



English Policy

Date of Policy	December 2022
Next Review Date	December 2023
Person/s Responsible	Staff and Governing Body

At Ashtree Primary School and Nursery we believe that every pupil has the right to be able to read and write effectively and to be able to communicate with others eloquently. In order to achieve this aim the teaching of English has a high profile within the school.

We follow The 2014 Primary National Curriculum in England, for English, ensuring 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
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening.

This policy applies to all pupils, regardless of their race, gender, religion or the presence of Special Educational Needs of any sort (including those who are most able). The curriculum is differentiated to ensure that all pupils progress in their learning at an appropriate pace supported by enrichment or reinforcement activities.

Within the National Curriculum for English skills are broken down into reading, writing and spoken language.

Phonics

In order to teach all our pupils to become fluent, confident readers, who have a love of reading, we follow a phonics first policy. All pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 receive phonics teaching in line with a Government validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme called 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'. From Reception onwards, pupils receive a daily phonics lesson, and three twenty-minute reading sessions per week, targeted at their current level of attainment. Children are encouraged to apply this learning in other opportunities for reading and writing.

Pupils continue to receive daily phonics teaching until they are confident with using and applying the skills taught within phase five of the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' document.

Phonics teaching continues into Key Stage 2, for as long as necessary, for pupils who require extra support and learning time to focus on securing their phonics knowledge.

We work within all Key Stages to ensure that all pupils who require additional 'keep up' or 'catch up' sessions receive it. Any pupil who has not reached the expected phonics level by the end of Year 1, as

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assessed by the national screening check, will continue to receive additional 'keep up' or 'catch up' sessions within Year 2, so that they can catch up with their peers.

In nursery, children will experience a wealth of listening activities by accessing Letters and Sounds Phase One. They will learn to distinguish between speech sounds and how to blend and segment words orally. Effective assessment involves careful observation, analysis and review by practitioners of children's knowledge, skills and understanding in order to track their progress and make informed decisions about planning for the next steps of learning.

Pupils at Ashtree Primary School benefit from a high level of phonics knowledge by all staff, the consistent use of language throughout the school and the high emphasis that phonics receives in all reading and writing activities.

Reading

We believe that 'knowledge and imagination grow with reading,' and that all pupils should be taught to read fluently and expressively and be encouraged to enjoy reading both for pleasure and for information.

Individual Reading

Although we believe, phonics gives pupils the best start in learning to read, at Ashtree Primary School and Nursery, we also recognise that pupils need to practise reading regularly in order to become proficient.

All pupils within the school are placed on a book band that is appropriate to their current reading attainment. They read regularly in school with an adult fortnightly. As part of our home school agreement with parents, we ask that parents also support this journey by reading with their children regularly.

At each book band pupils become fluent and confident both within decoding (saying the words) and in comprehending the text. Pupils are assessed with an individual miscue to ensure that they have secured both of these skills before changing the colour of their book band (from red book band onwards).

Guided Reading

Teaching of reading also occurs within 'shared reading' sessions in whole class English lessons, within whole class lessons and within small group guided reading sessions. Pupils begin guided reading in Year 2.

In Reception and KS1, children take part in regular guided reading sessions with the teacher (including the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme' while the pupils are learning phonics).

In Key Stage 2 the children use Guided reading to discuss and analyse books in groups both with and without an adult.

In Nursery, children are taught to recognise familiar words and signs such as their own name. They are taught and encouraged to describe main story settings, events and characters. They are taught how to predict how they think a story might end. They will enjoy rhymes and rhythms in stories, poems and rhymes.

The structure of a guided reading session varies depending on the attainment and needs of the pupils within the group and the class.

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Enjoyment of reading

By giving reading a high profile within the school and within each classroom, we hope to encourage a lifelong relationship with reading, which allows our pupils to enjoy and experience a wide variety of literature from many genres.

We encourage the enjoyment of reading in a wide variety of ways that continue to be adapted in order to gain and maintain the enthusiasm of the pupils within the school. This includes 'Stop and Read' sessions that give the children an opportunity to listen to a story read to them by their teacher. The books chosen are pitched accordingly and chosen by a class vote. The school provides a wide variety of high-quality resources to support the teaching of reading, these include appropriately stocked book corners for each classroom and an EYFS/KS1 library and a KS2 library.

Writing

At Ashtree Primary School we believe that being able to write coherently not only enables pupils to communicate effectively, but also allows them to experience the joy of crafting their own individual stories and articles that express their points of view clearly.

It is important that pupils learn to write independently from an early stage and this is encouraged through emergent writing within the EYFS. During Key Stage 1 the teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting complements this process and is used systematically to support writing and to build up accuracy and speed.

We know that for pupils to become successful writers they need to:

- experience a wide range of written texts, which is the primary source of knowledge about the written word and how it 'sounds'
- orally tell and retell stories and other texts
- experience both shared and guided writing, where the teacher focuses attention explicitly on the technicalities of writing
- regularly practise writing independently.

