



Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery

English Policy

September 2024



Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery English Policy

Introduction

This English policy outlines the vision, principles, and practices for delivering high-quality English education at Hollinswood Primary School, in alignment with the 2014 National Curriculum and the expectations set by Ofsted. Our aim is to foster a love for reading, writing, and communication in all pupils, which will empower them as engaged and confident learners.

Aims

We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop a strong command of the spoken and written word.
- Read and write confidently, fluently, and with understanding across a range of contexts.
- Acquire a diverse vocabulary and knowledge of grammar and punctuation.
- Develop a love for reading and a resilience in writing.
- Use English as a means to express their thoughts, feelings, and knowledge creatively.

National Curriculum

Our English curriculum adheres to the structure outlined in the 2014 National Curriculum, comprising the following key areas:

1. Spoken Language

- Encourage clear articulation and expression of thoughts and ideas.
- Promote active listening and responding in discussions.
- Develop skills for formal presentations and performance in speaking.

2. Reading

- Focus on developing a love for reading through a rich selection of texts from various genres.
- Implement systematic phonics programmes (e.g., 'Letters and Sounds') for early readers.
- Foster comprehension strategies including prediction, summarisation, and inference.
- Encourage independent reading and provide opportunities for collaborative reading activities.

3. Writing

- Teach writing for various purposes across different genres, including narrative, non-fiction, and poetry.
- Embed the teaching of spelling, grammar, and punctuation within the writing process.
- Encourage draft, review, and edit practices to enhance the writing process.
- Provide opportunities for extended writing and develop pupils' creativity through imaginative writing tasks.

Stronger Foundations

The English curriculum, as outlined in the Stronger Foundations, emphasises several key areas to ensure effective teaching and learning. Here are the main points to consider:

1. Understanding Progress in English

- Schools should have a clear understanding of what constitutes progress in English and how this informs their curriculum approach.
- Attention must be given to all categories of progression, ensuring alignment with the National Curriculum.

2. Teaching Support

The extent to which teaching practices support the goals of the English curriculum is crucial. Instruction should enable pupils to develop expertise in reading, writing, and spoken language, with grammar and vocabulary interwoven throughout.

3. Effective Assessment

- Assessment in English should be effective in measuring pupil progress and informing teaching strategies

4. High Expectations and Love for the Subject

- A climate of high subject expectations should be fostered, encouraging a love for English among pupils

5. Staff Development

- Quality systems and support for staff development are essential to enhance teaching effectiveness in English

6. Curriculum Scope and Content

- The curriculum should provide foundational knowledge necessary for successful reading comprehension and written/oral composition.
- Key knowledge, such as phonics, should be taught systematically from early years through to key stage 2.
- As pupils progress, the curriculum should prepare them for more complex knowledge in key stage 3 and beyond.

7. Reading, Writing, and Spoken Language

- Reading: Pupils should gain confidence in reading through a variety of texts, developing skills from decoding to comprehension.
- Writing: Focus on transcription (handwriting, spelling, punctuation) and composition (articulating and structuring ideas).
- Spoken Language: Curriculum should include knowledge of high-quality language, conventions of spoken forms, and opportunities for practice in various contexts.

8. Vocabulary Development

- A broad knowledge of the world should be developed through a rich vocabulary, linked to texts studied.

9. Attention to Struggling Pupils

- Special attention should be given to pupils with lower starting points or special educational needs to ensure they do not fall behind.

These points collectively aim to create a robust framework for delivering a high-quality English education that meets the needs of all pupils.

Telling the story English Review

The Telling the Story English Review highlights several critical themes and recommendations for enhancing the English curriculum.

1. Importance of Curriculum Content and Sequencing

- Effective curriculum content and its sequencing are essential for enabling pupils to achieve the aims of the national curriculum for English.

2. Unique Role of English

- English combines literature, language, and linguistics, providing a foundational skill set in spoken language, reading, and writing that supports learning across the curriculum.

3. Reading Instruction

- Once children can read accurately, they should be given explicit instruction on how to build fluency and comprehension.

4. Writing and Spoken Language

- Schools should not introduce complex writing tasks too early
- Schools should ensure there is enough teaching and practice in transcription skills.

5. Valuing English as a Distinct Subject

- English should be valued not only as a medium for teaching other subjects but also as a distinct subject in its own right. A lack of focus on its unique role can weaken the curriculum.

6. Daily English Instruction

- All primary schools are expected to provide daily English lessons that uses time effectively.

Reading

The children in our Nursery setting access phase 1 phonic lessons before beginning the Bug Club Phonics programme, as it is useful for children to do some preparatory work on print conventions, letter knowledge and whiteboard use. The children in Reception, Year One and Year Two (autumn term) have daily phonic lessons. We follow the Bug Club Phonic scheme. See the phonics section of the school website for further information. Following the phonics lesson children will read a phonetically decodable book from our chosen scheme, matched to their phonetic ability. This book will contain the phonemes and common exception words taught that week. Children read the same book each day and take this same text home to help increase fluency when reading.

