

English Policy

Policy name	English Policy
Member of Staff Responsible	Subject leader (Tegan Parr) & SLT
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This policy has been adopted by the Governors/Directors in consultation with the English subject leader and teaching staff. This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies in school including: Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Marking and Feedback and other curriculum policies.

The Context

Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a slightly larger than average rural school for children in the age range 4 to 11. Achieving competence in English language is a vital part of the education of our pupils. All teachers play an important role in facilitating this. The English curriculum aims to develop language skills in four different areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The school's aim is that each child should achieve the highest level of performance of which he or she is capable in every aspect of English. We aim to provide our pupils with a wide experience of literature throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

Intent

The aim of our English curriculum is to prepare the children for the future, both in education and in life. Our curriculum has deep and broad coverage and content and is brought to life through rich and vibrant cultural experiences – the cultural capital.

The ambitions for our curriculum:

- **High aspirations permeate across the school**
- **The school offers a host of cultural experiences and enrichment opportunities**
- **Our pupils develop a love of life-long reading**
- **British Values are an intrinsic part of the school**

At Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School we are dedicated to encouraging all children to be passionate about reading and writing. We are determined that all children will become highly competent readers and writers by the end of their primary education. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and the confidence to explore their imagination.

During their time at Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, all children will be exposed to a high-quality education in English that will prepare them for later life. We teach our children to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate ideas and emotions and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.

Through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Reading is key as it enables pupils to acquire knowledge and to build upon what they already know. All skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society. This context enables pupils to understand the value of English to them now, and in their futures.

Aims of English

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding, using a range of appropriate decoding strategies.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often; for both pleasure and information
- To acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and have a secure knowledge of the language rules for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage by accessing and valuing a range of texts drawn from both classic and modern literature from a range of world cultures.
- Write clearly accurately and coherently, adapting 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 across the wider curriculum
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Teaching and Learning

Our English teaching uses an **enquiry process** to allow pupils to learn for themselves. Within our English curriculum, we have identified the key substantive knowledge that we will implement to allow our pupils to become successful communicators.

1. A knowledge of phonics.

In EYFS and Year 1, phonics is taught daily, following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. We ensure phonics is taught from the start with lessons beginning in Reception from their second week in school. In Year 2, children who have graduated from the Little Wandle phonics programme move onto the Little Wandle Spelling programme, where they are taught spelling rules using a comprehension scheme for 30 minutes each day. Children in KS2 who have not yet graduated from the phonics scheme receive additional phonics support through

the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds 'Rapid Catch Up' programme. Staff are well-trained and highly competent in the teaching of phonics.

2. A knowledge of common exception words

From when they begin phonics in Reception, our children are taught to read and spell the 'tricky words' as set out in the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression. In addition, from Year 1 onwards, the children are taught to read and spell the common exception words appropriate to their year group.

3. A knowledge of comprehension

In Reception and Year 1, children receive three reading practice sessions per week to develop their decoding, prosody and comprehension skills. From Year 2, children who are meeting age-related expectations and have graduated from Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised move on to our Little Wandle Fluency scheme, where they take part in reading practice sessions 3x per week, with a focus on fluency, comprehension and prosody. From Year 3 upwards, children are introduced to whole class guided reading sessions following the James Durrant approach. Children in KS2 who are not yet ready for the whole class guided reading approach continue with the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Fluency scheme.

4. A knowledge of spelling rules.

Once the children have a secure knowledge in phonics and reach Year 2, spelling is taught daily using the Little Wandle Spelling programme. Spelling is taught weekly in KS2 through the Twinkl spelling programme. Spelling strategies are the focus of weekly spelling tests and activities.

5. A knowledge of grammar and punctuation.

GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling) is taught 3x weekly for 15 minutes in Key Stage One and 30 minutes in Key Stage Two and incorporated into daily English lessons. These sessions teach the children key concepts and vocabulary which are then applied in reading and writing sessions.

6. A wide vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary is developed across the school through the sharing of high-quality texts and reading to children and within our teaching there is lively discussion of vocabulary and meaning. Vocabulary is a key focus within reading practice sessions in early reading and whole class guided reading from Year 2+ with every session beginning with a discussion of key vocabulary found in the text. Staff use dual coding in all subjects through working walls, knowledge organisers and word mats.

7. A knowledge of looped handwriting

Handwriting is taught twice a week in EYFS and Key Stage One and weekly in Key Stage Two. From Year 1, children begin to write using our looped style. Beautiful handwriting is modelled and expected in all areas of the curriculum.

