



Verwood C of E First School & Nursery

English Policy

Reviewed September 2022

This policy outlines the purpose and management of the English taught and learned at Verwood C of E First School and Nursery. The school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the teaching staff. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

The importance of and entitlement to English

At Verwood First School and Nursery we celebrate that English is a tool for both our thinking and learning. We continually work to develop our children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. In this way, children become empowered to interpret the world around them and to make sense of their experiences.

We want our children to be able to express themselves creatively and imaginatively. We aspire for them to become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and a range of multimedia. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins, ensuring that they are at the heart of the learning experience.

Aims and Objectives

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.

Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation

English forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at our school we ensure that all pupils can engage with English learning and develop as young readers and writers irrespective of their race, cultural background,

gender, religion, creed, level of intellectual ability or physical and emotional circumstances.

In planning work the teachers will aim:

- to provide breadth and balance of language activities for all children
- to provide a differentiated English curriculum to meet the needs of all the children through the continuity of experiences
- to set suitable learning challenges for individuals or small groups of children
- to respond to pupils diverse learning needs
- to liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator to ensure that provision is made for all children with S.E.N.
- to relate activities for S.E.N children to their individual targets and personal plans.
- to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.
- to identify vulnerable groups who are not making expected progress, and provide appropriate support.

Pupils identified as needing extra support in English will be given the appropriate help in the classroom. Providing for pupils with special educational needs should take account of each pupil's particular learning and assessment requirements and incorporate specific approaches which will allow individuals to succeed, such as using texts at an appropriate level of difficulty and planning for additional support.

Ensuring continuity and progression in learning

In the National Curriculum for 5 - 11 year olds, English is developed through four key areas:

- ✓ Spoken Language
- ✓ Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- ✓ Writing – Transcription & Composition
- ✓ Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

It is important to note that each is closely interrelated with the next, so it becomes increasingly difficult to consider one without the other(s).

The Early Years Foundation Stage

English in Early Years is based upon the Foundation Stage Profile strand of Communication, Language & Literacy.

Communication, language and literacy depend on learning and being competent in a number of key skills, together with having the confidence, opportunity, encouragement, support and disposition to use them. This area of learning includes communication, speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes, being read a wide range of books and reading simple texts and writing for a variety of purposes. To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in communication, language and literacy, practitioners should give particular attention to:

- ✓ Providing opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other
- ✓ Incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning;
- ✓ Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- ✓ Giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role play and practical experiences
- ✓ Planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books
- ✓ Providing opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script
- ✓ Providing time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups, with particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, using their home language when appropriate

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2):

Children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-4):

Children should learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

Approach to learning and teaching

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 should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills.

Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate. All pupils should be enabled to

participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.

They should 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 and theatre performances. Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the national curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

Phonics:

As of Autumn 2022 we follow the 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' phonics scheme. Children who take part in ULS receive 25 minute sessions on a daily basis and are assessed regularly.

This scheme is a systematic synthetic phonics programme which was validated by the DfE in December 2021.

Wimborne Academy Trust is committed to creating a thriving reading culture in all schools where every child will learn to read successfully.

Phase one is the beginning of the systematic learning of phonics and will take place predominantly in Nursery and Pre-School. It falls primarily within the Communication and Language and Literacy area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This crucial phase is the exciting first step on every child's early reading journey and forms the bedrock of developing children's early reading. In this phase children will experience a wealth of listening activities, including using their listening skills to hear sounds in the environment, recognise instrumental sounds and use body percussion. Children will enjoy playing with sounds and words as they develop their language skills, spotting rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in songs and stories they hear. They will begin to explore the skill of oral blending and segmenting. A more structured approach to the teaching of reading will begin in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception where children will begin to learn sounds and decode words, they will make rapid progress in their reading journey. Children will learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception' words for Phases 2, 3 and 4. They will use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions and sentences. Children will leave Reception being able to apply the phonemes taught within Phase 2, 3 and 4.

In Year 1, children will work through Phase 5a, b and c, they will learn any alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional Common Exception Words. By the end of Year 1 children will have mastered using phonics to decode and blend when reading and segment when spelling. Towards the end of Year 1 all children are screened using the national Phonics Screening Check.

In Year 2, phonics continues to be revisited to ensure mastery of the phonetic code and any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive support to close identified gaps. To ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression, children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up through

bespoke 1-1 interventions. These include grapheme (letter(s) representing a sound) phoneme (single spoken sound) correspondence recognition and blending and segmenting interventions.

The lowest attaining 20% of pupils are closely monitored to ensure these interventions have an impact. The phonic provision will continue for those in KS2 who have not completed the programme

Reading:

Reading is a skill essential for life and at Verwood First School and Nursery we want our children to leave school with a love of reading. Reading is a habit and that habit needs to be grounded in what we do at school. Children need to see adults loving books, so school staff are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children. This of course includes magazines, newspapers and online reading as well as traditional books.

