



Attleborough Primary School

English Policy

Date: March 2022

Review: March 2025

English Policy

At Attleborough Primary School we believe that a high quality education in English is essential for children’s social, emotional and cultural development. Our English curriculum develops children’s ability and confidence to speak and write fluently so that they can recognise and communicate their ideas and emotions to others. We put a high importance on reading a range of poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts to help children to develop emotionally, spiritually and culturally and to gain additional knowledge about the world around them.

Aims

Our aims are in line with the National Curriculum aims and objectives for English: to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping children with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop a love of literature through reading widely, both for learning and for pleasure.

Teaching and Learning

The school follows both the Talk for Writing and the Power of Reading approach to teaching English. The Power of Reading Scheme has high quality texts with rich illustrations at their heart, and lend themselves to engaging book talk and impressive use of vocabulary.

Our teachers use a range of strategies to engage and inspire children during English lessons and follow a sequence of teaching that enables children to develop the required skills to be able to interrogate texts and write across a range of genres. Children are taught in mixed ability groups throughout the school and are constantly challenged through the work that they are given. Tasks are matched to the individual children’s needs to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to make good progress. In some cases, this may involve the support of the teacher or teaching assistant on a whole class task; in others it might be differentiated texts or tasks suited to the individual’s needs. Our timetable allows for 1 ½ hours of English teaching (reading and writing) to be carried out each day.

Within English sessions children will be taught about the importance of how we use language, grammar, spelling and punctuation to support their writing and inference, sequencing, retrieval, vocabulary and prediction skills to develop their reading comprehension. Children are also given the opportunity to practise and consolidate their English skills through reading and writing in topic lessons.

English Curriculum Planning

Our English planning falls into 3 phases: long term plans outline the topics that we will be teaching both across the curriculum and within English; medium term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term and short term plans which give detail of our daily English teaching and learning. Our short term plans list specific objectives and learning outcomes for each lesson and give details on how the lessons will be taught. Medium and short term planning is produced within year groups and individual class teachers will use these to make assessments of children’s performance which will then be used to allocate extra support and intervention as necessary.

To ensure that our children are achieving their full potential in English, we:

- Follow the Talk for Writing teaching sequence (Imitation, Innovation, Invention and Independent Application) which contains specific and clear objectives for each lesson,
- Follow the Power of Reading teaching sequence (and all of the suggested reading and teaching methods),
- Teach phonics based on the Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised Programme,

- Teach spellings through the Twinkl Spelling Programme,
- Use Word Rescue to increase and develop children’s vocabulary,
- Choose our whole class reading from a carefully chosen reading spine which includes award winning books,
- Have high expectations of all children; ensuring that they are all challenged to produce their best work,
- Use knowledge of children’s prior learning to ensure that we are building on skills that they have already learned so they are given increasing challenge as they move up the school to ensure they make good progress,
- Differentiate our lessons so that all children have the chance to flourish,
- Plan engaging and inspiring opportunities for children to write, including entering competitions and engaging with authors,
- Plan for speaking and listening opportunities to enable children to practise key skills verbally before they put pen to paper,
- Assess work and give detailed (often in the moment) feedback to pupils to help them to make further progress with their work at all stages of the Talk for Writing and Power of Reading sequences, but in particular during the innovation stage of Talk for Writing, when children are still mastering their ability to write in a certain style,
- Model shared writing and guided writing weekly,
- Give children regular opportunities to edit their work to produce an improved article that they are more proud of,
- Use cooperative learning strategies to ensure active learning.

Speaking and Listening

We understand how important spoken language is to our pupil’s development across the curriculum and how important it is to their progress in reading and writing. Our teachers ensure that children are exposed to rich language in their lessons and encourage them to use it both in writing and speech so that they are able to communicate precise ideas to their audiences. Children are taught how to express their ideas clearly and audibly and how to listen and respond appropriately to others. We attach great importance to the use of Standard English within our school and teachers and teaching assistants sensitively support the children through their modelling of language to distinguish between the variety of regional dialects and the importance of Standard English. Speaking and listening are at the heart of both the Power of Reading and our Talk for Writing approaches. Children are regularly required to perform texts orally, playing with the language and rehearsing what sounds the most effective as a speaker and a reader. This is crucial before any ideas are put to paper. Within English teaching time, children are encouraged to use drama to help them to gain meaning from texts and deepen their understanding of the motivations of characters within them.

Reading and Phonics

We understand that reading underpins the curriculum and is essential to children’s success in all subjects taught throughout the school. Teachers at our school understand the key role that they have in helping to develop positive attitudes towards reading and the importance it has in fuelling children’s imagination, offering the children lifelong educational success. Every child visits the school library once a week and the local library one a half term.

