



WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL **ENGLISH POLICY**

Literacy unites the important skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. The different elements work alongside each other to help children to make sense of the world around them. We follow the 2014 National Curriculum Framework for Literacy and other guidance to enable quality learning and teaching to take place. This policy should be read alongside the new National Curriculum in England (published September 2013) and other documents from the Standards and testing Agency.

Reading Intent

At Whitchurch, we believe that all children should be equipped with the skills they need to be fluent, confident readers, who are able to comprehend a wide range of texts. We want pupils to develop a lifelong love of reading and to be able to understand more about the world and the global community they live in. We believe children should be exposed to a wide range of books so that they can see themselves in a book and have access to a diverse range of authors to broaden their experience both creatively and culturally. We foster strong partnership with our parent body, encouraging them to read and share books with their children from the moment they start in Reception. We fundamentally believe that reading underpins everything we do in all subjects across the curriculum.

Writing Intent

At Whitchurch, we believe that all pupils should be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing. We want pupils to acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to spell new words by effectively applying the spelling patterns and rules they learn. It is important that the children understand the purpose and audience when writing to engage their reader appropriately. We want our pupils to have fluency of oral and written Standard English in order to be able to express themselves clearly and confidently.

Our writing is often based around quality texts as we believe that the children benefit from strong models to influence their vocabulary and their sentence construction.

Our Aims:

Speaking and Listening

Literate Primary pupils should:

- Be able to talk confidently to share ideas and extend learning
- Be able to debate
- Listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest
- Articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary recognising audience
- Respond to questions and opinions appropriately
- Retell stories and poems which are known by heart

Reading

Within the context of reading, we believe that literate children should:

- Use a range of strategies including accurate decoding of text, to read for meaning; read with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text
- Deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts
- Identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level; have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading
- Explain and comment on writers' uses of language
- Have an interest in words and their meanings; developing a rich and varied vocabulary
- Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader
- Relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions
- Read a range of genres in fiction and poetry, including classical poetry
- Through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- Discuss books with reference to author, illustrator, genre, theme and characters; to express personal responses with increasing fluency
- Be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences

Writing

Within the context of writing, we believe that literate children should:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding;
- Have a thorough understanding of the English alphabetic code to underpin their reading and writing;
- Have fluent, legible and joined handwriting;

- Have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary;
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot;
- Understand, use and be able to write a range of non-fiction texts;
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing;
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;

Our assessment, planning and teaching strategies work towards the progressive development of these skills.

Our aim is to develop Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural through our teaching of literacy. We want to do this:

- To develop confidence and expertise in language,
- To understand how language shapes their individual identity.
- To develop awareness of moral and social issues in fiction, journalism, radio, television and film.
- To understand how language changes over time, the influences on spoken and written language and social attitudes to the use of language.
- To use written and discussion work in order to discuss social and moral issues.
- To develop empathy and sensitivity through literature.
- To develop expression of their own feelings through writing.
- To use moral stories as a basis for discussion e.g. Aesop's fables.
- To collaborate in groups, sharing ideas and values.
- To develop an awareness of other cultures through stories which reflect current cultural backgrounds and traditions, including folk tales.

Framework For Teaching

The school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage and Primary Framework as the starting point of our planning. Planning is, where possible, linked to the creative class topic, to enable cross curricular learning and in-depth knowledge of subjects.

Materials from a wide range of sources are used to enhance teaching where they are compatible with the practise outlined in the above packages.

Planning

Planning might be based on a book, film unit or topic theme. We write to perform, discuss, instruct and entertain. The Jane Considine sentence stacking approach is used for planning the majority of our units. This is explained in the writing section of

the document. We do use a range of other resources to support planning in writing where appropriate.

Assessment

Assessment is used to develop children's learning. Progress is tracked half termly using a range of evidence, including the following:

- teacher observations
- evidence in writing books, reading, phonics and spelling journals
- Little Wandle phonics assessment
- Accelerated reader Star Assessment tests
- Statutory tests (SATs) in Year 2 and Year 6
- Statutory phonics assessment in Year 1
- No More Marking writing assessment

Writing

At Whitchurch Primary School, we have adopted 'Jane Considine's The Write Stuff' approach to our teaching and learning of English to ensure clarity to the mechanics of writing. Following a method called 'Sentence Stacking', the approach places emphasis on sentences being 'stacked together' chronologically and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing.

Within each genre studied by the children, they will learn to sentence stack, focusing on the style of the author and impact of words and sentences most appropriate for that particular genre. All genres covered within writing sessions are those as taken from the Genre Overview on our Writing Progression Document.

Within each writing lesson, pupils learning is 'chunked' into three distinct parts for a writing lesson; initiate, model, enable.

The initiate stage is a time to inspire: through the use of a stimulus, pupils are immersed in a rich language discussion and activities to provide a wealth of vocabulary to aid their writing.

The model stage is the chunk whereby the teacher demonstrates the thoughts and processes of a writer and articulates writing choices.

The enable stage is the opportunity for pupils to showcase what they can do within particular writing parameters known as The Three Zones of Writing: FANTASTICs, GRAMMARISTICs and the BOOMTASTICs.

The Three Zones of Writing are essential components to support pupils in becoming great writers. Through the nine idea lenses known as the FANTASTICs, pupils focus on intended purpose of a sentence.

The GRAMMARISTICs allow pupils to focus on the grammar element of writing which focuses on sentence structure, grammar rules and punctuation.

