

# English Policy and Handbook



## Wath Victoria Primary School

Updated September 2021

Review due: September 2023

## **Intent**

At Wath Victoria Primary School, we believe that the study of English develops a child's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. They will use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

This policy aims to clarify the teaching and learning of English at Wath Victoria Primary School, and to provide guidance for teaching staff, parents and governors on agreed practice within the school.

## **Implementation**

This revised English policy comes into effect from September 2021. INSET training on 01.09.19 will give further training, advice and information about the processes in the policy. Delivery of the policy in classes will be monitored by SLT and Subject Leaders.

### ***Teaching and learning styles***

At Wath Victoria Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English. We use Rosenshine's Principals of Instruction in our teaching practice, with our principal aim being to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in all areas of the English curriculum. We do this through a daily English session in which children experience a variety of teaching and learning activities. These include whole-class reading or writing activities; whole-class focused word or sentence activities; guided group or independent activities and whole-class sessions to review progress and learning. Such input is balanced during the teaching of an English unit in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the students.

Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources. Children may use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

### ***Equal opportunities***

In all classes children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use Teaching Assistants to support targeted children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals. Working walls and help desks are used in all classrooms to support children to be independent in their learning.

## ***English Curriculum Planning***

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the English Programmes of Study as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum informs what we teach in the long-term:

- Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in reading, writing, grammar and punctuation that we teach each year. Spelling is taught using the No-Nonsense spelling programme and spelling is learned through the acquisition of spelling rules once children are secure with phonics. The yearly long-term plan is divided into 4 blocks each of which are driven by a novel, poem or visual text (film).
- Medium-term novel study plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each block of learning. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.
- Class teachers plan on a short-term basis for the teaching of English. This planning lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives some detail of how the lessons are to be taught. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher, year group teams and subject leaders discuss them on an informal basis. The class teacher will change their lessons daily based on the previous day's learning to ensure every lesson gives the children the best chance of being successful.

## ***English in Foundation Stage***

English is taught in Foundation Stage as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson varies according to the needs of the children. Aspects of the English curriculum are related to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them and to use them in various situations.

## ***Communication***

Beginning in EYFS and progressing throughout their school career, children's communication skills are seen as fundamental to their development. Early language skills are planned for and taught from Pre-School. Throughout school, children are expected to speak in sentences, with teachers modelling this where necessary. Talk for writing strategies are used such as 'hot seating', 'role play' and 'conscience alley' to engage the children's communication skills in English and the wider curriculum. At Wath Victoria, children are actively encouraged to:

- Have the opportunity to talk through their ideas before they write, discussing vocabulary choices and impact of language
- Listen and respond with constructive comments, questions or answers in a variety of speaking and listening activities across the curriculum, developing wide ranging and suitable vocabulary
- Join in group discussions and interactions, taking different roles in groups, making a range of contributions and working collaboratively
- Join in drama activities, performing in role and responding to performances

- Listen to and follow instructions and to relay messages accurately;
- Develop social skills and good manners
- Use talk partners to encourage development of ideas

## ***English Skills 1: Reading***

At Wath Victoria Primary School, we believe that children are entitled to love reading and to read to the very best of their abilities. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise and extend their reading in English and other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority. Teachers also read a class novel or short story on a regular basis as part of a 'story-time' session. *(See 'Every Child's Reading Entitlement', Appendix 1)*

### **Reading Aims:**

- All children will become independent readers, able to understand and evaluate a variety of reading material at an appropriate level.
- All children will be able to read for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms, at an appropriate level
- All children will understand the importance of reading as a means of communication
- All children will see reading as a purposeful activity
- All children will be exposed to a variety of genres and authors *(see 'Reading Spine', Appendix 2)*
- All children will be encouraged to love reading for pleasure *(See 'Reading for Pleasure statement', Appendix 3)*

### **Assessment of Reading**

Children's reading skills are assessed using the PIRA testing system on a termly basis and by using the reading assessment documents. *(See 'Reading Progress Tracker' documents, Appendix 4)*. The system allows teachers and SLT to look at standardised scores, age standardised scores and chronological reading ages. Teachers report reading data four times per year, including the PIRA results and class observations. Children's progress in reading is monitored through Pupil Progress meetings. In EYFS and KS1, children's levels in phonics and their ability to apply this phonic knowledge to their reading, are rigorously tracked. *(See 'Phonics Progress Tracker, Appendix 5)*. It is our aim to enable children to continue their reading progress outside of school by providing them with phonically decodable texts, matched to their phonic phase, which they can read at home.