In EYFS and Year One we teach phonics through the Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised programme, covering phases two to five. This programme is a systematic, synthetic and comprehensive phonic programme which is DFE accredited.

Children in Year Two through to Year Six who require early reading support will be taught phonics through the Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised Scheme, using either the Keep Up Programme or the specific Intervention Programme. At the start of each school year, children are assessed on their phonic knowledge and whole class teaching sessions, or small intervention groups are put in place to develop these skills to help them to decode words and read fluently. As well as phonic knowledge, children are taught how to use a range of clues to identify unfamiliar words and gain meaning from their texts: picture clues, context clues and word class clues.

Whole class guided reading sessions allow children to work collaboratively on reading activities and to work with teachers and teaching assistants discussing and interpreting both non-fiction, fiction and poetry. The sessions develop the children's ability to learn key vocabulary and use inference, prediction, sequencing and retrieval skills to access well written texts with rich illustrations, and are always pitched at a level which is higher than the children can access independently. Studying whole books during these sessions allows children to build up their reading stamina and fluency.

We also teach reading and writing skills through the Power of Reading Scheme. The whole class is involved in high quality book talk, character development and emotive writing whilst reading one particular book over a series of around twenty sessions. This is key to adding to the children's development and love of books.

Parental Support and Engagement. As well as our teachers, parents have a key role in helping to promote a love of reading and books amongst children. Taking time to listen to their children read, sharing books together, talking about books and recording reading sessions within the school reading record are the most important homework tasks that parents can support their child with. As a school, we actively seek out opportunities to engage parents in reading activities with their children. We hold phonics workshops to inform parents how their children learn phonics, so they can support their children at home. We also encourage children to visit the local Attleborough Library with their families.

Writing

Children are taught to write for a variety of purposes in a range of forms for a range of audiences. Our English teaching follows both the Talk for Writing and the Power of Reading teaching sequence. Talk for Writing begins with children undertaking a 'Cold Task' which allows children to show their teacher what they already know about a genre of writing and enables the teacher to adapt their planning to teach the skills that the children need to perfect. The children then learn a model text off by heart which over the course of a 3 to 4-week unit ultimately leads to the children writing in that style, which is then assessed through a 'hot task' piece of writing. Throughout the year, using both schemes, each year group covers a range of fiction and non-fiction genres as well as poetry. During the course of a unit, the children complete around 3 to 4 extended pieces of writing along with several short burst pieces to practice key compositional skills including grammar.

During any teaching sequence each teacher completes high quality shared writing with the children, where they demonstrate how to write in a particular style. This lends itself to children sharing their ideas. Supported composition (using an example of a children's piece

of work) is used to help the children to perfect their editing skills to improve their work and help to achieve their next steps in learning. Children also complete independent writing tasks and, depending on ability, some receive writing frames, word banks or scaffolds to help them to succeed.

To ensure progress in writing, teachers regularly provide in the moment, live feedback to children in the lesson so that they are clear on the things that they are doing well and the specific areas that they need to work on to make further progress. Children are given the opportunity to respond to both their teacher's comments and those from their peers, and are taught specifically how to edit and improve their work, using a red pen to show any changes more clearly.

Spelling

Teachers at APS understand the important role that spelling plays in children making good progress with their reading and writing. Research shows that children are better able to focus on their thoughts and ideas when writing if they are able to spell. Weak spellers can often limit their language choices and instead restrict themselves to using simple words for fear of misspelling them which can then contribute to slower progress in their writing.

Children in EYFS and Year One learn to spell using Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised. Children from Year Two to Year Six use the Twinkl spelling scheme, covering all of the spellings required from the National Curriculum plus any additional ones the teachers feel necessary for example topic words. Spellings are taught for 15 – 20 minutes for three sessions per week. These words are then tested in a 'quiz' format at the end of the week in a fourth session. Children take home five common exception words each week to learn and are tested on a Friday. Parents use 'look, say, cover, write, check' method to support their children in mastering their words. On a Monday, Year Two to Year Six children complete a Word Rescue and take a Tier Two word and investigate it, finding out the meaning, checking they can use it in context and that they can spell it. This word is then encouraged in the children's writing from then on.

Other key spelling patterns and grammatical terms and phrases are taught during the Power of Reading and Talk for Writing teaching schemes.

