

William Austin Infant School

English Policy

June 2024

Intent – What we want to achieve

At William Austin Infant School, our mission is to create a learning environment '**Where All Individuals Shine**'. We understand the importance of nurturing and developing all children into confident learners who are not afraid to take risks and can self-reflect on their learning.

We **intend** to deliver an English Curriculum that enables children to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills. This in turn allows children to access all areas of the school curriculum. Alongside this, we **intend** to develop children's ability to communicate in the wider world for a range of purposes which goes beyond our school. We **intend** to equip our children with the skills to share and express their thoughts, feelings and views through a curriculum where vocabulary and high quality literature is at the heart of the teaching and learning.

Through our English teaching, we **intend** to expose children to a wide range of texts and experiences that will encourage and enable children to develop an interest and love of reading and writing, which provides a window into the wider world. Children will master transferable life-skills and develop an increasing amount of confidence to implement these skills independently.



Implementation – How we will achieve this

At William Austin Infant School, we provide children with high-quality daily English lessons that are creative, engaging and inclusive. Key skills are taught and developed in carefully planned lessons. Each year group follow their own English curriculum overview in which prior knowledge and skills are embedded whilst continuing to further develop knowledge.

As soon as children attend our school their phonics and reading journey is implemented. This includes:

- A daily Phonics lesson in Year R and Year 1 which follows 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised', a systematic, synthetic phonics programme.
- Children read 'Little Wandle' books which are matched to their phonics progression. Children are well prepared for their Phonics Screening Check which happens in Year 1 and can transfer the skills learned in phonics to enjoy reading books of their choice. Assessments are at least half termly; data collated from these assessments allows 'Daily Keep Up' support to be implemented in a timely fashion ensuring that no child is left behind in their Phonics learning journey.
- Children in all year groups choose a book independently from the school library on a weekly basis that is linked to their own interests. This is the Year R and Year 1 sharing book which is for parents to read, talk about and enjoy with their child.
- In Year 2 children take part in weekly focused reading lessons, daily spelling lessons and children start 'Accelerated Reader', providing further daily opportunities to read.

Our ambitious English curriculum is **implemented** through lessons which follow the Pie Corbett 'Talk for Writing Approach'.

This includes:

- Exciting 'hooks' at the start of each English unit providing children with new experiences that spark interest in learning whilst introducing new vocabulary and opportunities to share opinions.
- The teaching of motivating 'model texts' which provide children with new vocabulary and structures that they are able to internalise and adopt as their own.
- Regular assessment and instant feedback is given allowing children to innovate structures to communicate their own ideas.
- Warm up activities and grammar focus lessons linked to the model text and the learnt writing genres.
- Providing children with cross-curricular writing opportunities based on these learnt structures in English so that they see writing forms are an important part of life.



Impact – The Outcomes

The **impact** of our English curriculum is seen through children's increased understanding of a wide range of texts and their ability to link their learning in English lessons to real-life experiences. Children are able to confidently express their thoughts, feelings and views and develop their vocabulary further as a result of their English lessons. The **impact** of our English curriculum can be seen through the children's increased confidence, skills and application of their learning; not only in English lessons, but across the whole school curriculum. The **impact** is seen through their love of reading.

Rationale

At William Austin Infant School we believe that, regardless of ability, ethnicity, gender, or beliefs, English teaches children to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. We believe that Speaking and Listening underpins all other areas of English and as such forms the basis of all our teaching. We strive towards our children becoming fluent readers with the skills to access, engage with and enjoy a wide range of texts.

Role of the Subject Leader:

- provide curriculum leadership in this area by assisting individual teachers with detailed planning, monitoring practice in the classroom, providing teachers with support and guidance appropriate to pupils needs and monitoring standards of attainment and achievement
- attend appropriate INSET, keeping up to date with developments in this curriculum area and share information with staff by providing and organising INSET
- provide continuing support on shared reading practices and the teaching of Phonics
- monitor planning, teaching, learning and standards
- analyse assessment data
- ensure intervention programmes are in place, planned for, monitored and impact analysed
- carry out 'learning walks' and 'book monitoring' and provide appropriate feedback and guidance

Curriculum Planning

The English Curriculum is planned and taught using the 'National Curriculum 2014', except in Reception, where English is taught using the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Framework'. We use the 'Talk for Writing approach' when planning units of English and every unit starts with a high-quality text. Handwriting is planned using the 'PenPals' progression. In EYFS children use the mnemonics that are part of Little Wandle phonics to help form letters correctly.

