

Hunton & Arrathorne Community Primary School

English Policy



Date: March 2025	Headteacher: Mr S Donaldson
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Aims

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

As the subject of English is such a vast area of the curriculum, the following policy has been divided into separate domains:

- Writing
- Spelling
- Reading Comprehension



Writing

At Hunton and Arrathorne, we intend for our children to be enthusiastic, articulate and imaginative communicators, proficient in expressing themselves in various forms and for different purposes by the time they reach the end of Year 6.

We see it as imperative for children to reach their full potential in writing, a life-skill that will serve them throughout any future career they may seek or any path they may choose to follow in life; their ability to achieve this rests on their skills and understanding in transcription, composition, oracy and grammar, punctuation and spelling. It is essential that our teaching and curriculum develops pupils' competence in these areas by providing children with the opportunity to write for a range of purposes, forms and audiences and across the curriculum to help ensure their writing is relevant and purposeful.

Organisation

Writing sessions are planned, delivered and assessed by the class teacher responsible for that class. They take place daily in Key Stage 2 and four times per week in Key Stage 1. Children have their own English books where their work is produced but they also have personal dictionaries to support their autonomy.

Implementation

Writing begins in EYFS where the children access 'Drawing Club', a vocabulary driven, stimulating scheme delivered by our highly-skilled EYFS lead. This scheme introduces the children to mark making through the use of 'codes' and builds up to phrases and sentences. This, alongside the Little Wandle Phonics Programme, provides the children with the opportunity to write sentences independently by the end of EYFS and provides them with a solid foundation of skills as they enter Year 1.

From Year 1 to Year 6, children develop their writing skills through the use of the Literacy Tree Scheme, a high-quality, text-based scheme which provides children with the opportunity to write across a wide range of genres and purposes. We have adapted the long-term plan to ensure it is progressive and bespoke to the needs of our children and to ensure children are exposed to fiction, non-fiction, poetry and playscripts throughout their education.

In Year 6, the children follow the scheme throughout the Autumn Term; once they have the skills and understanding of a range of genres, they move to a more 'sustained writing' approach which gives them ample opportunity to write, at length, for a variety of purposes & audiences and further develop their editing skills. In addition to our use of the Literacy Tree Scheme, children are exposed to daily dictation activities whereby they are given, orally, an age-appropriate sentence to complete. This enables the children to develop their handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills as well as having the opportunity to check their work for accuracy, either independently, with a peer or verbally with a teacher.



Spelling is taught from Year 2 through the use of the 'Spelling Shed Scheme' and handwriting is taught through 'Letter join' – more information about how these are delivered can be found further down.

Lesson Structure

Whilst the Literacy Tree planning offers tasks and activities for each lesson, each English lesson should begin with a 'skills' activity; this may be a daily dictation activity, a task based on editing and improving or a recap into previously taught spelling, punctuation and grammar rules. Each lesson should also include some form of speaking and listening activity to help develop oracy. Lessons should be evident in English books, with photographs/comments from the children used where no written work is evident in order to demonstrate a broad and varied range of activities used to develop our writing skills.

Learning Environments

Learning Walls should be relevant to the current text being covered and should be used as a 'working wall', with evidence of skills taught and teacher modelling from throughout the current unit of work. In addition to this, there is a Writers' Gallery in a shared area of the school to demonstrate progress from Reception through to Year 6. This should be updated at the end of each unit using children's 'published' writing.

Handwriting and presentation

Children producing their best handwriting and ensuring their presentation is to their highest standard is a big emphasis, not only in English but across the curriculum. We adopted the Letterjoin Handwriting scheme in January 2022, which allows us to have a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the school, resulting in a neat and cursive style. Each class should have at least two handwriting sessions per week, which should involve some teacher modelling/demonstrations from the Letterjoin scheme as well as the opportunity for children to practice on sheets or in their books.

All work in English should be presented with the full date and the learning objective. This may be stuck in for younger children but by Key Stage 2, children should be expected to write this independently.

Peer and Self-Assessment

Children should be encouraged to continuously assess and edit their work, building their autonomy in identifying and correcting any mistakes. Peer and self-assessment should be encouraged following longer pieces of writing for each writing unit in order for children to reflect on their work, celebrate what they have achieved and reflect on what could be improved.