Therefore, when planning English activities, we ensure that all pupils have access to these experiences. Within all year groups, pupils' writing work is based on high quality texts which the children respond to in a variety of ways (story recall, diary entry, non-fiction information texts in line with the National Curriculum). We follow a broad curriculum for writing which revisits different text types every year to ensure that pupils become confident writers of different genres. We also recognise the value of visual literacy both as a stimulus for writing and as media through which pupils can present their own ideas.

Handwriting

Handwriting and presentation of work within our school is important in all areas of the curriculum (see Presentation and Layout of Work Policy). Pupils are taught handwriting from Reception onwards. In EYFS and Year 1 (Autumn/Spring) the pupils develop a clear 'printed' style of writing. Pupils are taught to join letters and to develop cursive writing in Year 2. As they progress through the school, they are supported in generating an individual style which is both efficient and neat, through discrete handwriting lessons. Children who need extra fine motor development are supported in their classes.

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Spelling

In order to become confident writers pupils also need to become proficient at spelling. In EYFS and Key Stage 1 spelling is intrinsically linked to reading. Therefore, the spellings are based on phonics being learnt in class, along with key words from the lists in 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' and The 2014 National Curriculum.

From year 2 onwards pupils receive spelling lessons using No Nonsense Spelling Scheme. The programme has been written broadly following a teaching sequence for spelling, whereby each new concept is taught, practised, and then applied and assessed. Frequently there is also a 'Revise' session before the teaching session. Pupils requiring additional support with their spelling may take part in additional tasks to improve their spelling of high frequency words.

Grammar

We also recognise that pupils need to be taught to write grammatically and therefore pupils at Ashtree Primary School receive grammar lessons that are incorporated into the English lesson on a regular basis. These different grammatical elements are taken from The 2014 National Curriculum.

Spoken Language

At Ashtree Primary School we recognise the importance of being able to communicate orally and to understand what others are saying. We will teach pupils to use language precisely and coherently. This involves giving pupils opportunities to experience a rich language environment to develop their skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations. They should be able to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

Pupils are given opportunities to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including:

- using talk to develop and clarify ideas;
- identifying the main points to arise from a discussion;
- listening for a specific purpose; discussion and evaluation.

Pupils are also given opportunities to speak in front of a wider audience during Show and Tell and assemblies.

Including all pupils

There are pupils of differing abilities (including HPA, PPG, CLA and SEN) and needs in all classes at Ashtree Primary School. We provide suitable learning opportunities for all pupils by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the pupil. We use the skills of the Class Teacher and the Teaching Assistants to support relevant pupils in order to meet their needs.

Assessment

Effective assessment is essential to quality teaching and learning. Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a tool utilised by the school to raise attainment and accelerate progress. Good assessment practice ensures lesson planning is relevant and is based on a sound knowledge of the pupils' learning styles, attainment, progress and the next steps in their learning. We use guidelines from HfL and TAFs to help assess the progress of individuals within each class on an ongoing basis.

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Regular feedback is given to pupils (see the schools' Marking and Feedback Policy) and helps them to understand how to be successful, what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

The pupils at Ashtree Primary School take summative assessments in line with statutory requirements. They take part in a phonics screening test in Year 1; Reading and Writing SATs in Year 2 (which supports the teachers' overall assessment of their attainment); SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and Reading tests in Year 6 (as well as their writing attainment being assessed by their teachers, from ongoing work).

Other summative assessments are used throughout the school for example to test pupils' progress within spelling, grammar and reading.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our pupils can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows pupils to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

Laid out below are a variety of details giving more detail about certain areas of the English curriculum.

Appendix 1

Language used in relation to phonics

In order to achieve consistency for the pupils in our school all staff use the following language in relation to phonics.

- **blend** (vb) — to draw individual sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. s-n-a-p, blended together, reads snap
- **cluster** — two (or three) letters making two (or three) sounds, e.g. the first three letters of 'straight' are a consonant cluster
- **digraph** — two letters making one sound, e.g. sh, ch, th, ph.
- **trigraph** — three letters making one sound e.g. igh
- **quadgraph** — four letters making one sound e.g. ough
- **vowel digraphs** comprise of two vowels which, together, make one sound, e.g. ai, oo, ow
- **magic 'e'** — This is the term used in this school to describe a split vowel digraph with the children — two letters, split, making one sound, e.g. a-e as in make or i-e in site
- **grapheme** — a letter or a group of letters representing one sound, e.g. sh, ch, igh, ough (as in 'though')
- **grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC)** — the relationship between sounds and the letters which represent those sounds; also known as 'letter-sound correspondences'
- **mnemonic** — a device for memorising and recalling something, such as a snake shaped like the letter 'S' or a saying to help remember the order of the letters in a word i.e. 'silly animals in Devon' = said
- **phoneme** — the smallest single identifiable sound, e.g. the letters 'sh' represent just one sound, but 'sp' represents two (/s/ and /p/)
- **segment** (vb) — to split up a word into its individual phonemes in order to spell it, e.g. the word 'cat' has three phonemes: /c/, /a/, /t/
- **VC, CVC, CCVC** — the abbreviations for vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, and are used to describe the order of letters in words, e.g. am, Sam, slam.
- **Short Vowel** — /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ or /u/
- **Long Vowel** — a phoneme which represents the name of the vowel /ay/ /ee/ /igh/ /ow/ /you/
- **Consonant** — All letters of the alphabet that are not vowels
- **Phoneme frame** — Boxes used to help with spelling in phonics sessions. One box is used for each phoneme.
- **Dots and Dashes** — A dot is used under a single letter phoneme and a line (or dash) underneath a digraph/trigraph etc to help the children segment a word to sound out.