Daily phonics lessons are taught following the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' progression and in Year 2 daily spelling is also taught using Little Wandle Spelling.

Context of Teaching

In 2017-2019 we took part in the Primary Writing Project which follows Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' approach. Units are planned so as to include 'Imitation, Innovation and Independent Application'. Each unit starts with a 'hook' to capture children's interest and enthusiasm and are structured around a high-quality text. Children are given opportunities to recite and learn a model text. They explore the meaning of new vocabulary and learn to explore the effect language and grammar has on a reader. During this stage children will also read as the writer exploring the text structures and features. Children then innovate the model text taking part in shared writing and group writing supported and modelled by the class teacher. Children are given specific feedback and individual 'Next Steps'. Finally, children are able to independently write creatively moving away from the model text. Model texts and units are carefully constructed by teachers ensuring curriculum objectives are taught and revisited throughout the year to deepen children's understanding. Long term planning and progression mapping allows children to develop and build upon skills learned from previous years and units. Year R and Year 1 mainly follow the Imitate and Innovate stages and as children come towards the end of Year 1 into Year 2, they use more Independent Application. In all stages whole class teaching is followed up with work in groups, with partners or individually to develop and embed the skills they have learned or are developing.

Oracy

Development and teaching of oracy skills are very important in our school. The 'Speak to Succeed' steps used with a variety of talking groups, is a whole school approach to speaking and listening. This enables a consistent approach to the development of talk in classes and across the school with clear expectations. It is integral to all learning and lessons. In oracy we use the 'The Oracy Skills Framework' to improve children's oracy skills.

Phonics

At William Austin Infant School our chosen Phonics SSP is 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'. Phonics is taught as a discrete daily lesson and moves at pace through the Little Wandle phonics progression. Our 'Collins Big Cat Little Wandle Phonics' reading books are exactly matched to children's phonics stage to

enable fast progress and fluency in their reading. Regular half term assessments and focused, regular 'Keep up' interventions allow for children to achieve and progress. If children receive intervention, children are reassessed three weeks later which enables faster progress to be made and is a tangible way of seeing the impact of the phonics interventions.

In Year R, Year 1 and for some Year 2 pupils, children are given a home/school reading book matched to their phonics stage of learning. This book is read at least twice in school before it goes home. Children focus on the skills of decoding, prosody and comprehension. This book goes home once children can read it fluently on Fridays. In addition to this, children are involved in reading a wide range of texts in a whole variety of environments throughout their school day such as in the class reading corner, the outside reading dens as well as the school library. This is all part of our reading culture. We further promote enjoyment in reading through our daily story time and the reading spine book choices. Children are encouraged to read frequently at home and will have a home/school reading record book to enable communication between parents and teachers. Teachers also use 'Shared Reading', which provides an opportunity for the teacher to model fluent, expressive reading whilst also enabling the children to join in. Specific reading lessons support children to master focused comprehension skills. The majority of Year 2 children also choose Accelerator Reader books to enjoy that are based on children's assessment outcomes.

Children are encouraged to write for a range of purposes. Children are also encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their writing. Appropriate support is given and children are encouraged to become fluent, independent writers. A variety of teaching techniques are used including 'Shared Writing', 'Guided Writing' and dictation.

Handwriting is taught as a discrete session in KS1 but forms an integral part of the daily phonics lessons. Handwriting teaching initially focuses on the movements needed to form letters, then the formation of individual letters and, once children are ready, they are taught to use a joined style of handwriting.

