

Halstead Community Primary School

English Policy



Approved by the Full Governing Body

Signed:

Patricia Dunmall (Chair of Governors) – Mr Hawkins (Headteacher)

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ENGLISH POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of principles, aims and organisation for the teaching of English at Halstead Community Primary School.

2. Principles

At Halstead Community Primary School we believe in providing a high-quality education in English which will enable pupils *to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them*¹. We believe all the skills of language are essential, so we will ensure the pupils of Halstead Community Primary School will learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently thus enabling them to become fully participating members of society.

The school's policy is informed and guided by the programmes of study and statutory requirements for the subject set out in the **English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013**. We will also be informed by the New English Curriculum's overarching aim 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.*¹

3. Aims

Our English Policy at Halstead Community Primary School aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop the understanding and skills to become independent, enthusiastic and competent speakers, readers and writers
- enjoy using language in different contexts and have the confidence and ability to do so
- become competent and articulate speakers and good responsive listeners in a variety of situations and are able to communicate effectively including making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate
- use discussion to learn and to express ideas, feelings, experiences and understanding and be able to elaborate on and explain these clearly
- use their phonetic knowledge when reading and writing
- develop and use a range of strategies when reading to become fluent readers who have a good understanding of what they have read and appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- *write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences*¹
- understand the function and importance of Standard English
- develop a range of spelling strategies and apply them in their independent work
- *acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language*¹
- develop a fluent, legible handwriting style and take care with presentation of their work
- understand that the language skills they have acquired may be relevant across all areas of their learning and life and to apply those skills where possible

4. Principles of Teaching and Learning

At Halstead Community Primary School we follow the programmes of study and statutory requirements for the subject set out in the **English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013**. Our long, medium and short term planning across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will incorporate these programmes of study and statutory requirements. The statutory requirements from the EYFS Profile will be followed in the Reception class. As we use a creative and topic based curriculum English lessons will sometimes be linked to the classes' current topic and may be cross-curricular when suitable and appropriate.

Each Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 class undertake a daily English lesson which usually includes a warm up or SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) activity, whole class teaching input, independent and group work and a plenary. This lesson structure may, however, change according to the learning objective, the learner's needs or when cross-curricular or more creative learning approaches are used to achieve the learning outcome for that lesson.

In addition to the daily English lesson each class also timetables:

- daily 20-30 minute guided reading session with the guided group focus alternating weekly between a reading then writing focus (this will be introduced to Early Years when the children are developmentally ready)
- daily 10-15 minute reading for pleasure session after lunch 4 times a week and a writing for pleasure session once per week (these sessions are timetabled across the school straight after lunch time at 1.15pm)
- daily 15 minute spelling lesson for Key Stage 2 and a daily 20 minute phonics lesson for Key Stage 1 and Early Years (these sessions are timetabled across the school straight after morning playtime)
- weekly handwriting lessons (or fine motor activities for Early Years) are timetabled for at least 30 minutes over the week, either as one session or smaller sessions spread over the week
- an extended, independent writing session at least once a week (for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) linked to either the current English unit or linked to another curriculum area (these sessions may be in an English lesson or during a topic or cross-curricular lesson)
- each class will have a timetabled slot in the school library each week where they can read for pleasure and take a library book home

4.1 Spoken Language

Spoken language and listening skills are key in pupils' development across the whole curriculum, so at Halstead Community Primary School we give children a range of purposes and opportunities for speaking and listening in all areas of the curriculum. As spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing it will sometimes be taught discretely in English lessons to ensure pupils understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate and also gain the knowledge, skills and understanding of drama. More often, however, spoken language and listening skills will be incorporated and practiced within most English lessons and across all areas of the curriculum. Because the quality and variety of language pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar, teachers and all staff need to act as models for the appropriate and correct use of language.