Structure of Guided Reading sessions

It is likely that children working in KS1/Y3 will need teaching explicitly the skills required to be a good comprehender including: visualising, making connections, unpicking vocabulary, analysing, predicting and questioning. This will take place when the teacher reads aloud to the children describing what their mind is doing while they are reading.

It is likely that children in KS2 will need to use their guided reading time to reason, justify, verbalise and validate their thoughts about a text. Therefore, it is likely that the majority (if not all) of the guided reading session time will be spent in discussion and that the children read a section of text in preparation for the session or during the session. The most important factor of any guided reading session is that it is targeted at the specific learning needs of the children.

Appendix 3

Ways in which we Encourage an Enjoyment of Reading.

In order to achieve our aim that all pupils should be taught to read fluently and expressively and be encouraged to enjoy reading both for pleasure and for information, we:

- Have made reading high profile in the school
- Have a reading reward scheme in KS1 & KS2
- Maintain two well stocked libraries with books appropriate to the age of the children
- Have a reading area in each classroom with books for the children to choose to read.
- Celebrate World Book Day every year with fun activities
- Have Year 6 Reading Ambassadors who read with all year groups
- Offer a space for children to read at breaktime every day of the week
- Hold parent drop in sessions where parents can stay with their children to hear them read or read them a story
- Have a variety of storysacks in a 'Storysack Library'
- Offer workshops for parents to come and learn new strategies to use with their child.

Appendix 4

Resources for Teaching Reading

Guided reading books for EYFS and KS1 and book banded books are a part of the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised scheme and used until pupils have completed the phonics scheme.

Once pupils have completed the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised phonics scheme, book banded books to support the teaching of reading are from various publishers including: Collins Big Cat and Nelson Thornes, and are carefully matched to pupils' reading abilities and their next steps.

Guided Reading books in Year 2 and Key Stage 2, are age appropriate and cover a range of genres throughout the school year.

Infant, Junior and Class libraries contain a wide variety of age-appropriate texts.

Responsibilities of the English Leads

The English Leads consist of the Phonics Lead, the Reading Lead and the Writing Lead and they will coordinate the Area of Learning 'Language & Literacy' within the school, aiming to secure high quality learning and teaching, effective use of resources, and the highest standards of achievement for all pupils.

Key Tasks:

Strategic Vision

1. Have a strategic vision for English development within the school
2. Have a good knowledge of issues related to English
3. Keep up to date with developments e.g. Teaching methods, resources, assessment issues and record-keeping procedures
4. In consultation with the SLT and staff to devise the school's English policy based on statutory requirements
5. Ensure that there are schemes of work for English in place. The scheme should outline progression from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2. These are updated regularly and shared on our School Website
6. Encourage displays of children's work and celebrate children's achievements
7. Promote opportunities for children to use their English skills for a range of purposes and audiences other than the teacher e.g. Involvement in competitions, writing for other children and parents
8. Devise an annual action plan for the development of English.

Monitoring & Evaluation

1. In consultation with the SLT, monitor the implementation of the policy
2. Support staff, in collaboration with the SLT, in analysing all available data to inform learning and teaching
3. In consultation with the SLT and staff, evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and scheme throughout the school
4. Ensure that pupils' assessment records are kept up to date, in line with the school's Assessment Policy
5. Lead on Internal Standardisation and moderation
6. Liaise with the school's InCo regarding pupils with literacy difficulties. Keep records of meetings connected with the subject
7. Present reports to SLT and the school governors on the effectiveness of improvement measures.

Resource Manager

1. Be responsible for organising, maintaining and cataloguing resources and equipment
2. Keep abreast of suitable new resources to support classroom strategies.

Professional Development

1. Identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff
2. Disseminate information from INSET and provide updates to staff
3. Ensure parents are informed of the school's approaches to teaching English and advise on how they may support their child's English development.

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Appendix 6

Responsibilities of the English Governor

The named governor responsible for English will:

1. Liaise with the Subject Leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher as appropriate
2. Visit the school and see the subject/area in operation (if possible)
3. Discuss the existing use of resources and future needs
4. Regularly report to the Governing Body on developments and progress
5. Attend appropriate training.