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8. A knowledge of transcription

Children in EYFS and Year 1 learn key writing skills through transcription and dictation. A large emphasis is placed upon developing the fluency of handwriting and spelling in these year groups in order to improve the composition of their writing in later years.

Communication and Language in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

The EYFS curriculum starts from birth and children progress through each stage of development aiming to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. EYFS Communication and Language will enable the children to:

- Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important.
- Learn new vocabulary.
- Use new vocabulary through the day.
- Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them.
- Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences.
- Connect one idea or action to another using a range of connectives.
- Describe events in some detail.
- Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen.
- Develop social phrases.
- Engage in story times.
- Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding.
- Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words.
- Use new vocabulary in different contexts.
- Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound.
- Learn rhymes, poems and songs.
- Engage in non-fiction books.
- Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.

Literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes,

poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

The EYFS curriculum starts from birth and children progress through each stage of development aiming to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. EYFS Literacy will enable the children to:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, nonfiction, rhymes and poems and during role play;
- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words;
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Transcription in EYFS is taught initially by focusing on fine motor skills and heavily on communication and language skills. This includes regular story time, nursery rhymes and oral games. As the children develop growing confidence in these skills, they are taught listen to and write captions and short sentences using the 'I do, we do, you do' approach. Fine motor skills sessions develop into more structured handwriting sessions.

Implementation

The English curriculum at the Emmaus Federation is broken down into knowledge building blocks which are built upon over time. As the children progress through the school, they gather more knowledge to help them reach their end point. Our aim is to ensure all our pupils become successful readers, writers, spellers and speakers, who can apply this knowledge to the wider curriculum.

We have identified the disciplinary knowledge that we will implement to enable our pupils to become excellent communicators:

- **Reading • Writing • Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling • Investigation • Expression • Interpretation • Reflection • Empathy; • Analysis • Synthesis • Evaluation**

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The disciplinary knowledge to be a successful English scholar:

READING – in English this means:

- being able to decode and read easily, fluently and with good understanding. Reading is taught daily through phonics, reading practice sessions three times a week and whole class guided reading in KS2 which is carried out daily with a range of texts linked to other areas of the curriculum and through high quality texts in text-based writing sessions.

WRITING – in English this includes:

- being able to develop fluency in transcription.
- being able to apply their phonics/spelling knowledge to write a range of words.
- being able to apply their grammatical and punctuation knowledge to write effectively.
- being able to apply their understanding of the structure, audience and features of a text to write effectively.
- being able to apply their understanding of editing and improving to ensure that they produce high-quality writing,
- being able to apply their knowledge of cursive writing to ensure that work is neatly presented.

Grammar Punctuation and Spelling – in English this includes:

- being able to write legibly and fluently and with increasing speed.
- being able to spell words which are homophones
- use apostrophes correctly for contraction and possession.
- use the first 3 or 4 letters of a word to check the spelling or meaning in a dictionary.
- use a thesaurus for impact.
- understand some morphology (common letter pattern) and etymology (common meaning/ word root) to help with spelling.
- use National Curriculum common exception words
- recognising vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal speech and writing, including subjunctive forms
- indicate grammatical and other features by understanding and using a range of punctuation

INVESTIGATION – in English this includes:

- reading high quality texts and asking questions about the text including about the structure, features and language.
- comparing texts on a similar theme or genre

EXPRESSION – in English this includes:

- the ability to recall, select and organise information.
- the ability to use key vocabulary to describe and explain different aspects of grammar, punctuation, spelling or genre
- the ability to communicate their likes/dislikes in response to a high-quality text that they have read.

INTERPRETATION – in English this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from what they have read in English lessons and during guided reading and reading practice sessions.
- the ability to suggest meanings and draw conclusions from what they have read including inferring or deducing information such as feelings of a character.

REFLECTION – in English this includes:

- the ability to critically analyse an experience and use it to interpret a text or use it in writing to record how it has impacted on you.
- the ability to explore and explain an event through personal experience and use it to shape an outcome.
- the ability to critically evaluate a book or a piece of writing.

EMPATHY – in English this includes:

- to connect with an audience and who you are writing for.
- The ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of a reader to forge a connection.

ANALYSIS – in English this includes:

- reading and discussing high quality texts and asking and answering questions that involve retrieval questions – what have I learnt? What do I know after reading this text?
- reading and discussing high quality texts including summarising events.