To develop effective spoken language and listening skills pupils are taught to:

- express themselves in a variety of situations using language and suitable registers which are appropriate to their needs and the intended audience
- *give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes including for expressing feelings¹*
- listen, understand and respond appropriately to others maintaining attention and participating in conversations and be able to gain, maintain and monitor the interest of listeners
- speak audibly and fluently using the vocabulary and grammar of standard English and the

- conventions of speech
- formulate, clarify and express their ideas, ask relevant questions and articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- *use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas*
- participate confidently in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates

4.2 Reading

Being a fluent and competent reader is essential for success at school and in life. As such, at Halstead Community Primary School we believe that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils should be able to read fluently and with confidence, in any subject. We follow the new English programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 which consist of two dimensions: word reading and comprehension (both listening and reading). It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions. The teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics is key to our early teaching of reading. We, therefore, have discrete phonics lessons timetabled for Early Years and Key Stage 1 each day. Opportunities to apply these decoding skills and develop the other dimension, comprehension, will be taught in guided reading sessions and during whole class shared reading. Opportunities to model, apply and use reading skills across other subjects will also be planned for. Children will also have opportunities to read widely and often by having opportunities to read to and be read to by teachers, other adults and each other during English lessons, guided reading sessions, reading for pleasure times, library sessions and across all subjects as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Book weeks, book fairs, read-a-thons, author visits and other special reading focused activities will also be planned during the academic year to help establish and promote a love of reading.

To develop as competent, independent readers, pupils will be taught to:

- use and apply their phonics skills to blend and segment words
- use their phonics to work out the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words
- understand that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words
- use a range of strategies to read a variety of texts with accuracy, fluency, expression and understanding
- develop a wide vocabulary and good linguistic knowledge
- understand and respond to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction and poetry books and texts using other media eg. kindles, ipads and the internet
- develop good comprehension skills and be able to answer a range of questions about what they have read and express their opinion through high-quality discussion with the teacher or other adults
- find out the information they need in order to research and answer questions
- read, analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts, including literature from the English literary heritage and from other cultures and traditions

English resources will be organised effectively to develop a stimulating and literate environment throughout the school with a core set of big books, guided reading sets and class novels available for each Key Stage along with a variety of take home books and reading corner books in each class. Each classroom will have an attractive, inviting reading corner or class library area to promote and encourage reading for pleasure.

The value of parents and other family members helping children with their reading cannot be overestimated. Children take books home regularly from the class take home book collection. In reception and Key Stage 1 books are leveled by book band colours so children take home reading books which are at their appropriate reading level. In Key Stage 2 children choose from a range of books suitable for their reading age and level. A reading log will be provided for each child so they can record and comment on the books they take home.

To promote reading for pleasure and to develop an appreciation of literature, all classes have a 10-15 minute reading for pleasure session four times a week. We also celebrate days such as National Poetry Day, Book Week and World Book Day each year with author visits and workshops, if possible, and a variety of fun and stimulating activities focused on books and reading.

4.3 Writing

Children need to be able to form, articulate and communicate their ideas in writing and be able to write down these ideas fluently. At Halstead Community Primary School we follow the new English programmes of study for key stage 1 and 2 which are broken into the two key dimensions: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). In addition, pupils will also be taught how to plan, revise, evaluate and publish their writing. Children are taught these writing skills as part of English lessons, during guided writing sessions and phonics and spelling lessons. Children will also have regular opportunities to apply and practice these skills across a range of subjects and situations giving the children the opportunity to write in a variety of contexts. An extended, independent writing session will also be planned for at least once a week related to either the current English unit or linked to another curriculum area.

To develop as effective writers, pupils will be taught to:

- use and apply their phonics skills to segment words for writing
- develop effective transcription - *spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words*¹
- express themselves clearly and precisely in writing
- develop an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar
- demonstrate their understanding of how writing enables them to remember, communicate, organise and develop their ideas and information
- develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader, using a wide-ranging vocabulary and effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently
- write neatly and with accurate spelling and grammar
- understand the appropriate use and purpose of an increasing range of written forms
- write for a range of text types with an awareness of the audience, purpose and context

Children have individual writing targets on a book mark and children are expected to work on these in all their writing. They are monitored by the teacher and pupil on a regular basis and new targets are set at least once a term and shared with parents.

To promote a love of writing all classes have a 10-15 minute writing for pleasure session once a week. Displays around the school will celebrate the children's writing. We also have book weeks, author visits and other special writing focused activities are also planned during the academic year to help promote writing.

4.4 Phonics, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation

At Halstead Community Primary School we follow the statutory requirements for spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation as outlined in the English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013.