Teachers follow the structure as suggested by Bug Club for the reading sessions. In addition to this the children also choose a book to take home to read for pleasure from the class library.

From Year 2 (Spring Term onwards) and Key Stage Two teachers plan their reading lessons following Kala Williams Read Master approach. The aim of this approach to the teaching of reading is to maximise teaching time to encapsulate a balance between pleasure and attainment by providing clear systematic practise with practise strategies and to develop probing readers who question what they read, seek clarity and achieve independence. The books used for the whole class reading lessons have been carefully chosen to ensure that texts are age appropriate, have cross curricular links or cover the protected characteristics.

Writing

The writing curriculum has been planned for using the following concepts:

- Transcription (including spelling and handwriting)
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Composition

EYFS

In Reception, children take part in daily phonics sessions, where they learn transcription skills alongside taught phonemes and graphemes. Fluent transcription skills are a critical focus for the early years and key stage 1. In Reception, composition and transcription will be taught separately. When focussing on composition, children can convey their ideas orally.

Carefully-planned provision is continuously accessible for pupils in both Nursery and Reception in order for them to develop their Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening skills. These opportunities regularly link to whole class shared stories and themes and topics covered, supporting the development of subject schema. Quality adult-interaction with pupils ensures that the provision is being accessed appropriately and in a way that will provide experiences for them to practise developing core skills and make progress.

Year 1

By the beginning of Year 1, not all pupils will have the spelling and handwriting skills they need to write down everything that they can compose out loud. The national curriculum suggests using dictated sentences in Year 1 to apply and practise spelling.

This means:

- Children get the practice they need to acquire fluent transcription skills (spelling and handwriting), which is the foundation for their progress in writing.
- Dictation activities enable pupils to practise and apply their spelling knowledge and segmenting skill to use the content they have been taught and to do so without having their working memories overloaded by composing sentences.

We adopt this approach whilst children in Year 1 are still mastering transcription skills. Once they have become more confident with this, they are then taught the knowledge needed for writing through the learning journey outlined below.

KS1 and KS2

In KS1 and KS2, we develop writing through four purposes. These are:

- writing to entertain
- writing to inform
- writing to persuade
- writing to discuss

In these phases, teaching and learning activities will follow the same approximate structure over each writing unit. This writing journey will take place over a number of lessons.

1. Diagnostic assessment. This provides an opportunity for teachers to assess what the children know and what needs to be focussed on. This assessment will either be written, a concept task (eg role play) or a discussion task.
2. Time to explore the genre. This will include a discussion about the Purpose (to Persuade, Inform, Entertain, Discuss), Audience and Text Type (features of the genre) and how these elements affect the writing choices that the author makes.
3. Text deconstruction. Children will be given a WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) which they can emulate. Children will be supported in 'deconstructing' the text so that they have a clear understanding of the elements required to write successfully in this genre.
4. An engaging stimulus or a memorable experience for writing. Writing activities are planned which will have a 'real' audience which will increase children's motivation to write. These are linked to whole class texts, the wider curriculum and trips, visits and visitors.

5. Conceptualised construction. Children have an opportunity to independently write, using the knowledge they have learnt throughout the writing journey. Children may write in chunks. The cognitive load involved in writing can be overwhelming for children as they have to consider many different elements at the same time therefore children may complete writing activities in 'chunks' over the course of multiple lessons.
6. Editing and improving. Children will read through their work and using feedback from the class teacher/teaching assistant or their peers, they will make improvements to it.
7. Independent Writing Task: At the end of the unit, children are asked to complete a different writing task in the same genre. This allows the teacher to assess their work and the progress they have made in that unit.

Vocabulary

The use of genres specific vocabulary is taught within each new unit of writing to encourage children to 'magpie' and include this within their own work. Children are encouraged to transfer vocabulary across different pieces of writing to increase their language bank. Children look at synonyms and are given the opportunity to practice using the new vocabulary in a variety of contexts.

Writing across the curriculum

Extended writing opportunities are regularly planned for across the curriculum. This encourages the children to be creative and flexible with their writing skills, applying what has previously been taught; e.g. writing a narrative set in Ancient Egypt or writing an explanation of how a volcano erupts.

Handwriting

The ability for children to write legibly is essential in order for them to demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers (and their lives beyond school) as well as ensuring that they have the ability to communicate effectively using their writing. Nelson handwriting encourages development of an individual style in each child through carefully structured stages and fully covers the technical aspects of writing: letter formation, basic joins, printing, speed writing and slant. Nelson handwriting progresses from pre-writing patterns through to the development of an individual style.

Spelling

The National Curriculum divides writing into two broad areas: transcription and comprehension. Transcription covers the technical aspects of writing: handwriting, spelling, grammar & punctuation.

Ready Steady Spell is a progressive systematic spelling programme from Year 2 up to Year 6. It covers all National Curriculum expectations progressively for all these year groups. It provides full coverage, in a cyclical way, by providing opportunities to reinforce and embed learning systematically and interactively.