

Westover Green Community School



Policy for English

Rationale

Competence in English enables children to communicate effectively within their families, with their peers and with the wider world and leads to improved life opportunities. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing enable children to organise and express their own thoughts and to access the knowledge and ideas of others. In order to negotiate today's world, children need to be literate in the widest sense; to be competent in the use of ICT in all its varied forms and to be able to respond thoughtfully and critically to information put out through the media. If, in addition to this, children can respond to literature at an artistic, aesthetic level, we should foster this - good literature is life enhancing.

"Studying English literature at school was my first, and probably my biggest step towards mental freedom and independence. It was like falling in love with life."

Ian McEwan

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils are supported to develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils are also taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils are enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils are supported to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama performances.

The statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across key stage 1 and key stage 2 are also reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

The use of Somerset's Total Communication signing system is regularly used, particularly for Singing and Signing Assemblies, to improve comprehension and communication skills. Some teachers have had training in STC.

Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLA) realise and use their role as language models for children. Whether in story telling, whole class teaching, group discussions or one-to-one conversations, teachers and TLAs aim to provide a good model of spoken English and a good model as communicators, using eye contact, voice inflection and gesture to ensure children's engagement and understanding.

At Westover there are TLAs trained to deliver 'Talk Boost' a programme that promotes spoken language development which leads to accurate grammar and sentence construction in writing.

Reading

We seek to foster an enthusiasm and interest in books, firstly through the example of teachers. Before they start school, children are encouraged to borrow books from the class book corners to take home and share with their parents. We encourage parents to read to, and with, their children at home. We encourage parents and children to search these out in the local library and to request books as birthday/Christmas presents.

The National Curriculum programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

word reading

comprehension (both listening and reading).

The teaching at Westover Green focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. Phonics is therefore emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

It is our aim that, by the end of their primary education, where appropriate, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

We invite professional writers and poets, into school or take children to 'readings' in order to inspire an enthusiasm for books. Examples include the poets Adrian Mitchell, Tony Mitton and Phil Bowen, Oxford Reading Tree illustrator, Alex Brychta and fiction writers Michael Morpurgo, Luke Temple and Stewart Ross.

In addition, children at KS1 and Lower KS2 are given individual reading tuition - sometimes with the class teacher, more usually with the TLA and/or volunteers. Children are expected to take a book home each night to read or share with parents, according to their reading independence.

The main scheme used at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 is Oxford Reading Tree. Other schemes such as Rigby Star and Pearson Bug Club supplement the scheme. After ORT the children use non-scheme library books.

An awareness of the need to provide multi-cultural books and books appealing to boys as well as girls is reflected in the books bought for the library.

We are supported by parents and members of our local community, who come into school each week to listen to children reading.

Accelerated Reading Programme (ALR)

This programme is available to Y2 pupils throughout the year and targets specific needs with the purpose of accelerating reading ability and preparing children for the KS2 curriculum. The programme is run by a specifically trained and designated member of staff.

Phonics

Phonics is taught systematically and regularly in all Foundation Stage and KS1 classes. 'Letters and Sounds' is taught at Foundation Stage and KS1, supplemented by Jolly Phonics. Foundation Stage and each KS1 year group streams the teaching to best enable every pupil to access learning at a level appropriate to their development. The importance of repetition and over-learning in the teaching of phonics and spelling and the link between spelling and handwriting is recognised. Much emphasis is placed on phonemic awareness and rhyme awareness, particularly in the early years. The synthetic phonics model of teaching is taught throughout the school. We aim to make the teaching of phonics lively, enjoyable and interactive through the use of a variety of activities, games, investigations and ICT.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

transcription (spelling and handwriting);

composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

The teaching at Westover Green develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing are incorporated into the National Curriculum programmes of study for composition. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

We recognise the need for children to write effectively in all areas of the curriculum and for cross-curricular links to be made between English and other subject areas.

Talk for Writing is used to improve children's writing. The system of immerse, imitate, innovate and invent structure gives children the opportunity to explore and analyse different genres in a secure format before moving on to their own independent writing. In addition,

oral repetition, debate and drama encompassing actions for particular words (connectives) give formal structure to the writing.