### **1.1 Early Reading (EYFS & KS1)**

During EYFS and KS1 at Wath Victoria, children are **learning to read**. We aim to teach most children **how** to read by the end of Key Stage 1, in order for them to be able to read effortlessly, for pleasure and for learning. We aim for children to master the following 5 strands:

1. Phonics: decoding of words
2. Automatic reading of high frequency and common exception words
3. Prosody: fluency and expression in reading
4. Language and vocabulary development
5. Comprehension

## Phonics

Phonics is our main strategy for decoding words. In Pre-School and EYFS, language development underpins all teaching and learning. EYFS and KS1 systematically follow the progression of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds, starting with Phase 1 and 2 activities in Pre-School (F1). Phonics Phase 3 teaching begins in Foundation 2.

Children are taught phonics in groups, according to need and ability, with the aim of most children achieving age related expectations for their year group. Children are assessed every 6 weeks, using the Little Wandle assessments. Groups are adapted accordingly as a result of these assessments.

## Reading Skills

Starting in Foundation 2, the skills of reading are taught through small group guided reading sessions. Children are taught to apply their phonic knowledge, to automatically read high frequency and common exception words, and strategies to read fluently and with expression.

Comprehension is taught through carefully written questions in guided reading sessions in order further develop comprehension skills. EYFS and Year 1 use shared reading strategies when using texts during a wide range of curriculum lessons. In Year 2, the aim is to progressively teach more lessons as whole class reading. Children in this year group who are working below and towards age related expectations, will access appropriate reading interventions. See 'Early Reading Mastery' for further clarification. ([Appendix 6: Early Reading Mastery](#))

## 1.2 Reading in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, children are **reading to learn**. Children should be able to read fluently, gather information, comprehend and interpret the texts they have read and read for their own personal enjoyment. Children who are working below and towards age related expectations in Key Stage 2 are provided with appropriate reading intervention programmes, including Little Wandle Phonics 'Keep Up' as necessary. We use a variety of methods to teach reading in Key Stage 2, such as:

- Whole class reading (using shared and/or paired reading strategies), using the class novel and other texts
- Explicit teaching of specific comprehension skills – decode, explain, interpret/infer, language choice / authorial intent
- 1:1 reading with an adult
- Regular explicit teaching of vocabulary using Bedrock ([See 'Bedrock' online learning programme, Appendix 7](#))
- Daily independent reading for pleasure

### Whole class reading

Whole class reading takes place within the English session and within other lessons across the curriculum; the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts, linked to topics and the curriculum, that reflect the teaching objectives.

## **Vocabulary**

Explicit teaching of vocabulary is carried out throughout school. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, new vocabulary is taught in discrete lessons. In Key Stage 2, this is done, partly, via an online learning programme (Bedrock). Children are encouraged to use their newly acquired vocabulary in their oracy and in their written work. A vocabulary curriculum has been mapped out for foundation subjects and relevant words are taught during these lessons.

## **Reading for Pleasure**

Time is allocated in the timetable for each child to read independently, or be read aloud to, every day, for pleasure. Adults also model reading aloud to the children every day, to nurture the children's love of reading and stories. (See Reading for Pleasure statement)

## ***English Skills 2: Writing***

At Wath Victoria Primary School, we encourage all of our children to enjoy being writers. We aim to deliver engaging, purposeful lessons which allow the children to express themselves clearly in a range of written styles and genres. Teachers establish the purposes and audiences for writing, promoting the idea of writing for a purpose, and make teaching objectives explicit to children so they know why they are studying a particular text or text type and what the intended outcomes are.