Phonics and spelling are taught discreetly and systematically in daily phonics lessons in Early Years and Key Stage 1 and in daily spelling lessons in Key Stage 2. Opportunities to use and apply these skills are also provided in the English lessons as well as in other subjects in the curriculum.

In Early Years and Key Stage 1 lessons we follow the *Read, Write Inc Phonics* program but this is adapted, when required, to meet the learning needs of the group of children. When children have completed the *Read, Write Inc Phonics* program and are secure (usually after they have passed the Phonics Screening Check threshold) they will follow an adapted program to bridge the gaps between the phonics and spelling programs and to secure the reading and spelling of words containing different pronunciations and spellings for phonemes/graphemes. For most year 2 children and children in Key Stage 2 the *No Nonsense Spelling* program is used for the daily spelling lessons. Children who require additional support will be assessed by the Inclusion Manager and given appropriate 1:1 or small group support following an appropriately adapted program. Children will be given set spellings regularly for homework based on the current phonics or spelling lessons and the list of spellings outlined in the English programmes of study (see appendix 1 of the English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013). They are then

1. *English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013.*
HCPS English Policy 2017

tested on a regular basis in each class. The ability of children to apply correct spellings in their writing will also be monitored.

Teachers will informally assess phonics and spelling continuously during the discrete lessons and across all other subjects. Phonics in Early Years and Key Stage 1 is formally assessed, at least once per term, using the *Read, Write Inc* assessment guidelines. Year 1 pupils undertake the Phonics Screening Check at the end of year 1. Children who do not make the check threshold will be given another opportunity in year 2 to complete the check and given appropriate support/intervention so they are successful in the follow up check.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing but to ensure pupils understand the relationships between words, understand nuances in meaning, work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning and develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language vocabulary, grammar and punctuation will be taught as part of the English lesson in the warm-up session or as part of the main lesson or guided group work. Pupils will also be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. As it is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English these terms will be taught and integrated within the teaching of English.

4.5 Handwriting

The focus on handwriting in the new curriculum is much greater, highlighting its importance and making the connection between a child's handwriting and their composition and spelling ability.

The development of fine motor skills is an important foundation of handwriting. These skills will be planned for and developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and beyond if necessary. Early Years Foundation Stage plan gross and fine motor skill activities and also use *Write Dance* to develop these skills. For Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 we follow the statutory requirements as outlined in the English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013 and use the *Scholastic English Skills Handwriting* scheme from years 1-6 to implement the statutory requirements. (Please see Appendix A for the statutory requirements and our handwriting overview)

As good writing depends on fluent, legible and eventually, speedy handwriting we dedicate at least half an hour each week. Handwriting will be taught discretely at least once a week (for a total of 30 minutes in a week-either as a 30 minute lesson or as smaller mini-lessons) in each class. During handwriting lessons letter formation/joins will be modelled by the teacher and children will have opportunities to practice these. For Early Years Foundation Stage and year 1 the daily phonics lessons also provide an opportunity for correct letter formation to be modelled and practiced

Certificates will be given when children achieve set standards (see attached Handwriting Levels sheet). When children's handwriting is of a consistently high standard (ie. Handwriting level 10) children may be given a pen license.

5. Assessment and marking

As stated in the English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013, *by the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study*¹. We use formative, day to day assessment to help assess if these expectations are met. Formative assessment will also be used by teachers to help inform their planning. These types of formative assessments are gathered by the teachers and teaching assistants in a variety of ways. In speaking and listening this involves observing children using a variety of spoken language for different purposes. In reading this involves formal and informal observation and close monitoring of children's developing use of strategies and responses to texts. In writing it involves effective feedback and marking which is positive, instructional and developmental. All pupils work will be marked regularly with feedback given as appropriate. See [Feedback and Marking Policy](#) for further detail. Pupils will also have targets set regularly (at least once a term) for reading and writing. These targets will be put on bookmarks for the children to access easily and shared with parents.

1. English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013.
HCPS English Policy 2017

Summative assessment is currently under review to ensure it meets the requirements of the new curriculum. From September 2015 we will use the Kent Tracking system to record, track and monitor children's progress. For reading and writing we will use the Kent Tracking Statements for Reading and Writing. Year 1 children (and year 2 children who did not pass in the previous year) will complete the Phonics Screening Task in June each year.