SYNTHESIS – in English this includes:

- being able to combine multiple sources and ideas together
- to be able to interpret different texts and create an analysis of literature from multiple sources
- to be able to use prior knowledge to interpret text or create new pieces of written work

EVALUATION – in English this includes:

- being able to discuss evaluate their learning and ideas
- being able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding.
- making formal presentations, participation in debate/discussion.
- being able to listen to others' points of view.

Processes for Effective Learning in English

1. Reading High Quality Texts

This includes the sharing of a high-quality text as the basis for all our writing. These texts are topic linked where appropriate. Reading of the text includes the key reading skills of retrieval, inference, deduction, summarizing and prediction. Reading of the text includes the skill of investigation. We use the text to explore features, structure, audience and purpose of a genre.

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2. Planning

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This involves understanding the features and key information needed to write a text. The children are taught different methods of planning a text type.

3. Grammar Punctuation and Spelling

Whilst Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling skills can be taught separately, we spend time exploring the specific features of genre types, aiming to ensure grammar and punctuation are taught at appropriate times, so that children see a good model of text and can use their newly acquired skills within their own writing. Knowing and securing the necessary Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling skills and rules will be of great value to developing the quality of the children's independent writing.

4. Writing a text

This involves applying their knowledge of the text type and using their planning to create a text.

5. Editing and Improving.

This involves the children being taught how to edit their writing and also how to improve it by making changes e.g. to word choice or sentence structure.

The Daily Implementation of English

- Across the school, from Reception and Year 1 (Spring Term+) to Year 6, all pupils take part in text based writing: a well-planned text-led learning journey. Children are exposed to high quality, challenging texts that inspire writing and further reading.
- Transcription in EYFS is taught initially by focusing on fine motor skills and heavily on communication and language skills. This includes regular story time, nursery rhymes and oral games. As the children develop growing confidence in these skills, they are taught listen to and write captions and short sentences using the 'I do, we do, you do' approach. Fine motor skills sessions develop into more structured handwriting sessions.
- Transcription in Year 1 is taught by focusing on sentence building using the 'I do, we do, you do' approach. Children in Year 1 develop their grammar and punctuation skills by focusing on a key area per term. Structured handwriting sessions begin in September and continue throughout the year.
- Consistent teaching sequence: we adopt a 2-3 week genre writing cycle including investigation of the features of a text, planning, writing and editing.
- Teachers read to their class daily and are confident to read stories aloud energetically and enthusiastically, bringing the story to life.
- Books are further explored through the wider curriculum in subjects such as RE, history and PSHE.
- Working walls in every classroom are focused on text-based writing. They include features of a text, planning, WAGOLLS and examples of editing. Each working wall will also have key vocabulary through the use of dual coding and GPS displayed.
- Reading display: In each classroom we have a reading display linked to the current class text. This will include information about the text, key questions for the children to answer, a copy of the book and examples of children's responses to what they have read.
- Phonics display: In EYFS and each KS1 classroom there will be a phonics display. This will include: the Little Wandle wall frieze at a child-friendly height to enable the children to refer to it throughout the day; a grapheme chart for Phase 2 and 3 in Reception and a 'Grow the



Code' grapheme chart Phase 2, 3 and 5 in Year 1; grapheme word mats on tables as a prompt in all lessons and in phonics packs for use during the phonics lessons; key GPCs already taught, tricky words and a working wall which is continually updated with new GPCs learnt and tricky words taught.