Curriculum Links

English underpins the whole curriculum as children are both using and reinforcing their skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing in every area of the curriculum. Our school's curriculum approach allows us to teach and apply these skills across all subjects. Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links with English in the foundation subjects, specifically regarding writing genres that have been taught and mastered discreetly in English lessons. They will plan (where appropriate) for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through discreet, specific English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. Teachers provide equal access to the English curriculum by using adaptive strategies to ensure every child can access the curriculum and that individual needs are met, enabling progress. We quickly identify which pupils or groups of pupils who are attaining in the lowest 20% and take steps to improve their attainment. We run a number of intervention programmes which are specific to the needs of the individuals. Children are identified based on their regular assessment outcomes. Some of the interventions that we use include BLAST for EAL learners as well as using specific staff members who have Eklan training to develop speaking and listening skills. Other strategies include BLANKS sentences which support the development of speech and comprehension, or Colourful Semantics to develop vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning is monitored and guided by the subject leader. Children's work is scrutinised twice annually by the subject leader, Deputy Headteacher and the Headteacher. The outcomes of which are discussed with all teaching staff. Whole school, Year group and individual written feedback is given. When necessary, teachers identify Next Steps on their planning using it as a 'living document'.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- In all year groups children are assessed half termly on their writing and reading and these assessments are used to inform future planning.
- Teacher assessment in writing takes place at the end of each half term. Teachers assess children's writing in KS1 using independent writing produced from cold tasks (at the beginning of a unit) and hot

tasks (produced at the end of the unit) as well as the independent pieces of writing produced throughout the half term. They are assessed using the school's assessment system.

- Reading is also assessed using the school's assessment system.
- Teachers use assessments from Little Wandle to assess phonics and spellings and Year 1 also complete a Phonics Screening Check in the summer term. The results of which are reported to parents in the annual report are Statutory assessments.
- At the end of the year children in KS1 children are assessed as working at expected, working towards the expected and working at greater depth. In EYFS teachers assess whether children have met the Early Learning Goals in Literacy and Communication and Language (a prime area) which contribute as two of the five learning areas as to whether a child is assessed as having a Good Level of Development at the end of Year R.
- Annual reports to parents comment on the children's progress and attainment and outline individual targets for improvement. Parents are also kept informed of their child's progress at parent consultation meetings.
- Recording by observation and photographic evidence of significant learning outcomes is used in Year R. Children are assessed in Literacy and Communication and Language based on the Early Learning Goals.

Classroom Management

- Classrooms are organised in such a way to promote independent learning. Each class has a working 'English board', which displays graphemes and phonemes, key words and visual prompts to help with writing. Each class has a washing line or display board space for an English unit that should contain the model text, short burst shared writing, key vocabulary, story or text maps and text tool kits.
- Resources and equipment are clearly marked or labelled in order to allow actual or visual access for the children.
- Children may work in a variety of situations including in the classroom in a small group, in whole class activities, working independently and in teams or as part of a mixed ability group.
- English is taught daily by class teachers, supported by the Subject Leader and also Teaching Assistants.
- Some phonics lessons are delivered by trained TA staff but the majority are taught whole class by the class teacher.
- Each class has an inviting reading corner which the children are able to access.

Resources

- The school continues to develop resources in all areas of the English curriculum.
- Each class has the Little Wandle flashcards, word cards as well as wall friezes.
- The school makes good use of the school library, and this is updated regularly.
- Each class has their own equipment to support learning, including resources for speaking and listening, and there are also central stores for the Foundation Stage and for KS1.
- There are dressing up clothes, masks and role play resources that are kept centrally in the school's staff room.
- It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to manage the classroom resources and to return all borrowed central resources.
- Resources for children with special educational needs are kept in Butterfly room.
- Each class has a reading area to give them free access to fiction and non-fiction books and we also have a well-resourced school library.
- Story spine packs for each year group, these displayed in the Year 2 reading den.
- The use of ICT resources is encouraged as are links within the curriculum.
- We have a variety of voice recording equipment including recording postcards and sound buttons.

Reviewed June 2024

Next Review June 2027