



English

Introduction

This policy outlines what we are aiming to achieve in respect of pupils' English education. It also describes our agreed approach to the planning, delivery and assessment of the English curriculum. The English taught and the methods used follow statutory requirements outlined in the following documents:

- The National Curriculum in England: Primary curriculum (Sept 2013)
- Early years foundation stage statutory framework: For group and school-based providers (July 2025) and Development Matters (Sept 2020)

The aim of the policy is to provide information and guidance for teachers, governors and other interested persons.

National Curriculum - Purpose of Study

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. Through being taught to speak and write fluently, people learn to communicate their ideas and emotions to others; through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading, in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, spiritually and socially.

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and develop a love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure 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

Rationale

In this school, all aspects of English are taught because every pupil has a statutory entitlement to be engaged with the programmes of study for English in the National Curriculum. Also, we believe the development of knowledge, skills and concepts across the whole spectrum of English to be essential because of their:

- crucial importance in the child's social, emotional, personal and intellectual development
- unique position as the essential learning tools both in and out of school
- status as communication skills for life
- potential for personal enrichment through facilitating access to a wide range of texts, providing pleasure or information

Scope of the Subject

The essential principle of English teaching is to help pupils to use language in an appropriate manner for a variety of purposes, audiences and situations to maximum benefit. It encompasses the enjoyment and critical study of literature. As a school, we strive to ensure that our children become confident, successful, literate members of society.

Literate primary children should:

- communicate appropriately in spoken and written forms
- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic and comprehension) to monitor their own reading and correct their own mistakes
- understand the sound and spelling systems and use these to decode and encode accurately
- have fluent and legible 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 on paper and on screen
- understand, use and be able to write a range of non-fiction texts on paper and on screen
- plan, revise and edit their own writing
- have a sound technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing
- be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences
- through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- express themselves creatively through the study and critical appreciation of literature and poetry

- explore/empathise with others and develop relationships, understanding and valuing other cultures through literature
- study and produce media texts, manipulating texts/language and ICT for effect
- Explore situations and issues through drama, role-play and speaking and listening activities

Speaking and Listening

The school ensures the continual development of pupils' confidence, and competence, in spoken language by focusing on the quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak, understanding that these are key factors in developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding for reading and writing. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and poems, and to prepare their ideas prior to writing. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

Oracy skills are taught and practised across all areas of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to use structured sentence stems, which enable children to confidently articulate and present their thoughts and ideas.

We provide pupils with opportunities to:

- speak competently and creatively for different purposes and audiences, reflecting on impact and response
- explore, develop and sustain ideas through talk
- understand, recall and respond to speakers' implicit and explicit meanings
- explain and comment on speakers' use of language, including vocabulary, grammar and non-verbal features
- take different roles in a groups to develop thinking and complete tasks
- participate in conversations, making appropriate contributions building on others' suggestions and responses
- use dramatic techniques including work in role to explore ideas and texts
- Use technical language to comment and reflect upon spoken and written language forms
- create, share and evaluate ideas and understanding through drama

In addition to the many oracy opportunities in the classroom, further opportunities to develop oracy skills include House Captains' Assemblies, School Council and Sports Council.

Reading

The school believes that reading is an integral and vital tool to learning both in and out of school. Reading facilitates independence in the quest for knowledge. It allows the reader to share experiences, which would otherwise not be encountered and encourages development of empathy. It engages readers with language models from which they can gain pleasure and an understanding of how their language works. It exposes them to cultures, genres, ideas and text types to give them a broad appreciation of literature and allow them to appreciate our varied and rich literary heritage.

At YFPS, we enable pupils to:

- read fluently and automatically by using systematic, synthetic phonic knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and the skills of blending as their prime approach for decoding unfamiliar words (Rose Report 2005), this is taught through the careful delivery of Read, Write, Inc. phonics
- build up a store of words that are instantly recognised and understood on sight
- understand and interpret tasks using inference and deduction
- identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts
- explain and comment on writers' use of language, vocabulary, grammatical and literary features
- engage with, and respond to, texts by reading independently for purpose, pleasure and learning
- respond imaginatively, using different strategies to engage with texts
- evaluate writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text
- choose to read a range of text types including fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- experience storytelling, reading aloud and story sharing to develop fluency and expression

Early reading skills are taught through Foundation and into KS1, following the Read, Write Inc programme for the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics. We have trained all staff and we also have a reading team who teach phonics daily to a group of children. We also run a tutoring programme for children who require extra support, to help ensure that all children are supported to become confident readers.

We have recently introduced Reading Plus in KS2. This tool is an adaptive literacy programme designed to improve children's reading skills, including fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. Reading Plus provides a personalised learning experience tailored to each child's reading ability, helping them to become more confident readers.

Alongside the decoding skills taught through phonics, we use the reading 'VIPERS' approach to teach the skills required for effective reading comprehension.