- Genre/Text specific vocabulary: Identified through the working walls and highlighted to the children at the beginning of and during lessons.
- EYFS: Reception children are given a secure grounding in the Prime Areas of learning, ensuring they have a good foundation on which to build through the specific areas, including Literacy. Areas of provision are enhanced to ensure vocabulary understanding and extension, and develop understanding of the world around them
- The 'First 20%' are read with daily.
- In EYFS and Year 1, children working in Phases 2-5 are taught phonics daily. In addition, they receive 3 reading practice sessions per week as a group, focusing on a key area in each session: decoding, prosody and comprehension using the same fully decodable phonics book all week. After the third read, the children take home the same book to read fluently at home.
- In addition to this, to encourage our children to read for pleasure, every child in EYFS and KS1 can choose their own 'sharing book' to take home twice a week.
- In Year 2, the children continue to receive daily phonics lessons until they are ready to graduate the scheme. Children who are reading fluently join our Little Wandle Fluency scheme and take part in guided reading sessions 3x per week, however; children who still need to practice reading with decodable books remain in reading practice session groups alongside EYFS and Year 1 children. If these children still need this provision after Christmas, they join our Rapid Catch Up programme and continue to receive phonics sessions and read with decodable books but at a faster pace.
- In Key Stage Two, children follow the Accelerated Reader scheme and choose books within their reading range from our well-stocked library of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books. Our library is audited regularly for diversity, range and quality and new books are introduced frequently. Our children love the challenge element of this reading scheme and enjoy discovering new books.
- Whole class guided reading takes place for all of KS2 daily following the James Durran approach which focuses on the children's fluency and comprehension skills. Fiction books, non-fiction books and other types of media, such as visual literacy, are chosen carefully by teachers and used during these sessions. The three reading sessions follow a specific format which is structured to ensure the children are taught the full range of content domains required to develop a critical reader.
- Children in Key Stage Two who still need to practise reading with decodable books and develop fluency follow our Rapid Catch-Up programme three times a week. This replaces whole class guided reading and instead the children continue to receive phonics and reading support but at a faster pace to help them catch up quickly.
- Parents are given reading guidance and clear expectations about reading at home. We communicate this through workshops and by providing resources to support and encourage reading at home.
- When sharing books and within our teaching there is lively discussion of vocabulary and meaning. As our children master decoding, there is increased teaching of vocabulary and comprehension.



- Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling is taught 3x weekly for 15 minutes in Key Stage One and 30 minutes in Key Stage Two and incorporated into daily English lessons. Using resources from Classroom Secrets, children are taught key rules and strategies and are then encouraged to apply these to their independent writing. Teachers follow the long-term plan from Classroom Secrets which sets out a clear pathway for progression throughout all year groups.
- Handwriting is taught twice a week in EYFS and Key Stage One and weekly in Key Stage Two. From Year 1, children begin to write using our looped style. Beautiful handwriting is modelled and expected in all areas of the curriculum.
- Cultural Capital: English is promoted across the school through initiatives such as World Book Day, Nursery Rhyme Week, reading challenges, author visits and family read along events. Excellent progress in English is celebrated with books vouchers and awards. •

Teachers assess children's work in English using the STA assessment guidelines whilst always considering the age-related expectations for each year group. Summative assessments for each year group take place termly in reading and phonics through the Little Wandle assessment, PIRA reading and SPAG assessments, previous SATs papers and the phonics screening check.

- Teacher assessment is used to assess writing, and this is moderated across our federation.
- Every 6 weeks, children take an Accelerated Reader 'star test'. The test provides teachers with a wide variety of information, including each child's reading age and zone of proximal development. After each test, progress is measured, and children are identified as working below, at or above.
- Children identified as working below from our assessments are given additional support through daily reading or reading three times a week.
- Phonics is taught using a whole-class method and formative assessment is used daily to identify and target children needing same-day intervention. Individual one-to-one intervention and group intervention is given immediately to any child falling behind using our Keep Up intervention programme. Reading practice session groups are organised based on termly assessment, however, they remain fluid throughout the year and children move within these groups depending on their needs.
- Formative assessment is used in every lesson through verbal or written feedback in relation to the specific learning objective and on-the-spot marking.

Equal Opportunities

The teaching of English follows the school's policy on SEND and differentiation and aims to provide all children with equal opportunities. The Governing Body ensures that the school does not discriminate against any pupil on the ground of disability, sex or race in deciding admissions, providing the curriculum, teaching and guidance; in applying standards of behaviour, dress and appearance; and in the allocation of resources and other benefits and facilities which the school provides. The school prides itself on its ability to welcome and involve children of all abilities, backgrounds and heritage. Children are recognised as individuals and both supported and challenged at their own level of development. Our main principal aim is that all children achieve the best that they can be, in all aspects of their development, during their time within the school.

Role of the Reading and/or Writing Coordinator

- Endeavour to promote a dynamic approach to the development of English ensuring that it has a high profile.
- To evaluate the standards of English teaching through the analysis of assessment data, book looks and learning journeys.
- To update the English curriculum and oversee its implementation by other staff.
- Keep up to date with developments in English.
- Report back on training attended.
- Advise and support staff with the teaching and learning of English.
- Be responsible for overall auditing and upkeep of all school English resources and facilities. To organise any budgets made available from various funds and to ensure money is used to its best advantage.
- Regularly review and update the school policy statement and guidelines as required.
- To work closely with the lead governor for English.

Signed By: **T Parr**

Position: **English Lead**

Date: **September 2025**

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