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

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Whole-Class Guided Reading:

At Verwood C of E First School and Nursery we promote a 'phonics first' approach in both our guided reading sessions at school and in the books children take home, texts are very closely matched to a child's current phonics knowledge so that every child can experience real success in their reading. In these crucial early stages of reading we will primarily use books from Ransom Reading Stars Phonics to ensure complete fidelity to the Unlocking Letters and Sounds progression we follow. Once children progress beyond decodable texts, they move onto our book scheme so that they can continue to progress in their decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension skills to become avid, expert readers.

Once children progress off of ULS grouped guided reading and onto a whole class guided reading approach, teachers will read a range of texts focusing on comprehension and specific features in relation to objectives and content domains. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader. Teachers demonstrate to the class by 'thinking aloud' the skills required to be a reader. For guided reading, the text chosen should be at a level slightly higher than the majority of the class and the teacher should plan differentiated questions around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment.

Class Read:

Every class across the school is read to by an adult on a regular basis, fostering a love for reading through exposing the children to high quality literature. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of mediums (newspaper articles, video clips, extracts from novels etc.) to teach reading and to choose challenging texts that will uncover new vocabulary and themes, opening up discussions around the language of books.

We aim to have regular reading sessions outside of English lessons – a minimum of three times weekly in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. This gives children an opportunity to engage in independent, sustained reading and provides an opportunity for pupils to read and enjoy a range of texts and to apply reading strategies.

Each class has a dedicated, exciting reading area containing a range of books and text types for children to access independently.

Every class should have a range of books including:

- ✓ Poetry / plays
- ✓ Fiction – the choice of books reflects the spread of interest and reading abilities across the class, for example picture books, graphic novels, etc
- ✓ Non-fiction – as wide a range as possible, including plenty linked to the subject areas being studied
- ✓ Books from a range of cultures and in a range of languages interwoven through all collections – it may be appropriate to have some ‘focus’ boxes of books too

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils’ vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should 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 should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. References to developing pupils’ vocabulary are also included within the appendices.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and ‘language about language’ listed in the curriculum. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers’ creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers. Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

Spelling at Verwood First School is developed through:

- The systematic teaching of phonics in KS1 using the ULS scheme and the recurrent teaching of spelling strategies and conventions at KS2 using the ‘No Nonsense Spelling’ document.
- Regular dictionary and thesaurus work.
- Use of word banks and spell checks.
- Regular opportunities to identify and use spellings within a context.

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).

Writing at Verwood First School and Nursery is developed through:

Shared Writing

This provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate writing, including the thought processes that are required. Teachers should make explicit references to genre features, as well as word and sentence level work within the context of writing. Pupils contribute to the class composition by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups or using individual white boards or their strategy page. This is also the time when children are given the opportunity to discuss, verbalise and refine ideas before committing to print. With knowledge of text type from shared reading sessions, children should be able to generate a list of features that they would expect to use in any writing genre about which they have learned. This can be used by teachers and children alike as one way of assessing children's writing and their understanding of the purpose and organisation.

Independent Writing

Children should be given the opportunity for a range of independent writing activities which clearly link to whole class writing objectives. These tasks will need an identified audience, clear purpose and should cover all aspects of the writing process. Children should be given the opportunity to self-assess and peer-assess writing, based on a rubric linked to the learning objective/year group objectives and developed by the class as a whole as part of the teaching sequence leading up to creating an extended piece of writing. Ideally, time to mark pupil's writing should be built into future lessons to allow children to go through their work with an adult, learning from their misconceptions and setting targets for future pieces of writing. As a school, we encourage cross-curricular writing opportunities where possible, using our rich and varied curriculum as an engaging stimulus for the children.

Handwriting and Presentation

At Verwood First School and Nursery children are taught to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. We believe pupils have the opportunity to develop a fluent, legible and cursive script in their writing across the curriculum. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. Please see the Handwriting Policy for more details.

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).

In English, teachers:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Curriculum for English.
- Adapt and use the Programme of study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children.
- Make effective use of Assessment for learning within English.
- To ensure work is planned to enable all children to reach their full potential.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments will be used to monitor and support children's performance and progress. There are various forms of summative assessment in English that will inform future learning:

- Unlocking Letters and Sounds reading assessment once every half term
- Year group common exception word reading 3 times a year
- Unaided writing is evidenced throughout each half term

Responsibilities of Subject Lead

The English subject lead has the responsibility to take a lead in developing English further across the school.

- To have an impact on raising standards of attainment for English across the whole school.
- Adapt and use the Programme of Study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children.
- To monitor the whole school and individual needs to be able to assess individual professional development opportunities and needs.
- To maintain the availability of high quality resources.
- To maintain an overview of current trends and developments within the subject.
- To ensure, together with the Head Teacher and Assessment Lead, a rigorous and effective programme of moderation of assessments.
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of children's work sample monitoring is in place.
- To effectively manage any funding designated to English.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme.