

English Policy

Date of policy:	January 2019
Date last review adopted by governing body:	26 February 2019
Frequency of review:	3 years

1. Rationale

At Writtle Infant School we firmly believe that the learning of English is a significant life skill and that the development of strong learning foundations will enable our children to listen, speak, read and write confidently throughout their school career and on into adult life. English is taught of course, as a core curriculum subject. However, the key skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are practised and extended throughout the day in a wide range of cross curricular contexts. Since children enter school with differing levels of linguistic skill and experience there is a commitment of personalising each child's learning so that their ability to use English confidently and flexibly is steadily developed throughout their infant years.

2. Aims

We aim to develop in all the children:

- A positive attitude towards all aspects of English.
- The ability to communicate and respond effectively.
- A love of reading and books.
- The competence to produce work of high quality.
- As much independence and confidence as possible.
- A keen awareness of audience in all areas of English across the range of English skills.
- Persistence and stamina.
- The confidence to tackle and solve problems through the application of knowledge and the use of skills.

3. Objectives

- To provide a rich topic based English curriculum starting from where the children are.
- To provide a stimulating environment in which all the skills of English can thrive.
- To follow the guidelines of the National Curriculum, Early Years Foundation Stage, and Letters and Sounds.
- To motivate children by drawing on their experiences and perceptions.
- To provide multi-sensory English education in order to maximise engagement and enjoyment in all children.
- To use a variety of techniques, including drama to expand the range of opportunities for expression and interaction in English.
- To encourage an atmosphere of trust and supportiveness in which children can take creative and intellectual risks.

4. Children's Experiences

Speaking and Listening

Most children will be able to talk by the time that they come to school. It is essential that these skills are developed so that children are able to express themselves confidently, clearly and fluently using a variety of vocabulary. Talk is valuable in the development of a range of skills and is an essential starting point for reading and writing. It is also necessary in developing social skills.

It is important for children to become aware of the times when it is necessary to listen attentively. This is an acquired skill which is absolutely essential in a learning situation. At Writtle Infant School we employ a number of different approaches to facilitate this, including: talk partners and trios, narrative thinking, time to talk, talk for writing, hot seating, role play, puppets, class discussion, social stories intervention programmes, sharing assemblies and drama productions, 'show and tell', story sacks and audio listening posts. Speaking and listening opportunities are provided daily in English sessions and across the curriculum.

Reading

At Writtle Infant School, early literacy in EYFS and KS1 is learnt through developing work on speaking and listening, early reading and phonics and in line with the Communication and Language and Reading and Writing strands of the Early Years Curriculum. All children are heard read regularly by an adult in school and are able to independently choose books from a banded selection to share at home. The books are a mixture of fiction and non-fiction and are grouped in approximate reading levels according to a child's reading fluency, decoding skills and comprehension. There is no limit to how many times a week they can change their books. At Writtle Infant School we provide a variety of styles and levels of reading books and schemes to meet all needs. Parents and other family members are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's reading development. In supplement to these books each child has their own online book bag which they can access with their unique username and password at www.activelearnprimary.co.uk/login. Teachers will allocate online books and homework activities on a regular basis. All pupils are also given a reading record book which is to be used by adults, including parents and carers who hear the child read. The expectation is that adults will write in the record if their child has read at home. Teaching staff will also communicate how the child is getting on in school and will give next steps in order to develop his/her reading skills further.

Guided reading occurs regularly across the school in KS1 and during the summer term in Foundation Stage. Guided reading sessions are led by the teacher or teaching assistants and are based on the book talk approach of talk for writing. In addition to this we teach skills such as comprehension and using other cues to read a word- not just phonics. Research and book selection skills are also taught from an early stage. The children are introduced to the key comprehension skills of: Inference, prediction, vocabulary, retrieval and sequencing through fictional characters called: Vocabulary Victor, Predicting Pip, Inference Iggy, Sequencing Suki and Rex Retriever.

We have a wide selection of guided reading texts and online texts that we use for guided reading. We also have daily story sessions read by an adult to encourage the love and enjoyment of books and reading.

We believe that free access to books of all kinds is important in the development of the child's interest in, and appreciation of, reading. To this end, all classrooms have inviting reading corners/mini-libraries and also book displays and collections related to ongoing topic work. We have a purpose built library and each class has a weekly library session. During library times children are allowed to select a book which they may take home for a week. We also run regular family library sessions before and after school when parents and carers can choose a book to borrow.

Writing

At Writtle Infant School we believe that the learning of writing skills should be embedded across the curriculum. The key skills of planning, composing, evaluating, spelling, handwriting, presentation, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary are therefore taught explicitly in the context of English lessons but also indirectly through cross-curricular writing tasks in other subjects.

In EYFS, writing is about how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken word and the written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing, children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes. The appropriate developmental age in EYFS curriculum informs planning for learning activities and writing materials are always available for the children in their child-initiated learning and play. Children are introduced to narrative thinking and talk for writing through word and language games, role play and storytelling/helicopter stories.

The development of writing skills at KS1 progresses by building on the basic skills learnt at EYFS and very much with an emphasis on talk for writing. Children are introduced to many different genres and opportunities are given for extended writing. Tasks are planned for and scaffolded according to need by the provision of written structures/templates (where appropriate), by the use of IT, or by the intervention of a supporting teacher or adult.

5. Cross-curricular opportunities

At Writtle Infant School we believe that children learn best in a creative, cross-curricular and integrated context. As staff we will therefore seek to make cross curricular links with the learning taking place in English with that in other areas, both at the planning stage as well as in response to formative assessment. We also aim to provide extra-curricular opportunities to enhance English skills, knowledge and understanding, such as drama workshops, visiting authors, special book day activities, and storytelling sessions.

