

Orchard Community Primary School



English Policy

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Orchard Primary School at their meeting on.....

Version	Date	Author	Reason for Change
2	June 2022	A.Cooper	Updates within school
3	September 2025	L. Farrar	Updated & Reviewed

Review Frequency	Next Review Date
Every 3 years	2028

Introduction

Orchard Primary School understands the need for all pupils to develop their spoken language, reading, writing and understanding of grammar as an essential component of all subjects and as a subject in its own right. A good understanding of English skills is a basis to fully accessing all other areas of the curriculum.

Aims

Our aims in teaching English are that all children should:

- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment.
- Read a varied selection of texts whilst gaining an increased level of fluency and understanding.
- Develop a range of reading strategies for approaching reading; using and applying phonological, contextual, grammatical and graphic knowledge.
- Use reading as a means of gathering information to support their learning throughout the entire curriculum
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Write in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences, including themselves
- Write with increasing awareness of the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and develop a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms
- Form letters correctly, leading to a fluent and legible handwriting style
- Develop listening and comprehension skills through a variety of means including reciprocal and non-reciprocal situations
- Develop their oral abilities at their own level
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate appropriate responses to increasingly complex questions and instructions

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in, The National Curriculum in England Framework Document for Teaching, September 2014, the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2014 and The Writing Framework, July 2025.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), the Early Learning Goals are:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.
- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.
- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2):

Children should learn to speak confidently (using Standard English) and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to ask questions to deepen their understanding. Pupils should use spoken language to organise their thinking and support their writing.

Pupils should read for pleasure, understand what they have read and begin to read with expression. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use and adapt language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds. Pupils should use their knowledge of phonics to support reading and writing. They should be encouraged to use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation in their written work. All pupils should use the skills learnt in English across the curriculum.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6):

Children should learn to speak clearly and convey ideas using Standard English whilst being able to adapt their vocabulary for all purposes and audiences. They should ask questions to check their understanding. They will use spoken language to clarify thinking and organise ideas for writing.

They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. Pupils should develop an enjoyment of reading, exploring different types of texts. They should explore the use of language and learn how the structure of language works. Pupils should write extended texts using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. They should use their reading and writing skills across the curriculum. They should write in different genres including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.

Subject Organisation

The English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum in England Framework document for teaching, September 2014. Working towards the Early Learning Goals ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum.

Foundation Stage (Reception) - In Reception, children have daily discrete phonics lessons. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child initiated activities. Children take part in shared and individual reading sessions and have daily story times to support the development of their love of reading as well as vocabulary acquisition.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) - In Key Stage 1 daily discrete phonics lessons continue. Children consolidate their knowledge of alternative sounds for spelling and begin to apply their knowledge of spelling rules in their writing. Children have regular mixed ability English lessons, including discrete Grammar and Punctuation sessions. These sessions may be blocked over two or three days to allow for greater continuity of teaching and learning. Children take part in both shared and individual reading sessions and have regular story times to develop a love of reading. English skills are developed across our 'Creative Curriculum'. Provision is made for children who require extra

support through intervention programmes (e.g. Precision Teaching, 1:1 reading and small group Guided Reading), scaffolded class teaching and teaching assistant support.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) - In Key Stage 2 children have regular mixed ability English lessons, including discrete Grammar and Punctuation sessions, which can again be blocked over two or three days. Additional English sessions include daily whole class reading, handwriting, class novel and spellings. English skills are developed across our 'Creative Curriculum'. Provision is again made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes (e.g. Horner, phonics interventions and one-to-one tutoring) scaffolded class teaching and teaching assistant support.

Approaches to Spoken Language and Listening

In school, oracy is a powerful tool for learning; by teaching students to become more effective speakers and listeners we empower them to better understand themselves, each other and the world around them. It is also a route to social mobility, empowering all students, not just some, to find their voice to succeed in school and life. Language and literacy are inextricably linked. English emerges from a solid foundation of oral language development, which is cultivated through interactive conversational turn-taking, exposure to a varied vocabulary via songs, rhymes, books and stories, and consistent dialogic reading habits. Spoken Language underpins the development of reading and writing and helps children develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear is vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar and their understanding of reading and writing.

Interactive teaching strategies are used to develop pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils are encouraged to build firm foundations by using discussion to probe their understanding, discuss and debate concepts. We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is equally important.

Children who require extra support in speaking and listening benefit from small group sessions and may draw on the expertise of a Speech and Language Therapist.

Foundation Stage (Reception) - Children will be taught to listen attentively in a range of situations. They regularly listen to multimedia, rhymes, poems, songs, stories and non-fiction, discuss key points and respond to what they hear. Pupils are taught to give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately. Children begin to use talk partners; this involves developing good communication skills such as: taking turns, making eye contact (if appropriate) and learning that other people have opinions and ideas that are different from their own. This is continued and developed throughout the school.