VIPERS stands for: vocabulary, inferencing, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summarising/sequencing. Children are taught these VIPERS skills explicitly through daily reading comprehension lessons.

Most importantly, at YFPS we aim to promote a 'love of reading'. We use Accelerated Reader for children who have moved off of the RWI programme, as a means of ensuring that children are matched with (and challenged by) appropriate texts, whilst also being highly motivated to progress in their reading. We encourage children and staff to discuss and share texts, and embrace opportunities for events and initiatives which celebrate and promote reading, including World Book Day and the Summer Reading Challenge.

Writing

We believe that confidence, and competence, in the use and control of the written word is essential to the creation, exploration and clear communication of meaning. As a school, we understand that writing is a developmental process and endeavour to promote it as an enjoyable experience.

In the early stages, the focus of teaching will be on developing knowledge and confidence in the young writer and, as this becomes established, the focus will sharpen to the development of competence, ensuring growth of knowledge about all aspects of writing and its application to written work in a planned, organised, stylistic and accurate manner.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription (spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters, phonics, and understanding the morphological and orthographic (spelling structure) patterns of words).

Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

We therefore provide opportunities for pupils to:

- create and shape texts for purpose, pleasure and learning
- use and adapt a range of forms, suited to different purposes and readers
- make stylistic choices, including vocabulary, literary features and viewpoints or voice
- use structural and presentational features for meaning and impact
- organise ideas into a coherent structure including layout, sections and paragraphs
- write cohesive paragraphs linking sentences within and between
- use a range of spelling strategies to have the confidence to use a wide range of vocabulary
- vary and adapt sentence structure for meaning and effect
- use a range of punctuation correctly to support meaning and emphasis
- convey meaning through grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated sentences

Writing opportunities are carefully planned around class topics and high-quality model texts. In KS1, children imitate and innovate texts, progressing to their own inventions. In KS2, children respond to class texts in their writing, utilising a wide range of tools, including Alan Peat's Sentence Types, to provide structure and variety. Significant emphasis is placed on audience and purpose when planning writing opportunities and children enjoy sharing their compositions with others. We also use Colourful Semantics to support children with their understanding of sentence structure and composition.

Spelling

We believe that conventional spelling is necessary to accurately convey meaning to the reader. We therefore help our children to develop a variety of strategies that will enable them to become independent, conventional spellers. The school recognises that learning to spell is a developmental process and utilises a phased spelling programme to build on spelling patterns across the key stages.

We therefore develop pupils' knowledge of:

- segmenting words into their constituent phonemes, for spelling is the reverse of blending phonemes into words for reading
- spelling words accurately by combining the use of grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge as the prime approach, and also morphological knowledge and etymological information
- a range of approaches to learn and spell irregular words

We use the Spelling Shed scheme of work from Year 1 to Year 6, which provides a structured progression of spelling rules and skills, whilst also providing children with a fun and interactive means of applying, practising and perfecting their spellings.

Handwriting

The school believes that the presentation of written work can not only reflect on an individual's fine motor skills but also the nature of the writer through his/her awareness of, and attention to, audiences' needs. We aim ultimately for our children to develop a fast flowing, legible, personal hand. To achieve this there is a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the whole curriculum and key stages. From 2025, we have started to use the Ruth Miskin handwriting scheme, predominantly in KS1, but also moving up into lower KS2, which allows children to build up to speedy joining.

The structured teaching programme ensures:

- correct orientation and formation of letters
- consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing
- a pride in presentation
- a smooth transition from printing to a joined up style

'Letterjoin' handwriting resources are also used across the whole school to support handwriting in KS2.

Curriculum Design and Accessibility

At YFPS, our reading and writing lessons are intrinsically linked with our termly history/geography topics in each year group, and use high-quality texts as inspiration.

On a typical day, children will participate in a 20-30 minute whole-class guided reading lesson based on a text linked to the history/geography topic. Guided reading lessons focus on developing VIPERS (vocabulary, inferencing, prediction, explanation, retrieval, sequencing and summarising) skills. Children will then move seamlessly into their writing lesson, which utilises the guided reading material as a catalyst for writing in a variety of genres.

In all classes, we recognise that children have different learning needs and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies – primarily through providing additional scaffolding and challenge where needed, additional adult support/intervention, tools/resources and, in some lessons, by organising the children to work in pairs on open-ended investigations and analysis.

Where appropriate, teachers and teaching assistants provide specific support to individuals or to groups of pupils.

Any IEPs, or other individual programmes will be linked, where appropriate, to the suitable year group objectives from the national curriculum or relevant intervention programmes to support phonics and writing development. For some children, where appropriate, we offer bespoke and personalised planning and teaching which is in-line with their development.

English Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. Long-term planning provides an overview of history/geography topics to be covered across the school, to which the reading and writing lessons are linked. Detailed medium-term planning sets out the reading texts to be used and the writing genres to be covered. It also shows the structure of how writing is linked to the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Weekly planning is in the form of Powerpoints which set out the small steps in learning across the reading and writing curricula.

The English curriculum is monitored termly by looking at the long term overviews and support is put in place in the form of a meeting with the English leads when required.

The monitoring of books is carried out by the Senior Leadership team on a regular basis to support teaching and learning across the school.

The Foundation Stage

Language teaching and learning undertaken within the Foundation Stage, is guided by the requirements and recommendations set out in the communication and language aspect of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Adopters Version) . Read, Write, Inc. is currently used as the basis for the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics.

We give all the children ample opportunity to develop their understanding of language. We aim to do this through varied activities that allow them to use, enjoy, explore, practise and talk confidently. Outdoor areas extend the children's opportunities to apply their emergent reading and writing skills independently.

Cross Curricular Links

It is recognised that English holds a unique position as a medium for learning in all areas of the curriculum. The school teaches through a topic, skills-based approach and the staff endeavour to give the children quality opportunities to learn and apply English skills in a variety of subjects. Teachers will identify opportunities for children to explore and develop language across the wide variety of spoken and written genres presented by other subjects.

Resources

There are a variety of resources to support the teaching of English across the school, for example, a well-stocked library, topic boxes and children's books from Plymouth Schools Library service. All classrooms have a wide range of appropriate resources including a range of audio-visual aids.

As a school, we also subscribe to a series of different web-based planning tools, which provide teachers with high-quality teaching resources, including model texts and grammar activities. Such resources include: Literacy Shed Plus, Grammarsaurus and Plazoom.

Assessment

Assessment has two main purposes:

- Assessment for learning – AFL (also known as formative assessment)
- Assessment of learning (also known as summative assessment);

The school recognises that AFL lies at the heart of promoting learning and in raising standards of attainment. We further recognise that effective AFL depends crucially on using the information gained to inform teaching.

The assessment procedures within our school encompass:

- Making ongoing assessments and responding appropriately to pupils during 'day-to-day' teaching. These 'immediate' responses are primarily verbal

- Using knowledge of pupils drawn from ongoing pupil tracking records
- Adjusting planning and teaching within units in response to pupils' needs
- Use of quizzing and questioning to check learning against previous objectives. If necessary, future planning is adapted in response to assessment outcomes
- Use of information gained from statutory tests and informal assessment. Analysis is done at both a quantitative and qualitative level. Information gained is used to set focused curricular targets (what to teach) and also to determine which strategies or methods are particularly effective in respect of specific areas of English (the how and why)

Response to Children's Work

We recognise the importance of responding to children's work, whether orally or in writing. Marking and feedback is viewed as key to moving the children's writing forward, with teachers using whole-class feedback and some individual targeted feedback to draw attention to key areas for improvement. Reading a range of texts is actively encouraged and children are rewarded for their efforts in reading regularly. In addition, we seek to encourage children by highlighting positive achievements. Children are given opportunities, and actively encouraged, to explain their work to others and share their work with their audience.

Continuity and Progression

The school is aware of the need to ensure continuity and progression in the development of knowledge and skills for individual pupils, hence we have a comprehensive progression of skills document for both reading and writing. Furthermore, basic skills are revisited and practised in order to ensure a deep understanding, which will provide an excellent grounding for the more complex skills and knowledge. Continuity and progression will be achieved through careful planning, scaffolding, support and assessment, and structured liaison between and across key stages.

Equal Opportunities

This school believes that every pupil is of equal value and has the right to equal education opportunities, irrespective of age, ability, race, creed and gender. Therefore we support all our children to:

- access the whole curriculum with respect to English/Language skills in reading, writing, speaking/listening through the provision of appropriate texts and additional outside support being requested as necessary
- extend the English curriculum appropriately through more demanding tasks, texts and extra support if necessary
- see themselves, and others, in our inclusive curriculum which celebrates diversity and champions equity

Special Educational Needs

We aim to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Quality First Teaching is considered an entitlement for all pupils and, as such, we employ a range of strategies to ensure that teaching and learning is accessible and engaging to all.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children’s work and of quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the head teacher and link governor supported by the subject leader. Teaching and learning is monitored through regular book and planning monitoring which is the responsibility of the subject leader.

The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

Working with Parents and Carers

We encourage and support our parents and carers to engage with their children’s learning, as we recognise their vital role in the development of English skills, especially reading. Children who are participating in the phonics programme of study are sent home with phonetically-decodable books, covering phonemes and graphemes that children have already been exposed to at school, and parents are encouraged to listen to their children read. As children become confident decoders and readers, we encourage parents to continue to share the love of reading at home. Parents also provide support for handwriting, spellings and various genres of writing that may be set for homework. Furthermore, the children engage with parents/carers as the audience for their writing, instilling pride in their accomplishments and a willingness to share and discuss learning.

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