Marking & Feedback

All work in English books should be marked in accordance with the Feedback Policy. This includes using the colour-co-ordinated use of highlighters: green indicating the objective has been met, yellow indicating partially met and pink indicating it has not been met. Children should be given the opportunities to edit and improve their work using purple pens and should be given the opportunity to publish a piece of writing at the end of each unit, implementing these improvements and corrections.

Assessment & Impact

The effectiveness of our Writing curriculum is measured by the extent in which our children are able to write confidently and accurately across a wide range of genres and for various purposes and audiences. Children should leave Year 6 with an enthusiasm for writing and equipped with all of the essential skills and techniques to flourish in writing for the remainder of their education and beyond. The impact of our curriculum is assessed robustly on a day-to-day basis to ensure it is providing children with the best possible foundations in which to succeed in writing. Our writing is celebrated and assessed in a variety of ways:

Assessing sustained pieces of writing against the relevant writing objectives using insight tracker.

Assessing children against end of Key Stage 2 SATs (Year 6 only) to assess understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Whole school writing gallery showcasing the progression in writing from EYFS to Year 6.

Regular book looks, learning walks and pupil voice to identify good practice and areas for development conducted by the English lead alongside the Headteacher and the link governor for core curriculum.

Weekly awards for hard work across the curriculum which includes writing.

Discrete spelling and handwriting sessions which are additional to the writing journey.

Spelling

We understand the children's spelling is closely linked to their understanding of phonics, which is why we place a huge understanding on Phonics within Early Years and throughout the school. For more information about how phonics is taught in school, please refer to the Early Reading and Phonics Policy and progression document.



From Year 2 to Year 6, children who have secure phonic knowledge are taught discrete spelling lessons three times per week. We follow the 'Spelling Shed' scheme for these sessions and they are in addition to phonics sessions for pupils who still need phonics. The programme has been designed to meet the needs of the 2014 national curriculum and it does that in a very manageable and flexible way, explaining comprehensively how to effectively teach spelling. We have chosen this spelling programme as it closely builds on the phonological understanding children have developed and allows for careful progression. An additional spelling worksheet will also be sent out weekly; this is optional but provides adults at home with the opportunity to consolidate spelling rules taught in schools.

As well as the discrete spelling sessions, it is our aim for children to develop spelling strategies which will help them for life. We identify common spelling errors within work and encourage children to use dictionaries and personal dictionaries to support them in correction. Some pupils have more additional bespoke support, from classroom resources or specific spelling intervention programmes to help them 'keep up' not 'catch up'.

The impact of our spelling curriculum is measured through summative and formative data. Teachers assess how well pupils apply spelling rules within independent writing, spelling sessions, spelling assessments (for children on the SEND register) and termly SATs assessments (for year 6 children).

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught discretely at least two times per week throughout the school. In Reception, pupils are taught simple letter formation. As they progress into Year 1 and have more finely developed motor-skills, pupils are taught to write in a cursive script. This is supported through the Letterjoin Handwriting Scheme.

We believe it is important that all staff in school model the correct handwriting, but also that pupils are exposed to a variety of fonts, styles and text types through things they read and see on display around school.

Pupils are encouraged to write neatly in pencil. In Upper Key Stage 2, all children are given a biro pen for writing activities. The style of pen is a deliberate choice which reflects the most common writing implement they will use in adult life. They are encouraged to use this for all writing-based tasks.

Reading

At Hunton and Arrathorne, reading is at the heart of all we do – a key curriculum driver within our school vision is 'We Are Lifelong Readers'. In addition to this, one of our '36 before Year 6' aims is for all children to meet an author in person. We have also recently adopted the Literacy Tree Scheme for writing which uses stories as the basis for developing writing.



The importance of reading is recognised and celebrated and, as the key to unlocking the rest of the academic curriculum, underpins much of what we do in school. Developing a culture where reading is at the forefront of our day-to-day teaching is established in Reception and consistently developed through to year six with opportunities for children to 'read for pleasure', both individually and with others, provided regularly. As reading engagement is strongly correlated with reading performance in an academic sense, we strive to make reading as enjoyable and purposeful as possible to ensure no child is left 'disengaged' with reading; our children's passion for reading is evident in school and is something we intend to build upon. Verbal discussions based around a text are recognised as key to unlocking understanding and engagement and this is a key factor in our approach to teaching comprehension skills. Once a text has been digested and understood, with the children provided with the opportunity to question and share their thoughts, then written comprehension skills can be developed. By the end of Year 6, we intend for our children to be fluent and passionate readers, whilst also being equipped with the skills to apply this passion to enhance their understanding across the curriculum.

Organisation

From Year 2 onwards, reading comprehension lessons should be taught between 9:00 and 9:30 each morning (with the exception of Monday). Children have their own Reading Journal in which to record their comprehension work.

For more information about reading and phonics in our school, please refer to the separate policy for Early Years and Phonics.

Planning Structure

We use Reading VIPERS in conjunction with the content domains for reading to ensure wide coverage of question types and forms. Following research into the most heavily weighted domains in the end of Key Stage 2 assessments, the following structure of lessons has been planned to be implemented from Year 2 – Year 6:

Tuesday: A new text will be introduced. Challenging vocabulary will be taught prior to children reading the text to ensure understanding. The text will be read by the teacher, modelling prosody and discussing key vocabulary as they progress through the text. No written comprehension questions will be completed by the focus will be on verbally discussing the text to ensure understanding.

Wednesday: The focus of this lesson will be 'echo reading' whereby the teacher models prosody and the children echo it back. This should be followed with some vocabulary-based comprehension questions, completed in their reading journals. These are then marked as a class at the end of the sessions.

Thursday: The children will read the text in pairs, again focussing on prosody. Pairings should be mixed up regularly to ensure more able children are able to model for less able readers and that children have the opportunity to read with various peers. This will be followed by some retrieval questions, completed in reading journals and marked as a class.



Friday: The children will read the text independently and the teacher will listen to children, targeting specific individuals. This will be followed by some inference-based questions (if this is appropriate to the text) or more general comprehension questions including sequencing, true or false, fact or opinion etc.

Throughout the week, opportunities to re-read the text, further increasing their prosody and fluency, should be built in. Comprehension questions, particularly those not covered on a weekly basis, should be reinforced throughout the curriculum.

Throughout the curriculum, we have invested heavily in a 'Curriculum Spine' for each subject across the curriculum, encouraging children to 'read as historians' or 'read as scientists' to further emphasise the importance of reading in all aspects of the curriculum.

Learning Environments

All classrooms include a reading corner which provides children with a selection of books to choose from for reading for pleasure. We encourage a 'Book Shop Culture' in each room which should entice the children to want to select the books on offer.

'Recommended Reads' and 'Curriculum Books' are clearly identified as well.

Presentation

Children should begin a new genre by writing the long date and naming the genre/text being taught (e.g. Classic Fiction Text: The Wind in the Willows). Each subsequent day should use the short date to indicate where one lesson ends and where the next begins as well as naming the focus for that lesson (e.g. L.O. – Vocabulary). A new page should be started to indicate the beginning of a new week/text.

Texts

It is important that children are exposed to a range of texts in different forms and genres throughout our reading comprehension lessons. Lessons may incorporate the use of a class text to help develop children's understanding of this but should not use it exclusively, ensuring that each half-term we cover texts from:

- Fiction (including classical fiction)
- Non-fiction
- Poetry

Marking & Feedback

Each lesson should provide an opportunity to discuss answers to any independent tasks to ensure children have a clear understanding of how well they are doing in reading comprehensions. Children



mark their own work using blue pen and use purple pen to improve/correct their answers following shared discussions.

Assessment & Impact

The effectiveness of our Reading curriculum is measured by the extent in which children are competent readers who can recommend books to their peers, have a thirst for reading a range of genres, and participate in discussions about books. They can also read books to enhance their knowledge and understanding of all subjects on the curriculum, and communicate their research to a wider audience. They should be competent in answering a wide range of questions, both verbally and in writing, from various domains within the curriculum. Primarily, they develop a love of reading and establish themselves as 'Lifelong Readers'.

Our reading is celebrated and assessed in a variety of ways:

Formative assessments are carried out daily through listening to children reading, discussions based around texts and written responses in comprehension lessons.

Summative assessments are carried out termly using PIRA assessments to help gauge attainment in reading comprehension which is used to help inform teacher assessments

Reading at home is monitored through the use of reading diaries with incentives for reading five times per week.

Regular book looks, learning walks and pupil voice to identify good practice and areas for development conducted by the English lead alongside the Headteacher.

Related Policies:

- Early Reading and Phonics Policy
- Progression in Phonics
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Progression in Reading
- Progression in Writing
- Progression in Spelling