Handwriting

It is important that during their time at APS children are able to develop a fluent writing style which will facilitate their writing and will prepare them for the increasing speed, strength and stamina required as they move throughout the school. As with spelling, it is important that children's ideas and creativity are not held back by the physical act of forming letters and words and that their presentation can show a pride in their work. Regular handwriting practice is carried out in all year groups following our own School Handwriting Progression Document. Fine and gross motor skill activities are planned on a daily basis across the school to support all children, including those who have particular difficulties with their handwriting and co-ordination.

English across the Curriculum

Lessons across the curriculum are planned to give children the opportunity to consolidate and apply the full range of their literacy skills through speaking and listening, reading and writing to communicate their ideas and theories. In maths, children are encouraged to use their reading and comprehension skills to understand word problems and identify the calculations they need to use to find solutions. They use their speaking and listening skills to

explain and understand alternative ways of solving problems using precise mathematical language. In Science, children use precise technical language and forms of non-fiction writing to explain scientific phenomena and to record the outcomes of practical experiments. In history, geography and religious education children use their knowledge of the English language to find out new information about the world around them and are given the opportunity to express their views about a range of moral issues, both past and present, through spoken debates and writing. Our Topic plans are also aligned with our long-term English planning so that children are able to apply their learning to their topic writing and reading for learning.

English and Inclusion

Where appropriate, work is differentiated for children with special educational needs, English as an additional Language and for those that are gifted so that they can achieve their full potential. All our teachers provide appropriate learning opportunities to match tasks to the ability of the children.

Teachers and teaching assistants provide support so that every child will achieve in English by:

- individualised guided writing and reading;
- differentiated texts where appropriate so that children can more easily read and understand in the case of our EAL and SEN students, or more challenging texts that will stretch gifted children’s skills;
- visual and written materials in different formats;
- ICT and other technological aids (Clicker 6);
- alternative communication such as signs and symbols;

Assessment

Assessments are carried out in line with APS’s Feedback and Marking Policy. Teachers carry out short term, medium term and long term assessments of children’s work in English. Once each term, we assess Reading and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar using PiXL, which compares how we have achieved in our school with other PiXL schools around the country. From these tests, we can then complete question level analyses to adapt our planning to cover these crucial gaps or misconceptions and can also run intervention sessions at either individual, small group or whole class level. We also complete Salford Reading tests, Phonics tests and reading speed tests each term.

Short term assessments will evaluate children’s performance in lessons and daily plans are adapted in light of these outcomes. Medium term assessment looks into children’s performance across a unit and will be built into future planning of units. Long term assessment focuses on children’s performance at the end of a term, and the results of this assessment will trigger extra invention outside of core English teaching time for certain groups of children to help support their progress. Longer term assessment of reading involves a combination of teacher assessment and optional tests to assess performance, and for writing all assessment is teacher assessed and internally moderated.

Moderation

Year group moderation of writing happens on a termly basis and all our teaching staff are responsible for moderating writing levels across the school to assess writing progress at the end of the academic year. Scheduled staff meetings throughout the year focus on moderation ensuring that the school’s approach is both consistent and meets the national

standards as set out by the government. Cluster moderation usually happens once an academic year.

Resources

There are a range of resources within the school to support the teaching of English that are used across year groups, including:

Talk for Writing resources and books.

The Power of Reading resources and books.

A well-stocked School library which includes a range of fiction and non-fiction books and recommended challenge books to encourage reading for pleasure.

Guided Reading Books and Resources in year groups to help support the development of comprehension skills, love of reading and a broad understanding of a range of authors.

Reading scheme books, Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised Phonics and Twinkl resources to support children's decoding and phonic knowledge.

Word Rescue resources.

Clicker 6 to support children with dyslexia.

Monitoring and Review

The English subject lead must have a passion for the subject and for ensuring children have a sound English curriculum provided to them by teachers who are competent with their subject knowledge and driven to allow all children to succeed.

The subject lead is responsible for ensuring that year groups are following the long term English plans, including using the skills and knowledge learnt in these lessons in other subjects. The English lead must also complete regular training to ensure they are up to date with any curriculum changes and is also responsible for updating staff on developments for the English curriculum, suggesting training to support staff's subject knowledge and sharing best practice. Regular continual professional development sessions are led by the subject leader focusing on grammar for writing, moderation, Power of Reading, phonics, Talk for Writing and developing a love of reading and spelling. The subject leader is allocated regular management time which is used to review evidence of children's learning, to review the teaching of English across the school and to develop training programmes.

Health and Safety

All Attleborough Primary School staff operate within the school's Health and Safety Policy. After consultation and agreement with staff this policy was adopted by the school's governing body and then implemented by the school.