At Wath Victoria Primary School, we believe that the learning of writing skills should be embedded across the curriculum. The key skills of planning, composing, evaluating, spelling, handwriting, presentation, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary are, therefore, taught explicitly in the context of English lessons but also indirectly through cross-curricular writing tasks in other subjects.

## **Writing Aims**

- All children become independent writers
- All children will be able to write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of genres
- All children will understand the importance of writing as a means of communication
- All children see writing as a purposeful activity
- All children will use spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately and with confidence
- All children will be given the opportunity to compose, transcribe and refine writing
- All children will write with confidence and derive pleasure from their ability to do so

## **Assessment of Writing**

The marking of writing is carried out by adults providing responsive feedback during lessons and through adult reflection at the end of a piece of work, according to the school's marking and feedback policy. Writing assessments are monitored and moderated in a range of ways: during regular Work Watch meetings across each phase of school, during phase reviews and in key stage moderations. Assessment data for writing is reported twice a year and children's progress monitored in Pupil Progress meetings. Writing progress is tracked using the Writing Tracker. (See: *'Writing Progress Tracker' documents, Appendix 8 and SPAG progression documents*)

## **Shared writing**

Shared writing takes place within the English lesson and within other lessons across the curriculum; the teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions focus on the explicit teaching of specific writing strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, either individually or through partner work, with the writing.

## **Guided writing**

Guided writing takes place as part of an English session with a group of children with similar writing needs. During a guided writing session, the children will write with a teacher or teaching assistant supporting them. It is intended that guided writing provides an opportunity to further develop and extend their writing skills. Adults model the writing in a collaborative forum and the group receive feedback on their successes and discuss further areas for development.

## **Independent writing**

Children are expected to write independently at regular points in their writing learning journey. They are expected to use the resources provided in the classroom and information from the English Working Wall. They may use talk tins, iPad dictation or other strategies to help them orally rehearse their sentences before writing. They are encouraged to self-evaluate their writing, using their Writing Toolkit to check and then edit their work.

### **2.1 Early Writing (EYFS & KS1)**

In EYFS, children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken word and the written word and how, through making marks, drawings and personal writing, children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes. Emphasis is given to the development of spoken language, ensuring children know how to construct a sentence orally before being expected to write one. Children are explicitly taught new vocabulary and expected to use these new words in their oral and written work. During phonics lessons, children are taught how to segment words into phonemes, and how to spell “tricky words”. The appropriate developmental age in the EYFS curriculum informs planning for learning activities and writing materials are always available for the children in their child-initiated learning and play. Children are introduced to narrative thinking and talk for writing through word and language games, role play and storytelling/helicopter stories.

The development of writing skills at KS1 progresses by building on the basic skills learned during EYFS and very much with an emphasis on talk for writing. Children are introduced to different text genres and opportunities are given for extended writing. Tasks are planned for and scaffolded according to need by the provision of written structures/templates (where appropriate), by the use of IT, or by the intervention of a supporting teacher or adult.

Throughout KS1, children are gradually introduced to the learning sequence used in KS2. With adult support and modelling, children in F2 are encouraged to edit and improve their writing. Throughout KS1, children continue to edit and improve becoming increasingly independent in these skills. However, as a result of COVID closures on writing progress for our youngest children, greater emphasis will be placed on securing basic sentence construction in Key Stage 1 before moving on to more complex written structures.

## 2.2 Writing in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, for a new genre of writing, the learning sequence is as follows:

1. Write a launchpad for the new genre
2. Share read a model text and complete analysis of it for key features
3. Develop a Writing Toolkit from the key features
4. Review of launchpad writing using Writing Toolkit
5. Plan their writing using IPEELL:
  - Introduction
  - Paragraphs / Points
  - Elaborate / expand ideas
  - Language / vocabulary and links / cohesion
6. Write draft one in stages, modelled using shared writing, guided writing and then independent writing
7. Review draft one, using the Writing Toolkit and set targets for draft 2.
8. Edit and re-write sentences or paragraphs for draft 2, modelling improvements to vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
9. Final review of writing and make a best copy ('Published Work') if required.