6. Use of ICT

All use of ICT is led by our Internet Access/E-Safety policy. We have the intention that all children are Infant IT literate by the time they leave KS1. We believe that computers and other forms of IT can play a key role in learning in English. Children have access to laptops, iPads, audio recorders, video and audio-editing software, to support learning. From a teaching perspective, teaching staff have opportunities for training to take advantage of IT.

7. Phonics

Systematic and high quality phonics learning takes place daily at EYFS & KS1. In our school we use an amalgamation of successful phonics programmes. We believe that our programme of learning will equip our children with a range of decoding skills by the time they leave KS1, in addition to giving them a good grounding in spelling. This is built upon with the 'Support for Spelling Programme' which is taught in Year 2 once children have completed Phase 5 in Letters and Sounds. We use interactive resources such as Phonics Bug, Espresso and Phonics Play and a variety of 'Letters and sounds' games when teaching phonics. As a school we have a large bank of centrally available phonic resources for staff to use including The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness. This is also used in some cases as a learning intervention. Phonemes and key vocabulary are displayed in all classrooms. Children are set for at least one daily session of phonics across the year group. All children in Year two follow the government Support for Spelling programme and in addition, those who are still at Phase 5 or below are also taught within small intervention groups.

8. The School Provision

The school will provide the following:

- A daily S&L session;
- Daily WRP phonics programme;
- Small group and individual reading interventions;
- School handwriting scheme;
- At KS1 a weekly grammar lesson;
- Opportunities to write across the curriculum using and applying skills and understanding developed in English lessons.

9. Organisation

All teaching staff are responsible for the teaching of English to their own class. Teaching Assistants carry out learning activities, directed by the class teachers, with small groups or individuals. Classes are of mixed ability. The length of lesson will vary, according, to the task. Teachers will provide appropriate planning. We plan and teach fiction, non-fiction and poetry, through a 'talk for writing' and topic approach.

10. Management

The head teacher will have overall management of the English curriculum in consultation with the English leader and other members of staff. The English governor will be informed and kept up-to-date on a regular basis. School development targets which are set by the school and agreed by the class teachers each year are used to inform planning.

11. Equal Opportunities

All pupils will be provided with learning experiences which enable them to experience success, gain confidence and acquire competence. Every opportunity is made to ensure equal opportunity for all children, irrespective of ability, race, culture and gender. It is important that the materials used give a balanced view of events and people. Books used for the teaching of reading should also reflect the

interests of the children. (See Equal Opportunities policy) The English curriculum should fulfil the needs of all pupils. SEN children with specific English targets will be supported where necessary. The work will be differentiated according to the needs of the child. Every child must be able to make progress, however small, and have a positive attitude towards his/her work.

12. Implementation

All year group teams complete, medium (half-termly) and short term (weekly/daily) planning, which are linked to the year group's cross-curricular 'Themed Approach' long term curriculum planning (LTCP). Class teachers refer to the English Curriculum Guidance and The English planning Tool Kit to identify objectives. Examples of all aspects of English should be displayed, not only in the classrooms, but around the school. Home learning tasks are set for each year group in accordance with the school home learning policy.

13. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment opportunities are an integral part of English teaching. Formative assessment is ongoing and involves the children. Summative assessment will take place through Early Years Foundation Stage Profiling and end of Key Stage tests.

Each half-term children's unaided writing is levelled and with other assessment is used to record children's progress on the school tracking system. Children are expected to make accelerated progress in reading and writing each year in line with national expectations. In addition to ongoing assessments made and noted against planning records on a regular basis, termly assessments are also made in speaking and listening, phonics, reading and writing. The outcome of these assessments for each child is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and is fed into ongoing tracking data. As a result of this, individuals or groups may be identified for further targeted support.

Written reports informing parents of their child's progress are provided each term. They are intended to provide a discussion point at parents evening. Annual reports are written by class teachers, identifying achievements in line with the NC level descriptors and EYFS Curriculum, with general targets being set.

Marking should be diagnostic and supportive and in line with the school's marking policy, especially in respect to 'Assessment for Learning'. Children are made aware of the learning intention for the lesson and success criteria are shared in a variety of ways.

14. Resources

Resources are available in each of the classrooms and in the corridor and Library to promote the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in English. The English Subject Leader will assist members of staff with the resources which are needed. A wide range of fiction and non-fiction 'Big Books' and story sacks are available in the library and in classrooms.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

Members of the Senior Leadership Team and the English Coordinator, in line with the cycle of monitoring for this subject, will carry out monitoring of the teaching and learning in English through lesson observations, pupil interviews, governor assemblies and work scrutiny.

16. Role of the Co-ordinator

- To facilitate the development of English identified in the School Development Plan.
- To review English Policy periodically.
- To work collaboratively with staff to promote continuity and progression.
- To create and monitor Schemes of work.
- Monitoring including lesson observations, pupil voice surveys, work sampling and climate walks.
- To attend relevant INSET courses, and encourage and support staff where possible.
- To organise and if relevant deliver staff training.
- Monitoring and organization of centrally held resources.
- Purchase of resources in consultation with staff and in line with the allocated budget.

17. Role of Governors

Governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies. They support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively. They ensure that the building and equipment are safe. They monitor pupil attainment across the school and ensure that staff development and performance management promote good quality teaching.

18. Equality statement

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils regardless of gender, disability, and ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.