



ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed Annually by the Pupil Progress and Pupil Welfare Committee

Date of last review:	Signature:
Autumn 2020 (updated Summer 2021)	<i>L. Button & L. Hill</i>

Introduction

At Alford Primary School, we recognise that competency in the four areas of English (Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing) underpin learning across the curriculum. Therefore, the provision of quality teaching and learning opportunities for children to acquire these vital skills is central to our teaching practice. The four areas of English will be considered individually; however, since English is dependent on the inter-relationship between these four areas, teachers will build on links between them across units of work. We recognise that language and literacy learning is most effective in a meaningful and purposeful environment, through experiences and opportunities that contextualise learning, and through excellent adult and peer modelling. We understand that in order to become confident users of language, pupils need to be able to write, speak and read Standard English with fluency and accuracy. We aim to support children in becoming keen, enthusiastic and competent readers.

Speaking & Listening

Pupils' understanding of the spoken word and their capacity to express themselves is central across the whole curriculum. We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development, as it underpins the development of reading and writing, and often forms the starting point for teachers when planning for progression in these areas.

Aims and objectives

For children to be able to:

- Build on oral skills (however limited) that have begun at home prior to children reaching school age;
- Develop a wide vocabulary, and use grammar correctly to construct sentences;
- Develop questioning skills when responding to speakers and texts;
- Interact purposefully with peers and adults;
- Express and justify opinions, using the conventions for discussion and debate;
- Listen attentively to each other and to adults in school;
- Work co-operatively in small and whole class groups with a variety of people, in different contexts;
- Participate in the artistic practice of drama;
- Improvise, devise and script drama for a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Phonics & Spelling

At Alford Primary School, we have developed a structured 'Progression in Phonics' program that specifically follows the DfE 'Letters and Sounds' framework, principles and practice.

EYFS are taught a discrete phonics session daily for a 15-20 minute period. Children are placed into groups which meet their needs. Groups are reviewed regularly to ensure that children are being challenged and gaps in learning are targeted. Phonics skills are embedded in writing and reading tasks in Literacy sessions. Continuous provision and the outdoor learning environment in EYFS support children in closing the gap and consolidating their phonic knowledge.

In KS1, children have access to high quality daily phonics sessions for 20-30 minutes. Sessions are quick in pace, well differentiated, engaging and challenging for all children within the lesson. Targeted interventions alongside high quality learning environments, ensure that no child is left behind. All Year One children take the 'Phonics Screening Check' - a statutory assessment required by legislation. Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to re-take the 'Phonics Screening Check' and obtain a pass mark. Those children who do not obtain the required level set by the 'Phonics Screening Check' will receive phonics teaching in the first term of Year Three – which will be further supported throughout the year and across Key Stage Two with a phonics and/or spelling intervention programme. Planning for phonics will be

done separately from Literacy but with the understanding that good phonics teaching should link to the Literacy needs of the children within a Literacy lesson and across the curriculum.

At Alford Primary School, each Phonics lesson follows the structure of our 'Phonics Fab Four' Superhero Characters:

- Racer Revisit – Overlearn the previous graphemes and words
- Turbo Teach – Introduce a new grapheme / phoneme words
- Power Practise – Develop GPCs (grapheme phoneme correspondences) /read and spell new words
- Atom Apply – Use the new graphemes / words in games and activities to secure knowledge

Our 'Phonics Progression' makes explicit links to our phonics reading schemes. Children are matched to books that include graphemes and tricky words children have been taught, ensuring that reading books allow children to consolidate and apply their phonics knowledge.

In addition to the phonics programme outlined above, we also follow the spelling appendix to the Statutory National Curriculum. Details of the spelling requirements for each year group are detailed within this appendix. Please click here for a link to the current National Curriculum:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf

Reading

Competence in reading is the key to independent learning and is given the highest priority, enabling the children to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers. Success in reading has a direct effect upon progress in all other areas of the Curriculum and is crucial in developing children's self-confidence and motivation. As children gain the skill of decoding and begin to read fluently, the emphasis shifts to comprehension, in order to deepen pupils' understanding of a wide variety of texts.

In 2020, the whole school began using a consistent and uniform approach to the teaching of comprehension, through the use of the 'Pawsome Piggies'. All staff begin the year's English teaching with a unit of work that introduces the 'Paswome Piggies', with the intention that they will be called upon through-out the year to build on the children's ability to fully access a variety of media, using the different comprehension skills that each piggy represents (as defined by the DfE reading domains).

The school employs various strategies to promote the love of reading: RED TED in EYFS & KS1 and Battle of the Readers in KS2 incentivise the children to read and review a wide range of texts – certificates / prizes are awarded on a termly basis; daily (or at least regular and frequent) whole class reading sessions, using recommended texts (the top 100 Books from The Book Trust were bought by the school and distributed to each class); Year 6 Reading Buddies for EYFS – targeting reluctant readers in Year 6, to re-ignite their interest and enthusiasm. Every year, the whole school has a reading fortnight, leading to engaging displays around school, which showcase the work produced by a class around a particular book / story.

Aims and objectives

The school aims to:

- Provide all children with the necessary decoding skills / reading strategies to access texts;
- Become confident and fluent readers with a solid understanding of what they read;
- Read aloud, with expression and intonation, including reading as performance;
- Read with enthusiasm and develop a lifelong love of books;
- Access a range of genres, including narrative, poetry and non-fiction;
- Develop competency in using electronic media to access meaningful texts;
- Develop a critical appreciation of what they read;
- Develop their own imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
- Monitor and evaluate their own reading and reading experiences;
- Develop retrieval skills that allow them to effectively access a non-fiction text.