Throughout the process, learning stops will be made to teach discrete lessons on sentence construction, grammar and punctuation relating to the learning objectives for the writing. For genres which are being revisited, the learning sequence may be shortened to remove the launchpad and text analysis, as necessary. A range of genres are planned and taught throughout the year, based on the progression of skills in 'Writing for a Purpose' ([See: 'Writing for a Purpose' Appendix 9](#))

## 2.3 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

As a result of COVID closures during 2020-21, it has been noted that children's progress with spelling, punctuation and grammar have been adversely affected. In order to tackle this, discrete SPAG lessons will be taught at least twice weekly in Years 3 – 6 from September 2021. This is in addition to the online Bedrock vocabulary lessons, which are timetabled twice weekly.

### Spelling

This is taught using the 'No-Nonsense Spelling' scheme of work from Years 2-6. ([See: 'No-Nonsense Spelling' documents, Appendix 10](#)). Key vocabulary for science, history, geography and other foundation subjects is also taught. Children are taught to use a range of strategies to help them learn a new spelling. In written work, spelling errors are identified according to the school's marking and feedback policy. These will focus, in the first instance, on errors being made which are from previously taught knowledge. Spelling and vocabulary is taught, applied, assessed and revisited at school over a period of time and is not encouraged to be set as homework tasks.

### Punctuation and Grammar

Punctuation and grammar skills are taught through discrete lessons and via learning stops in an English study unit. The learning is planned from the year group objectives in the English Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum, using the RoSIS SPAG progression documents Progress in Punctuation. ([See: SPAG progression documents Appendix 11](#))



Assessments in SPAG are made termly using GAPS testing and by class teacher assessment. SPAG data is reported twice yearly by class teachers and progress is reviewed during Pupil Progress meetings.

## 2.4 Handwriting

Handwriting is taught throughout the school using the 'Letterjoin' handwriting scheme. (See: '[Letterjoin' Appendix 12](#)) This provides opportunities for children to practise their skills interactively, using the whiteboard or an iPad, for example, and in their handwriting books. Handwriting skills are developed through the scheme as children progress from a pre-cursive to a continuous cursive handwriting style. Children are expected to use this handwriting in all of their written work, with discrete handwriting lessons being taught twice weekly.

### ***Monitoring and Review of English***

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team, English Leader and the Reading Leader. The work of the subject leaders also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school.

### **Impact**

Our aim in the teaching of English is that all children will develop the necessary skills to use the English language, confidently, by:

- *achieving standards at least in line with national expectations*
- *enabling children to speak clearly, fluently and audibly, and to take account of their listeners*
- *encouraging children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard*
- *using and understanding a wide range of vocabulary which impacts on outcomes in reading and writing and sets them up for the next stage of their future education*
- *teaching children effective communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities*
- *helping them become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge*
- *reading a range of texts fluently with understanding and expression*
- *fostering a love of reading, encouraging children to read for pleasure*
- *developing enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts*
- *fostering the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value*
- *encouraging accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction*
- *improving the planning, drafting and editing of their written work and encouraging them to have pride in their handwriting and written presentation skills.*

## ***Appendices***

Further support and guidance for teaching English at Wath Victoria Primary School can be found in the following documents, which accompany this policy and handbook.

Appendix 1: Every Child's Reading Entitlement at Wath Victoria Primary School

Appendix 2: Wath Victoria Primary School Reading Spine

Appendix 3: Reading For Pleasure Statement

Appendix 4: Reading Progress Tracker

Appendix 5: Phonics Progress

Appendix 6: Early Reading Mastery

Appendix 6: Bedrock online learning programme <https://app.bedrocklearning.org>  
(See School Administrator for passwords)

Appendix 7: Writing Progress Tracker

Appendix 8: Writing for a Purpose

Appendix 9: No-Nonsense Spelling Programme, Years 2-6 (Raintree Publishers)

Appendix 10: RoSIS Spag Progression documents

Appendix 11: Letterjoin online handwriting programme [www.letterjoin.co.uk](http://www.letterjoin.co.uk)  
(See School Administrator for passwords)