The use of individual white boards is useful in class and group writing sessions, where children can all be involved in practising writing skills. Interactive Whiteboards are used to annotate texts to show writing features as well as to teach proof-reading and editing skills.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

The two statutory appendices in the National Curriculum (spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation) with an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study to inform our teaching at Westover Green.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They are taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed in the statutory appendices. These do not constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. The school follows the definitions provided in the non-statutory glossary in the National Curriculum.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. Pupils therefore learn the correct grammatical terms in English and these terms are integrated within teaching.

Handwriting - Approaches and Strategies (refer to the Handwriting Policy)

Handwriting is taught using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. In the Early Years, children are taught to add exit strokes to their lower case printing in order to aid the transition to joined handwriting.

Joined (cursive) handwriting is introduced at Year 1.

Good presentation of writing is encouraged.

Marking and Assessment of Writing (refer to the Marking policy)

Marking is an important part of the assessment process for teachers and children. It provides the opportunity to set targets for future learning. Whilst marking children's written work with them, is obviously the ideal, we acknowledge that this is rarely possible within an English lesson. To make marking manageable, teachers may use the following approaches

- Selective marking, eg all the openings, one paragraph of punctuation

- Marking a group at a time on a rotational basis
- Mark one example and use this as the basis for a shared writing or guided writing session on proof-reading/editing.
- Ask children to share their work with a peer 'response partner'

Our aim is to make marking positive and useful. Teachers' comments should:

- Be specific
- Identify strengths
- Identify the next steps
- Use supportive and direct instructions
- Indicate where the objective of the lesson has been achieved.

With regard to spelling, teachers will not usually mark every misspelt word in a piece of writing. Rather, we will draw children's attention to particular words, in the way we feel to be most appropriate and helpful. Children's spelling is assessed in line with the school's assessment policy.

Approaches to the teaching of English

Westover Green has adopted the National Curriculum programmes of study for English as a basis for our English curriculum. Every class in key stages 1 and 2 have a daily hour of english. Discrete phonics and spelling is taught across a week. Additional time, at the discretion of the class teacher, is also given to handwriting, individual reading, guided reading, spelling and listening to, and reading, stories and poems.

The reception class follows the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

When planning and teaching the English curriculum the following elements are considered:

- Differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils including careful planning of work to include a range of teaching strategies with a balance between audio, visual, and kinaesthetic techniques
- ICT and cross-curricular links are made where appropriate
- The careful marking of work in accordance with the marking policy
- Using reading and writing targets with the children to ensure progress is made

An English lesson is taught daily in years 1 to 6 inclusive. The structure of the lesson is flexible, whilst encompassing all elements of the National Curriculum over the course of a year.

Setting and Grouping

Children are grouped according to ability. However, grouping in each lesson will reflect the activities the children are engaged in.

AEN, EAL, Gifted and Talented

It is our policy to include every child in the class English lesson in all but the most exceptional circumstances. Additional support to address individual targets is given at appropriate times - this could be within or without of the lesson. Teachers aim to meet the range of needs within each class by differentiated questioning or activities, by targeted classroom support and by differentiated tasks during the Independent/Guided elements of the lesson. We recognise that all children are entitled to participate fully in English, but where appropriate, material from an earlier key stage or year group may be used, according to the ability of a pupil.

Equal opportunities

We will ensure that all pupils have access to the full English curriculum. For further details, please refer to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Children for whom English is an additional language will receive additional support as appropriate.

School curriculum

The programmes of study for English are set out year-by-year for KS1 and two-yearly for KS2.

At Westover Green the programmes of study are taught through fiction, non-fiction and poetry blocks. These are identified on curriculum overviews. Additional elements of the English curriculum are taught discretely:

- daily phonics in FS and KS1
- weekly spelling focus in KS2
- weekly guided reading sessions

Our school curriculum for English on a year-by-year basis is available online at our school website.

Teaching and Learning Assistants

Our TLAs are one of the school's most valuable and effective resources. Many of our TLAs have received training in the delivery of guided reading and guided writing and are competent at supporting these aspects of the lesson. During the Whole class input of the lesson TLAs may be deployed to support children with AEN by encouraging or focusing their attention, they may give individual help to children with significant needs or they may prepare resources.

Application of English Skills to other Curriculum Subjects

We encourage children to apply skills learned in English to other curriculum subjects and recognise that other subject areas provide opportunities for the further development and practice of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Teachers are encouraged to be flexible

with **when** they teach particular skills or particular text types so as to fit in with topics in, for example History.