6. Information Communication Technology

ICT should be used to aid and support teaching and learning wherever possible. This may be in the classroom or ICT suite. Each class has allocated time slots and additional slots can be booked where required.

7. Special Educational Needs

In all classes there are children of differing abilities from those on the SEN register, to the gifted and talented children. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve these through a range of strategies:

- planning differentiated tasks for children to meet specific learning outcomes
- giving children carefully planned additional resources to support their learning
- using a range of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to teaching and learning
- setting targets that will build and extend children's basic understanding
- identifying children who need additional support and providing appropriate intervention programs such as the Better Reading Partnerships

For further details of provision for children with SEN, please refer to [Equality & Inclusion Policy](#).

8. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the role responsibility of each class teacher:

- to plan and deliver the English Curriculum according to the **English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England 2013** statutory requirements or the Early Years Profile in Reception
- to act as a role model in for spoken English
- to use the Halstead English planning format
- to monitor and assess the progress of children within their class in accordance with the English, Assessment and Feedback & Marking policies
- to raise any issues with the Subject Leader when necessary

It is the role responsibility of the subject leader to plan for and sustain development and improvement in the teaching and learning of English through:

- Leading/organising staff development
- Ensuring continuity and progression through monitoring of planning, books and lessons
- Support the development of record keeping, assessment and target setting systems in Literacy
- Disseminating good practice
- Monitoring, ordering and organising English resources
- Keeping up to date with developments in English and disseminate to others
- Promoting the subject throughout the school
- Informing the Head Teacher and literacy link Governor of issues affecting English within the school.

9. Links to other policies

a. Health and Safety

Please refer to the school's [Health and Safety Policy](#).

b. Racial Equality, and Equal Opportunities

Children of all ethnic groups, both genders and abilities have equal access to the English Curriculum. Positive images in terms of such groups are promoted throughout the school, both in the use of language and in the provision of resources.

Please refer to the school's [Equality & Inclusion Policy](#).

10. Consultation and Review

This policy was originally written and discussed and agreed by staff and teaching assistants; parents, children and governors were consulted in Autumn 2009.

The policy was reviewed and amended in November 2012, July 2014 and July 2015.

This current version was reviewed and amended in November 2017.

Appendix A

Handwriting Statutory Requirements and Handwriting Scheme Overview

Early Years Foundation Stage core learning skills for handwriting:

- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are formed correctly.

Year 1:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Letters will be introduced in letters shape groups – straight down shapes; down, up and over shapes; up, backwards and over shapes; and zooming shapes. Capitals and numerals will also be taught.

Year 2:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Pupils revise and practise correct letter formation then move on to a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. The joins are introduced in joining groups – alternative forms (e & s); end low diagonal joins (ch sh th qu ck ai air er g); end low drop-on joins (ed ng ear igh); end high horizontal joins (or oi ow); end high diagonal joins (wh ot rk); end high drop on joins (oo oa wa); end high to e, oe and re; and tricky joins (ss ff ee zz).

Years 3-4:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch)

Pupils revise joins introduced in year 2 then move onto - end low diagonal joins (words starting with a and containing u and i); end low drop-on joins (ha to ba); end high horizontal joins (ri wi om); end high diagonal joins (ok rl); end high drop on joins (ra wo og); end high to ure, ve and we; and tricky joins to and from x. Pupils will then move onto learning how to join suffix endings (y e ding s es ies ly less ful able e rest tion ic ist); prefixes (un dis re pre de mis micro mini auto circ tele trans bi tri oct); common letter strings (ough igh ight kn mb wr); and contractions (n't 're 've 'll 'd).

Years 5-6:

In upper key stage 2 children will focus on developing their own handwriting style and on presentation writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Pupils revise joins with words starting with a and containing u or l then move onto – end-low and end-high joins (ace qua af wn vi rm ob rh wl oc rd va ve re oe ss ff joins to and from x); suffixes (words ending in e y in gest ish ment ful less ate en ify ity ism ness e rest like ology ance ise); prefixes (un dis mis il ir in im non anti prim aqua multi quad auto man); common letter strings (cian tion sion ci ce cy co ca ear ie ough ctu tch gue).