move to the next phase of learning within a topic. This is noted on the weekly plan. Sometimes, a group of pupils who have not met the lesson's objective receive brief but focused support before the following lesson takes place, to enable them to keep pace with their peers.

Short-term assessments will take place at the end of topics. Teachers' will assess some of the key objectives that have been covered. Children will be usually aware of the objectives against which they are being assessed. The outcomes are recorded using Classroom Monitor, where each individual child's progress is tracked, and this informs future planning.

Weekly extended writing for Years 2-6 provides a very regular opportunity to make assessments. The contexts will vary: scaffolded work within a topic; work supported by an adult; entirely independent writing. Regular opportunities are also planned for pupils to write short pieces, practising a particular skill such as varying sentence openers in a focused way. By independent writing, we mean writing completed at a distance from direct teaching and/or writing in other subjects e.g. science or history. Staff meet regularly throughout the year to moderate writing and ensure judgements are sound. Moderation meetings also take place with colleagues from neighbouring schools.

During assessment periods, staff often use SAT papers and optional QCA tests, particularly in reading. The range of assessments is used to inform a class teacher's judgement. Children who do not appear to be making good progress can be quickly identified and steps taken to enable them to catch up. At the end of the year, accurate information will then be reported to parents and the child's next teacher.

(see the school's Assessment policy for more information)

Marking

(See the school's Marking and Feedback Policy for further information)

As they move through school, children are taught to use drafting marks to aid in the editing of their own and others' work. They become increasingly skilled at self and peer assessment. They are used to discussing their work with an adult or talk partner and will be given time to read and respond to a teacher's written remarks. Focused marking is used for key pieces of writing, and will indicate success against the criteria given and next steps.

Throughout school, we use green highlighting to identify strengths, and pink to indicate an area for improvement. As they mature as writers, children are given increasingly open-ended verbal and written feedback, encouraging them to make their own choices as to how to improve. Pink highlighting is used less and less as pupils move through Year 5/6.

It is important that pupils learn to edit and redraft with increasing independence so we use a 'SPAM' routine (Spelling, Punctuation, Add, Missing) to encourage them to take responsibility for firstly, finding and correcting errors, and secondly, seeing ways to develop their writing further.

Children are also given time to correct grammar and spellings. A limited number of errors are highlighted by the teacher, depending on the child's attainment, focusing on high and medium frequency words and on spelling rules recently taught. When appropriate, 'sp.' will indicate an error on a particular line, but without pinpointing the exact word so that the children must look for themselves. Higher attaining pupils are expected to use a dictionary to correct spellings, while some children can refer to a word chart, and others are given the correct spelling as a model before practising the word three times. Pupils also use a wobbly line to indicate a spelling they intend to go back and check. The guiding principle is that pupils receive individualised feedback on all aspects of their writing so that they can make better progress.

Resources

Every classroom has its own:

book corner, with a range of scheme and real books in fiction and non-fiction (new book stock is purchased every year)

sets of dictionaries for different levels of ability and thesauruses

word cards and banks to support spelling

individual whiteboards

interactive whiteboard

2 class laptops

weekly library time with opportunity to borrow books

We acknowledge that the National Literacy Strategy produced many useful resources. Below are some which we use regularly in our teaching:

Letters and Sounds

Progression in Phonics

Planning Exemplification for Yrs 2,3&6
Developmental Writing
Grammar for Writing
Support for Spelling

To support teachers in their planning, we have chosen to purchase several schemes from which teachers can select resources:

Rapid Readers (Pearson)
Bug Club/Phonics Bug (Pearson)
Action Words
Jolly Phonics
Skeleton Poster Books (Sue Palmer)
Rigby Navigator, Guided and Independent
Ginn Models for Writing
Collins Focus on English
100 English Hours
Connections (OUP)
Collins' Grammar and Punctuation
KS2 Pelican Interactive books
Nelson English
Collins Drama Box
Rising Stars Cracking Comprehension

Pie Corbett Jumpstart
Read Write Inc Fresh Start
(Oxford)
Strategies for Immediate
Impact on Writing Standards
(Ros Wilson)
Oxford Reading Tree

Management of English

Role of the Subject Leader

- Ensure teachers are familiar with the new National Curriculum and help them to plan lessons
- Provide staff with accurate analysis of end of year data
- Plan English Action Plan in response data analysis
- Prepare, organise and lead INSET, with the support of the Headteacher
- Work co-operatively with the SENDCO
- Observe colleagues with a view to identifying the support they need
- Attend INSET to ensure Fishergate is up-to-date with new initiatives
- Monitor standards in the teaching and learning of English
- Teach demonstration lessons
- Discuss regularly the progress of implementing the English policy and EAP in the school with the Headteacher and the English governor

Role of the Headteacher

- Lead, manage and monitor the implementation of the new National Curriculum, including monitoring teaching plans and the quality of teaching in classrooms
- With the English governor, keep the governing body informed about progress and standards
- Ensure that English remains a high profile in the school's development work
- Deploy support staff to maximise progress in English

Date of Policy: January 2017

Date agreed by Governors and Staff:

Review: 2019



Danielle Rees English Subject Leader