Writing

Writing is an essential skill for children to learn in order to respond to their learning across the curriculum. We believe real life experiences, which encourage children to write independently for a purpose, are essential in developing the ability to communicate effectively through writing. It is a strength of the school that we provide writing opportunities within a rich, broad and purposeful curriculum.

Aims and objectives

For children to be able to:

- Enjoy writing and be competent in communication through writing;
- Write for a variety of purposes and audiences;
- Organise and structure their writing so that meaning and purpose are clear;
- Achieve age appropriate objectives as a foundation to be built upon at each stage;
- Take pride in the presentation of their written work;
- Use a variety of media effectively as part of their writing skill-base;
- Proof-read and edit their own writing to improve the quality of their written work.

Grammar & Punctuation

It is the aim of the school that children have a good grasp of grammar and punctuation skills, appropriate to their stage of education. Its main purpose is to support pupils' reading and writing, though in light of the increased importance placed upon this area in the 2014 NC, discreet lessons have also become necessary.

- In Key Stage 1, Grammar and Punctuation are taught through writing lessons, apart from in Year 2, during the build-up to SATs testing, when it is taught discretely.
- In Lower Key Stage 2, children receive regular focused P&G sessions.
- In Upper Key Stage 2, children receive weekly focused P&G activities; to prepare for end of KS2 SATs testing, Year 6 receive more frequent sessions during the Spring Term.

Handwriting

Pupils in EYFS follow "Read, Write, Inc." (RWI) to support correct letter formation, and receive focused practice during discreet sessions throughout the week. Pupils will have opportunities to discuss the letters that represent the sounds they hear, eg at the beginning of their own names and other familiar words. In phonics and other sessions, further opportunities will allow pupils to build on using the correct letter formation, when recording how sounds are represented by letters (graphemes). Pupils will be able to apply their own grapheme / phoneme knowledge to what they write in meaningful contexts.

In Year 1, children will consolidate their learning around forming the letters / numbers correctly, using appropriate sizing, spacing and orientation. When writing is modelled – and for all phonics sessions - it will be using print, not joined. Regular handwriting sessions (in books) will give children opportunities to practise the four-letter family patterns and individual letters.

The four family patters are as follows:

Anti-clockwise direction: letters: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
Down and off in another direction: letters: i, j, l, t, u numbers: 1, 4,
Down and retrace upwards: letters: b, h, k, m, n, p, r
Clockwise direction: numbers: 2, 3, 5
Zig-zags: letters: v, w, x, z numbers: 7

By the end of Year 2, a majority of children will begin to join their letters, following guidance in the Nelson handwriting scheme. Modelled writing will reflect this. When the children are ready, letters will be correctly modelled in handwriting sessions, using the joins taught. The process of joining letters will depend on the sequence of letters in a word, and will be taught using the two basic types of join: diagonal and horizontal. During KS2, children will continue to consolidate these joins, using appropriate sizing, spacing and letter formation. Pupils practise in short sessions throughout the week, usually incorporating the spelling patterns or word lists (from the NC English Appendix) appropriate to their year group. Handwriting interventions may be carried out in a focused 1:1 or group session for children who are falling behind age-related expectations.

Teaching and Learning

We have a Mastery approach to the teaching of English, where all children are challenged to work towards a deeper understanding of the knowledge expected for their year group. We follow the NC requirements for each key stage, embedded in a broad and balanced curriculum unique to our school. We aim to inspire an appreciation of the variety of genres across both fiction and non-fiction, engaging children by using the full range of media through which it can be accessed.

Displays

All classrooms have an English display area (active learning boards, washing lines, etc), which may show the learning through a unit of work, key features of the text type, learning prompts, and displays of excellent work. Every class should have 'The Pawsome Piggies' displayed, along with the relevant supplementary material; this ensures consistency of approach to the teaching of comprehension throughout school.

Assessment

Children in the Foundation Stage are assessed in accordance with the EYFS curriculum.

During June, all Year 1 children take the statutory 'Phonics Screen'; any child who does not reach the expected standard will then re-take the phonics screen the following year. Children in Year 2 will be teacher assessed during the summer term, using the 2014 National Curriculum expectations for each of the attainment targets in English. In May, Year 6 children will also take the SATs (externally marked tests) in Reading and Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation (SPaG). Additionally in Year 6, pupils will be teacher assessed in June using the 2014 National Curriculum expectations for Writing.

In all year groups, Teacher Assessments will inform end of year predictions as to each child's attainment in Reading, Writing and SPaG; these will be made in December, March and June, supported by formal testing. In addition, all children will complete a standardised Single Word Spelling Test three times during the year.

Marking and Feedback

Please refer to the Feedback Policy (including the interim policy made in light of the COVID Pandemic).

Homework

Pupils and parents in KS1 are expected to 'Read Every Day, Talk Every Day' (RED TED), recorded in their reading record. In addition to this, parents are also encouraged to read to / with their children throughout their time in primary school. Age and ability-matched spellings may be taken home to be learnt for a test during the following week, but best practice in spelling is currently under review, and staff are awaiting CPD around a new approach to the teaching of spelling (Easter INSET day). Year 6 pupils also receive a weekly English task (Reading, Writing or P&G), in readiness for SATs and secondary school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The curriculum leaders, alongside SLT, are responsible for monitoring and evaluating curriculum progress. This is done through book scrutiny, planning scrutiny, lesson observations, learning walks, pupil interviews, staff discussions, regular audit of resources and attendance at cluster meetings.

Review

The English policy will be reflected in our practice. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Agreement date of policy

This policy was developed by the English curriculum leader in November 2014 and updated in October 2020 and May 2021.