The BOOMTASTICs allow pupils to capture and create a vivid visual for the reader through the use of poetic devices. Throughout the writing process, children edit and redraft their work in response to feedback from their teacher and peers.

Pupils have access to a wide range of writing opportunities that include:

- shared writing
- guided writing
- free writing
- writing different text types and narrative styles
- writing in different curriculum areas
- handwriting practice
- collaborative writing
- writing related to own experiences and enjoyment
- writing from a variety of stimuli
- planning, drafting, editing and presenting
- using ICT

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'. Teachers establish the purpose and audience for writing and make teaching objectives explicit to pupils so they know why they are studying a particular text type, the kind of writing activities they need to undertake and what the expected outcome will be. The following teaching sequence for reading and writing will be used as a framework:

1. Planning
2. Drafting and Writing
3. Evaluating and Editing
4. Proof-Reading
5. Reading Aloud and Sharing

Writing Assessment

Children's writing is formally each year. We assess their work using 'No More Marking' and whole school moderation tasks.

Title	Genre
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Year 3 October	Fiction
Year 5 November	Non Fiction
Year 1 January	Fiction
Year 4 January	Non Fiction
Year 2 February	Fiction
Year 6 February	Fiction

Our moderation task is based on a video stimulus and is a fiction task based on a Christmas theme. The whole school will use the same task and the children will write an independent piece.

No More Marking is assessed at key points through the year and the tasks are all different.

Teacher assessments are recorded at the end of each big term in our online assessment package 'Insight.'

We provide parents with details of attainment three times a year. These results are usually evidenced through the use of assessment of our 'No More Marking' and also our moderation tasks.

Reading

At Whitchurch, reading is taught through:

- Guided Reading sessions with whole class, groups or individuals.
- Shared Reading.
- 1:1 reading intervention or small group sessions.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.

These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of ['Application of phonics to reading'](#)
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression

- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Year 4, 5 and 6

Staff plan for daily 30-minute, whole class reading sessions to provide opportunities for objectives and content domains to be met.

Each child participates in a Whole Class Guided Reading session every week where their reading will be informally assessed. Question stems are based on the skills of vocabulary, inference, prediction, explain, retrieval and summarising.

Reading Books - children are responsible for regularly changing their reading book - either a scheme book or a 'free choice' book - from home or school. Each child is given their ZPD number to help them to choose a book from the right range for them.

There is an expectation that children read for at least 20 minutes per night.

Children will have the opportunity to read aloud and read a book of their choice independently.

A love of text and reading is fostered through:

- Regular visits to the lower school library, where children have access to books covering a range of genres and styles. They have time to choose books and share them with others.
- Book recommendations in class, sharing favourite books,
- Teacher's read aloud regularly to children from a class reader.
- Celebrating reading through book awards and prizes from Nursery through to Year 6.
- Creating attractive reading environments – book corners.
- Our virtual library - children have an opportunity to listen to an author reading the first chapter of a book.

Reading Assessment and Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader continues to support each child's love of reading, as well as continue to develop their fluency through their primary education. Accelerated Reader is a programme we use to ensure that each child in KS2 has a reading book

that will comfortably challenge pupils of all ages and abilities, while continuing to support their vocabulary acquisition and fluency of reading.

Each half term, pupils undertake a short assessment called a 'Star Assessment' on a computer, in order to inform their class teacher of their level of comprehension, which in turn allows their teacher to help each child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

Half termly, each child will be given a new ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) range from which they can select their daily class reading books within. After each book they read within their ZPD range, they will complete an online quiz and receive immediate feedback on their comprehension of the book, which motivates them to make progress with their reading skills.

Their first book will be at the lower end of their ZPD range and as they achieve and succeed with each book they will move towards the higher end of their range.

Grammar

Grammar should be taught daily in the lesson and if applicable in "stand alone" lessons if the link is too tenuous. Teachers should refer to the Termly Grammar Outcomes outlined in the new Literacy curriculum.

Intervention and Special Educational Needs

It is anticipated that our quality first teaching will meet the needs of at least eighty per cent of each cohort. Where it does not, additional intervention will be used as follows:

- Teachers and teaching assistants will work with small groups on specific targets in addition to normal class guided work
- Children failing to make progress will be placed on the Special Educational Needs Register and their needs planned for through an Pupil Profile
- Children well beyond the expected levels will have their needs considered through school procedures for More Able Pupils

Phonics, Handwriting and Spelling

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Whitchurch Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. We are uncompromising in our aspirations for our pupils to achieve individual success. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle*

Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a high quality systematic and synthetic phonics programme.

We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Whitchurch Primary School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

For additional information please see our phonics policy.

Handwriting

We believe it is important for the children to spend time mastering letter formation to make sure their orientation and size are correct. In addition in EYFS, we recognise the importance of children being able to hold a pencil correctly to aid more fluent writing. We give the children repeated opportunities for practice of letter formation before moving to joining letters in Year 2. We have a set of letters, which we call stop letters that we do not join. These letters are b, p, q, s, z and x.

The New Curriculum sets out the expectations for spelling in an additional document. We aim to improve spelling and vocabulary acquisition by:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn
- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate

Teaching and Learning

It is recognised that children learn in a range of different ways and our teaching aims to include a range style and activities in order to personalise learning as far as possible.

Continuing Professional Development

We recognise that our practice is evolving all the time. We therefore aim to:

- Keep abreast of new development packages as they emerge and integrate these into our practice
- Attend training where possible to enhance our understanding and delivery

Status of this Policy: Approved

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