



NEWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH POLICY

Our Intent

At Newton Primary School, we view the teaching and learning of English as critical to a child's education and pivotal in developing an appreciation for lifelong learning and a love of reading and writing. We strongly believe in a balanced, creative and inspirational approach to teaching English, understanding that the skills of reading and writing are often the springboard to many other areas of learning. English is taught through timetabled explicit sessions and then integrated across all subject areas, maintaining the same high levels of expectation throughout. We base our teaching sequence on the 'Talk for Writing' process, which enables our children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. This process builds on 3 key stages: Imitation, Innovation and Independent Application. We aim to motivate children's learning, challenge them and inspire them to achieve their best through high-quality texts, different genres and contextualised learning. We strive for our children to be attentive, open-minded and enquiring learners. We understand the varied needs of our pupils and we aim to meet the range of needs of our pupils and differentiate learning effectively to help all pupils to make the greatest possible progress. We cultivate successful home-school partnerships to help children foster a love for reading and writing at home through workshops, open mornings and afternoons, homework and celebrating our children's achievements.

Our promises

All School Staff:

- To promote a confident, positive attitude towards the learning and use of English, making it an enjoyable experience.
- To promote confidence and competence in the skills of speaking and listening; reading and writing.
- To promote the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences.

- To promote the skills of communication through speaking and listening in a range of contexts.
- To promote the range of skills required in reading in order for children to read for meaning, understanding and enjoyment through effective use of environment, experiences, contexts and resources.
- To provide purposeful opportunities for the development of skills in writing across the whole curriculum.
- To provide opportunities for our children to develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.

Children:

- To develop an enjoyment of learning through practical activity, exploration and discussion.
- To develop confidence and competence in the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- To develop a true interest in words, their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- To develop the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of forms for the intention of a variety of audience and purposes.
- To develop a love of language and a broad bank of interesting vocabulary to use in discussion, reading and writing; commenting on the reasons and impact of their choices.
- To develop the skills of communication through speaking and listening in a range of contexts and to be able to discuss the impact and choices of their work.
- To develop the range of skills required in reading in order for children to read for meaning, understanding and enjoyment, showing an interest in fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- To develop a range of skills in writing and spelling across the whole curriculum.

Parents and Carers:

- To be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching English.
- To attend and contribute to Parents' Evening, information meetings, welcome mornings and afternoons.
- To support their children with English-based homework activities, specifically; reading and spelling.
- To praise their children for the hard work they put into their English work and actively encourage them to share reasons for their choices and outcomes.
- To communicate and work with the school whenever further support is needed to develop their children's English skills and understanding.

The designated English Governor will:

- meet with the curriculum Subject Leader at least once a year to find out about; a) the school's systems for planning work, supporting staff and monitoring progress; b) the allocation, use and adequacy of resources; c) how the standards of achievement are changing over time.

- Visit School and talk to pupils about their experiences of English.
- Promote and support the positive involvement of parents in the curriculum area.
- Attend training and other events relating to the particular curriculum area.
- To be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching English and review the English Policy regularly.

Our Approach to Writing

Writing:

As a school, we follow Pie Corbett's '*Talk4Writing*' approach. There are opportunities for immersion at the beginning of a new genre, including story mapping and drama-based activities. Once the children have a good understanding of the taught genre and have had enough time to engage with varied examples and a model text, we then move on to the innovation stage where the children begin to plan and compose their own examples using shared and paired write and analysis. The final stage is the invention stage. This is where the children independently plan, write and edit their invented genres independently.

Throughout our writing sessions, we follow a systematic approach to teaching grammar and punctuation called 'Rainbow Grammar'. This breaks down sentences into eight parts of grammar which are taught progressively from Year 1 to Year 6. Different colours are assigned to each grammatical phrase or clause so that children can understand how they work, imitate their patterns and then apply those patterns to new contexts.