ICT/Computing

ICT is seen as an integral part of the teaching of English. The teaching of word-processing and other related ICT work takes place throughout the school curriculum including ICT based lessons. The use of laptops and ipads enhance the teaching of English in a variety of ways including skills practice (spelling, reading, grammar) and research (preparation for writing).

Planning

Long term planning identifies the blocks of English that will be taught across the year groups aligned to the National Curriculum orders for English (2014). This is found on Curriculum overviews. To ensure the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are covered staff highlights the elements taught each term.

Medium/Short term planning is undertaken on a unit plan. Carefully chosen texts stimulate and enthuses the children to read and write. These plans show differentiation where appropriate and progression across the week(s).

All plans are monitored on a regular basis by the Head teacher and the English Subject Leader.

Assessment and Recording

Assessment is crucial to the learning process. Children's work is regularly assessed through observation, discussion, scrutiny of work and evaluating outcome.

- End of year targets are set for each year group
- Termly Pupil Progress Meetings are used to track the progress of each child in reading and writing across the year

Formative Assessment

Teacher assessment is an integral part of good practice. Assessment is carried out on a daily and weekly basis. It involves identifying children's progress against teaching objectives and targets, determining which children have achieved and moving them on to the next stage of learning. On-going assessment allows teachers to provide opportunities for appropriate interventions and support.

Summative Assessment

This includes:

- Baseline in the Foundation year

- End of year screening in Foundation year and Year 1
- Phonics screen in Year 1
- Year 2 NC tests
- Years 3, 4 and 5 optional tests
- Year 6 NC tests

Attainment targets

The school recognises that the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. We will be reviewing our assessment arrangements in light of the new requirements when they are published.

Recording

- Tracking in reading and writing against NC levels
- Phonics check through Letters and Sounds word checklist - spelling and reading
- Reading records

All levels of attainment are recorded on SLP (SIMS).

Homework

English homework is set in the form of reading and practising spellings. In years 5 and 6 children may be asked to finish a piece of writing at home, complete a comprehension, or practise a technical skill. Please refer to the Homework Policy for further details.

Staff Development

Members of the teaching staff have access to the following:

- Regular help and advice on the planning and teaching of English
- Demonstration lessons or the opportunity to observe another colleague or a Leading English Teacher in another school
- Whole staff INSET days and twilight sessions on the teaching of English

The English Subject Leader

The Subject Leader:

- Works with the Head teacher to develop the annual action plan for English
- Identifies staff training needs and arranges appropriate training
- Monitors the planning and teaching of English as well as the work and attainment of pupils
- Ensures that resources are available and appropriately deployed
- Maintains links with the English Governor
- Keeps abreast of current developments and publications

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to monitor standards and progress the following systems are in place:

- Each teacher meets with the Head Teacher and/or the Deputy Head Teacher three times a year (Pupil Progress Meetings) to discuss progress in reading and writing. Particular attention is paid to children working below age related expectations, children with SEN, and children eligible for Pupil Premium.
- The English Subject Leader is given time to monitor English through a range of activities which includes: analysis of tracking data for reading and writing, lesson observations, scrutiny of work, review of planning and interviews with stakeholders
- Staff meet at least twice a year to scrutinise writing across the school
- The school's English action plan is part of the whole School Improvement Plan and is updated annually by the English Subject Leader and Head Teacher.

Home/School Links

Parents are encouraged to read to and with their children from the time of their pre-school induction. Book bags go home each night at KS1 and lower KS2 and these include a home/school link book. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the two Reporting to Parent meetings each year and to discuss their child's progress in English then and at other times. Parents receive an annual written report at the end of the school year. This includes details of their children's progress and areas for development. Where appropriate the national test results are reported.

Resources

- Oxford Reading Tree is our core reading scheme for KS1 and lower KS2
- Pearson Bug club supports Guided Reading
- Pearson Phonics Bug supports phonics at FS/KS1 and LKS2
- A range of comprehension text materials
- Pie Corbett Talk for Writing stories for FS/KS1/KS2
- A range of guided reading sets

Policy Review

The English Subject Leader, following discussion with the Head teacher and colleagues, will review this policy as and when required. Any amendments will be presented to the whole staff before implementation.

Policy Reviewed by:	Helen Bell
Signed:	Chair of Governors
Dated:	

