

Broadwater Down Primary School

**ENGLISH POLICY**

Reviewed by Staff: March 2015  
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Next Review: April 2018

## Our School Vision for English

We aim to deliver a high quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of Literacy skills is central to improving a child's life chances. Teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills they have acquired in a range of contexts. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school. Teachers use inspirational ideas to engage children in work providing memorable experiences, bringing topics to life through real life contexts. 'Stunning starts' are planned to launch a unit of work with 'fantastic finishes' at the end. Curriculum coverage is carefully monitored by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all staff are delivering a quality English curriculum.

## National Curriculum 2014

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

The new English programme of study is based on four areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

The new National Curriculum is divided into 3 Key stages; Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). By 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.

The new National curriculum 2014, gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key stage under the following headings:

- Spoken language

- Reading - Word reading
  - Comprehension
- Writing - Transcription,
  - Spelling,
  - Handwriting and presentation,
  - Composition,
  - Grammar and punctuation

## Spoken language

Foundation Stage:

### Communication and Language

**Listening and attention:** Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

**Understanding:** children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

**Speaking:** children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

All the children in the Foundation Stage are assessed using Language link, a computer based program, which identifies any potential problems and provides an intervention program for individual children. Speechlink is used to identify any problems with making sounds.

Developing strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English at Broadwater Down Primary School. Teachers place a high emphasis on spoken language and plan for the discreet teaching of skills as well as incidental learning opportunities. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to enable them to internalise language patterns and understand how

language changes in different situations. This enables our children to understand and manipulate language for different purposes and audiences. To do this teachers provide authentic contexts, giving children opportunities to use a range of spoken language. Teachers provide a range of purposeful opportunities through role play, drama, discussions and debates. The strong emphasis on spoken language is evident in the Early Years and continues throughout the school. Children take part in regular debates and discussions as well as drama and role play and presentations to parents. All adults model the use of Standard English, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken English.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be *'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'* (p10)

They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

The focus on the spoken word gives children the ability to cope with written language by discovering:

- How it works;
- That meanings are shaped by lexical and syntactical choices;
- That language changes in different contexts;
- That there are differences between written and spoken English and standard and non-standard;
- Rules of spoken language;

- Creative thinking and self-expression

## Writing

In the Foundation Stage children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

The National Curriculum states that children should:

- develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- use accurate spelling and punctuation
- be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well-structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions regularly for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group. Children are encouraged to develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing and to use dictionaries, thesauruses and spell-checks.

*The Writing sequence:*

Immersion

This is the stage of the unit where children are immersed in the text type. Children will become familiar with the language rhythms and patterns that are involved within the text. It is impossible to write a sentence without being able to say it. This helps children to internalise the patterns of language. Key vocabulary is identified and displayed to be referred to throughout. It is vital that children understand what words mean.

### Exploration

This refers to looking closely at the text, analysing language patterns and playing with language. This is the part of the unit where a writer's toolkit may be created and further exploration into grammatical features and deeper meanings may be explored. Children may explore other similar texts. They may draw upon underlying structures and language features of the original model to create their own version.

### Imitation and invention

Using internalised techniques and structures, children now start to imitate and invent a new idea; this may be a character, story line, text etc. At this stage, children will move to becoming more independent writers. Children will be encouraged to write within the same text type but may choose different topics that interest and intrigue them.

*Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing will be evident throughout this sequence and will support both independent and groups of children following teacher's formative assessments. Assessments will inform shared writing and will inform the groups that are needed for guided writing. Stages do not have a time frame; teachers plan around the needs of the children in their class and the process is cyclical. Rich texts will be used as a stimulus for the writing sequence. A range of texts may be used throughout alongside the main text.*

## Handwriting

In Year R children are prepared to show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They learn to move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.'

In Reception class pupils will learn to:

- engage in pre-writing or 'writing-readiness' activities
- practise holding a writing or drawing implement correctly
- practise and enjoy making marks using a variety of materials
- make large marks and small marks, using gross and fine motor skills
- make patterns such as wiggles, curves, straight lines, zig-zags and circles
- practise drawing patterns inside bigger shapes, keeping within the lines
- write in a cursive style; leading in and out of letters
- use the Read, Write, Inc sayings for letter formation; the teacher will add 'leading in' and 'leading out' to the saying
- use the Write Dance programme

In Year 1 pupils are taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place using a cursive style where they lead into the letter and then out from the letter
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- Non statutory: Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly, to avoid forming bad habits.

- Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.(paper/books position may need adjusting; sitting on the left of a right handed pupil.)
- At Broadwater Down we teach handwriting through Handwriting families : (curly caterpillar) c,a,d,e,g,o,q,f,s; \*x when drawn cursively; (long ladder) i,j,l,t,u,y; (one armed robot) b,h,k,m,n,p,r; (zig zag) v,w,z.)
- We strongly recommend that handwriting should be taught as a modelled, supervised and guided activity, ensuring that pupils do not form habits which are unhelpful later. Correct letter formation and orientation is crucial.
- All Year 1 pupils will practise their basic handwriting skills on a daily basis for 10 minutes a day. This may be linked to spelling patterns and may at times be on a whiteboard and sometimes in books.

In Year 2 pupils are taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined ,write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters
- Non statutory: Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. It is not appropriate to rush children to join letters until they have mastered these skills.

- All pupils in Year 2 will practise their handwriting three times a week for at least 10 minutes, this may link to spelling patterns and may at times be completed on a whiteboard.

In Years 3 and 4 pupils are taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.]
- Non statutory: Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- Non statutory: Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say.

- They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version.
- They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

All children in KS2 will have one handwriting lesson a week to introduce joins and practise their presentation skills. Any child who requires an intervention will work on their skills for 10 minutes , three times a week. Children who make good progress with their handwriting will be awarded a pen licence which entitles them to use a handwriting pen for all written work. This licence will need to be signed by the teacher and the pupil and then laminated. It will then be presented in assembly by the Head teacher. A copy should also be stuck in the front of the child's English book.

The ICT program 'Handwriting for Windows' will be used to model our handwriting style and at times handwritten examples on whiteboards.

## Phonics in Foundation Stage and KS1

We take a whole-class approach to the teaching of phonics, where possible, with a focus on achieving age expected phase for all. We follow the Letters and Sounds document from the Early Years and beyond, supplemented by resources from Read, Write, Inc.

Systematic structured phonics instruction ensures all children are taught keeping up with the ideal trajectory of 'Letters and Sounds' and the pace of learning is appropriately challenging and no children are held back.

Close monitoring and assessment will inform interventions, highlighting gaps early on and ensuring children make progress.

Cued Articulation is used in Reception to support pupils who find learning phonics difficult.

Children not meeting age related expectations, who do not pass the phonic screening test in Year 1 continue to have phonics input on a regular basis to enable them to pass the test in Year 2.

## Spelling

We want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers, and we believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers need to spend less time and energy in thinking about spelling to enable them to channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

A balanced spelling programme includes five main components:

- understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological)
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words
- practising and assessing spelling
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading
- building pupils' self-images as spellers

A good spelling programme gradually builds pupils' spelling vocabulary by introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced. Experience has confirmed that short, lively, focused sessions are more enjoyable and effective than an occasional skills session.

Spelling strategies need to be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross-curricular words and individual pupils' words. Proofreading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting.

Year 2 and Key Stage Two follow the Read Write Inc Programme for Spelling. Children are taught spelling discreetly daily.

A letter is sent home on a weekly basis to inform parents of the spelling rule being taught that week alongside some high frequency words, and common exception words that need to be learnt.

## Reading

Reading in the EYFS at Broadwater Down is about children developing an interest and enjoyment of reading. Initially, they will be encouraged to develop reading behaviours, such as handling books carefully, holding books upright, turning pages and showing an interest in illustrations, understanding and joining in with stories, books, poetry and rhymes, and recognising that print carries meaning, in both books and the environment. Through this children should develop a competency to read, a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

When choosing texts, we look for a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry; selecting powerful texts which deal with important human situations and strong feelings and - in the early years - traditional tales with clear narrative structures and texts which have a strong musical quality. Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. So, while components such as grammar and vocabulary are important in the new curriculum, they will be taught in a contextualised way, through the enjoyment of shared reading.

Units of work will include rich texts which will be evidenced in planning. Shared reading will take place in class. Reading lessons, including guided reading, will take place on a daily basis on a weekly timetable in years 1 to 6. Children in the Early Years read on a one to one basis using the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. Every class has a reading area that is inviting and may be themed according to the learning journey. It may include author reviews, book reviews and reading prompts on display.

To promote a love of reading we:

- Read aloud to children up to and including Year 6, to introduce them to new authors and styles of writing.
- Encourage and model reading for pleasure and establish an appreciation and love of reading.
- Establish and develop a varied range of texts in the classroom.
- Run a Library Club
- Hold a Book Week
- Hold book sales

### Reading sessions

'Making it manageable and making it count', guided reading is focused on covering the Programme of Study and descriptors ensuring word decoding and word comprehension is covered for the appropriate year group using the yearly overview and medium term plan. Whilst children are developing their phonological skills they will be reading from phonetically decodable books.

### Grammar

It is most effective when grammar is taught in the context of reading and writing; either in the context of the linguistic demands of a particular genre or the writing needs of a child. In addition to integrated grammar teaching, discrete grammar lessons are taught to ensure pupils regularly visit key vocabulary and concepts. We take a pragmatic approach to the teaching of grammar and believe effective grammar teaching takes place in meaningful contexts.