Daily spelling sessions take place across the school, using the 'Spelling Shed' scheme of learning. Children are encouraged to practise their spellings as part of their homework and can do so by playing games online on Spelling Shed.

Reception and KS1 use the systematic synthetic phonics programme, Read Write Inc phonics (see phonics policy for more information on this). The Read Write Inc. '*Complex Speed Sounds Chart*' is displayed in all classrooms for children and teachers to refer back to when writing. Children are assessed regularly and interventions are put in place swiftly to help them keep up.

Handwriting:

The children need to learn the correct way to form letters so that they can go on to join up their letters as they get older. In Reception, children learn the formation of letters when learning their Set 1 sounds during their Read Write Inc phonics lessons. They have set phrases and pictures which they learn in order to help them remember the correct formation. This is reinforced in KS1 whenever the children are writing throughout the day. We then use the Martin Harvey approach for handwriting throughout school and practise handwriting in discrete sessions, as well as during some spelling sessions. Effective activities for strengthening hand muscles used in school are cutting and sticking activities, playing with plasticine and using clothes pegs. Opportunities for celebrating handwriting are encouraged to further engage and motivate pupils to be proud of their presentation.

Early Writing and Handwriting:

In EYFS, the children take on an adapted Pie Corbett structure where the children learn stories with actions, retell using puppets, small world characters or masks, imitate texts using children's ideas as a whole class changing the character, setting or ending and then use the same format to make up their own story and retell it orally using their own story maps. Furthermore, children in Reception practise writing their first and surname every other morning, using their own name cards. Once children are confident writing their own names, they are given handwriting practice sheets that include green and red words related to Set 1 and 2 sounds learnt in phonics lessons. To support their formation of letters and increase their fine motor skills, the children take part in 'dough disco' every day as a strengthening exercise for their fingers. Within the classroom, there is also a dedicated area called 'Funky Fingers' that always has an activity to help further strengthen fingers or develop fine motor skills, which is changed regularly to motivate and inspire learning.

Our Approach to Speaking and Listening

The development of good Speaking and Listening skills is seen as key to developing good general English skills. As such, children are explicitly taught how to be good speakers and good listeners as a discrete aspect of English and also across the full English Curriculum, the full academic curriculum and the wider curriculum. There are many and varied opportunities for the direct teaching of Speaking and Listening skills, both explicitly in English related sessions and across the full curriculum. These include:

- Ensuring that each adult and other children provide good role models including modelling of sentence building before writing across all year groups;
- Teaching the children the difference between standard and non-standard forms of spoken English and when each of these can be appropriately used;
- Ensuring opportunities and 'scaffolding' for discussion, individually, in pairs and in groups through the use of sentence stems in both Maths and English, and other targeted activities involving drama;
- Teaching children about how to be a good listener and insisting that children employ these skills at appropriate points during any teaching session and in their interactions with children and adults across the school;
- Providing children with a broad variety of language and key vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum and modelling its appropriate use.

Our Approach to Reading

Reading is of key importance and progress is carefully monitored. Throughout each school day, the children have many opportunities to read for a range of purposes. Interventions are swiftly put in place for any children who require extra support with any element of their reading, whether this is recognition of graphemes, blending, fluency or comprehension.

Children are encouraged to take their reading books home and parents are asked to support their child with reading at home. Reading and phonics workshops are held for parents to

offer advice and assistance so that they can become more confident in helping their child with reading. Recordings of these workshops are also made available on the school website.

In Reception, children begin their reading journey with picture books which support them with basic book skills, such as identifying a title, understanding where the story begins and how to turn pages. It also provides them with the opportunity to tell a story verbally and begin to develop their vocabulary. Once the children are secure with sufficient GPCs in their phonics, they will take home a decodable book. When the children are secure with Set 1 sounds in their phonics, they also take home a Read Write Inc 'ditty sheet'. These are also used to support children in school with their reading. In addition to phonetically decodable books, the children also select a 'reading for pleasure' book to take home each week to enjoy with their family.