Playing with words, investigations, puns, jokes, and rhymes can all enrich and inform grammatical knowledge and understanding and develop a genuine interest in how language works.

## SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) Starter/ Games

Teachers encourage children to play with language through short games based on children's needs (AFL) and also areas of the National Curriculum to be covered by the year group. Teachers use the appropriate language when talking about writing ensuring children learn the appropriate terms found in appendix 1. These are evident in planning - see appendix 2 for proformas of planning.

Timetables and planning will show evidence of daily games/ AFL focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar.

An electronic SPAG folder of resources and bank of recommended websites is available to support teachers on the Staff Public area.

## Learning Environment

Our classrooms and displays are used as learning tools. Using the learning environment, all skills are transferrable and learning is applied across a range of contexts, ensuring intrinsic links between reading, writing, phonics, grammar, spelling and punctuation are made and children are regularly given time to consolidate learning. Through the learning environment children are empowered and supported to build independence when working.

*We have literacy rich classrooms which have evidence of:*

- Differentiation offering all children the opportunity to make progress in Literacy learning.
- 100 high frequency words on display and/or accessible on tables to support children.
- The complex alphabetic code displayed.
- Children being engaged through a wide range of modes such as: drama, oral presentation, visual, and kinaesthetic activities.
- Modelled expectations available for reference.
- Current phonic and spelling objectives are visible.

- Easily accessible reference material such as spelling dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Working Walls as a record of the learning journey.

*Every class has an English and Grammar Working Wall;*

This evolves on a daily basis as each day progresses. It displays the long term learning objectives as well as short term intentions.

The success criteria are developed with the children and displayed. They are used to demonstrate to pupils how they will be able to achieve the learning intention.

Exemplified text-types are used.

Key vocabulary is also displayed. Mind-mapping, modelled examples, re-drafting and pupils' examples are features of the working wall.

## Role of Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- monitoring and evaluating English:-
  - pupil progress and analysis of data six times per year
  - provision of English, ensuring the breadth and balance of the curriculum
  - English across the curriculum
  - the quality of the Learning Environment,
- taking the lead in policy development,
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD,
- purchasing and organising resources,
- reporting to governors and SLT
- Guidance support and training for parents and carers
- keeping up to date with recent English developments.

## Expectation of all teachers

- Planning covers all English objectives throughout the year and this will be tracked using the yearly overview
- A4 English books are used for all writing
- A high level of presentation is expected across all subjects
- Guided group work is planned for and delivered
- At least one piece of writing is produced every day across the curriculum
- Topics offer children the opportunity to contextualise and apply discrete literacy learning for a wide range of purposes
- Writing is edited and published at least once every half-term
- There is a written outcome or presentation at least twice each half term; this could be a cross curricular piece of work
- Learning Objectives and Success Criteria are displayed in all lessons and are evident in books.
- Marking is directly linked to the Learning Intention and Success Criteria in all lessons. See feedback and Marking policy
- Success criteria are generated prior to the lesson and with the children.
- Skills taught in English are reinforced and embedded throughout all other areas of learning; this is evidenced in all work.
- Weekly plans are based on medium term planning and success criteria based on the most recent assessments.
- Assessment for Learning is used in classrooms.

## Time Allocations for English

### Foundation Stage

- Daily Phonics for 15 - 20 minutes
- Handwriting, including physical handwriting taught as part of phonics teaching
- Guided early writing activities twice a week from term 1 in writing book
- Early writing activities and opportunities will be provided daily - writing table, role play area
- Guided reading three times per week from term 4
- Grammar taught in context

## Key Stage 1

- Daily Phonics 15- 20 minutes
- Guided reading on a daily basis
- Handwriting practice within phonics teaching.
- Handwriting taught sessions twice/three times a week 15 minutes
- Extended writing taught across the curriculum.
- Grammar taught in context and as discrete warm-ups
- Punctuation and grammar games- 5/ 10 minutes 3- 5 x a week, details on English planning

## Key Stage 2

- Reading lessons on a daily basis
- Handwriting taught sessions at least once a week 15 minutes
- Handwriting practice within phonics/spelling teaching.
- Extended writing taught across the curriculum.
- Punctuation and grammar games- 5/10 minutes 3-5 x a week, details on English planning
- Spelling/phonics focus daily in KS2
- Phonics interventions/ whole class focus where needed- games to consolidate and reinforce

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy.

Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Group or individual targets are set accordingly. Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy and is crucial in supporting pupil progress.

Children are informed of their own targets for learning and supported to make progress towards them. Children are also involved in setting their own steps to success and encouraged to review their progress towards these through self, peer and teacher assessment. Please see Assessment policy for further details.