In KS1, children continue to take home a decodable book which correlates with their phonics phase, as well as a 'reading for pleasure' book. In KS2, and for some children in Year 2 who read fluently and are secure with all GPCs, the children take part in a scheme called 'Accelerated Reader' where they are assessed regularly through online quizzes and are given an appropriate reading band to allow enjoyment and suitable challenge. The children are encouraged to complete whole books and are offered rewards for reading at home and passing any quizzes.

Reading is taught in Whole Class Reading sessions, based on Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Reading' approach. In KS1, five key skills are integrated into the Talk for Reading units. In KS2, a further three skills are included. These skills are displayed in the classrooms and it is expected that the children understand and can talk about these skills. The eight skills are as follows:

	KS1 content	KS2 content
a. Explain vocabulary	Draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts	Give/explain the meaning of words in context
b. Retrieve	Identify/explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information	Retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
c. Summarise	Identify and explain the sequence of events in texts	Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
d. Infer	Make inferences from the text	Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
e. Predict	Predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far	Predict what might happen from details stated and implied

f. Identify structure		Identify/explain how information /narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
g. Identify effect		Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases
h. Compare		Make comparisons within the text

During our whole class reading lessons, the children are provided with ample opportunities to apply these skills, thus deepening their practice and understanding when answering comprehension questions.

Sentence stems are encouraged during reading sessions to provide children with the opportunities to both 'read as a writer' and 'read as a reader'. The texts used within these reading sessions are of high quality and designed to be 'unpicked' with a focus on high level vocabulary. Some of this work is documented in reading jotters whereas some lessons are purely verbal or practical and require no written outcome. These books are acknowledged though not marked in depth by the teacher; they provide regular mini assessment opportunities for the teachers and opportunities for concise reading skills practice for the children. The three phases of the approach are detailed below (appendix 1). Regular cross-curricular opportunities for comprehension are provided. Each class also has a whole class reading book which is read to them by the teacher at the end of each day as an opportunity for the children to listen to and enjoy a story.

English Across the Curriculum

Children are taught a wide range of English skills that are necessary to access the whole curriculum. English is seen as the 'keystone' which enables children to access other areas of the curriculum and to function effectively as developing citizens. Within other lessons across the curriculum, it is necessary to incorporate the good practice seen within English lessons as follows:

- Insisting on, and having non-negotiable high expectations of, children's handwriting, punctuation and spelling;
- Providing key vocabulary for different subjects and displaying these on word walls;
- Modelling good speaking to encourage the children to respond appropriately in full sentences;
- Providing regular opportunities to access high-quality texts in all areas of the curriculum;
- Referring back to the writing and grammar displays and resources in class in order that the children are consistently writing at their appropriate level.

Equal Opportunities:

Newton Primary School has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. We strive to enrich students' cultural capital in English through the use of a wide range of texts which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our

children and to prepare them to be global citizens. We believe in, 'valuing what the child brings to school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English. (see equal opportunities policy).

Role of Subject Leader:

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating pupil progress;
- Provision of literacy (including intervention and support programmes);
- The quality of the learning environment;
- The deployment and provision of support staff;
- Taking the lead in policy development;
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD;
- Purchasing and organising resources;
- Keeping up to dates with changes in the subject.

National Curriculum: English (DfE)

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 to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The national curriculum for English ensures 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

Appendix 1

The three phases of Talk for Reading:

1. Introduction - hook - context - activate prior knowledge - vocabulary before reading - model reading with fluency - prediction - initial responses - rereading - decoding/ word recognition - vocabulary - literal retrieval - establish focus (e.g. character focus?)	2. Investigation - dialogic talk ('book talk') - strategic reading - response activities - reading as a writer - summarising what's been learnt - reading fluently	3. Independent understanding (independently demonstrate levels of understanding) - identify key focus - demonstrate understanding - apply focus (<i>'Big questions'</i>)
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