Pupils will learn how to follow instructions and make independent choices. Children will be encouraged to ask and answer questions and use their own experiences as well as new experiences in response to stories or new encounters. Children begin to develop their own stories and explanations by connecting ideas. Opportunities throughout school provide a rich environment for Foundation Stage children to develop their speaking and listening skills. These include: songs, games, assemblies, special occasions, performances, visits, visitors and frequent encounters with new vocabulary.

All children are screened using the OxEd Language Screen and children who require additional support take part in NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) which is a 20-week programme designed to help children make rapid progress with their language skills. The sessions are delivered by teaching assistants, targeting the children's vocabulary, narrative skills, active listening and phonological awareness to develop their oral language skills as well as promoting longer-term progress in reading comprehension.

Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) - Pupils in Key Stage One continue to practice and develop their communication skills through the use of Talk Partners across the curriculum. This helps them to learn to take turns, listen and clearly explain their own ideas. Pupils are exposed to a rich oral language and are encouraged to answer questions in full sentences, using Standard English.

They have frequent experiences to encounter new words through an environment that is rich in vocabulary. They also experience new vocabulary in different contexts across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to play with words and ask about new words they encounter. Children have the opportunity to listen to a variety of multimedia fiction, non-fiction and poetry and they are encouraged to link what they hear to their own experiences. Pupils also experience re-telling stories orally and adapting well-known stories in their own words. In year two, pupils learn poetry and build up a selection of poetry that they can recite. They will continue to have many opportunities across the curriculum to use their communication skills, these include: Topic projects, performances to parents, assemblies, Buddy reading (with older peers), visits and visitors to school.

Key Stage Two (Years 3-6) - As pupils progress through the school, they are encouraged to ask more questions to deepen their learning. Talk partner skills are developed and pupils begin to learn how to debate and form their own opinions about what they have learnt. Children are encouraged to relate learning experiences to their own experiences.

Pupils will increase the bank of stories and poetry that they use to orally re-tell stories and recite poems. The use of play scripts helps pupils to develop their intonation, volume, pitch and oral presentation of vocabulary.

Whole class shared reading allows pupils to discuss books they have read, clarify new and unfamiliar vocabulary within a small group, take turns within a group, listen to what others say and build on their own ideas as well as challenging others' views. Tasks set as part of each termly topic support pupils' oral presentation and listening skills.

Pupils in Key Stage Two continue to have many opportunities across school to develop their communication skills, these include: assemblies, monitoring roles, whole school productions, special occasions such as Harvest Festival, visits and visitors.

Approaches to Reading

Reading is at the very heart of our curriculum and is given the highest priority in order to ensure that all pupils, regardless of background, succeed in reading. We are passionate that every child in our school will become a competent, confident reader with a true, deep love of reading. At Orchard, we have worked hard to develop a reading strategy that is underpinned by robust research, supports pupils' success in other aspects of English, such as Spelling and Writing and enables us to be forensic in identifying areas of weakness in a child's reading 'journey', so that we can respond in a timely and effective way. Reading sessions are carefully structured to ensure that every child develops both the technical skills required to decode text fluently and the knowledge and motivation to become a confident, engaged, and lifelong reader. Reading for pleasure is a cornerstone to our reading approach.

Our reading strategy is based heavily on the evidence-informed book, 'The Art and Science of Teaching Primary Reading' by Christopher Such. The book describes reading as *"the product of decoding and language comprehension, where weaknesses in either will lead to difficulties with reading comprehension."*

Essentially, for a child to be able to comprehend what they are reading, they need to be able to read fluently, have a broad vocabulary and a deep knowledge of the world. For this reason, our reading strategy incorporates all three of these elements: developing fluency, improving vocabulary and knowledge of the world.

1. Developing fluency

Our reading strategy has a heavy emphasis on supporting children to become confident, fluent readers. This means beginning with a robust, systematic synthetic phonics programme - we use Jolly Phonics for this.

Alongside continued phonics teaching in Y2 (and beyond), children participate in daily whole-class reading sessions, where they engage in 'extended reading' (prolonged engagement with longer extracts of texts). Through this, children improve their accuracy, pace and prosody - the three components of fluent reading.

In EYFS and KS1, the 'phonetically controlled' books which the children take home, are carefully matched to current reading ability and are fully decodable to allow the child to practice sounds they have learnt and therefore increase fluency and enjoyment of reading.

2. Improving vocabulary

A wide range of challenging vocabulary is embedded in our curriculum, and teachers also explore new words at every opportunity during the normal school day. We also include some discrete vocabulary instruction in pupils' reading diet. This involves children engaging with, for example, 'tier two' words or Latin/Greek root words. In these sessions, children deepen their knowledge of the English language and are given lots of opportunities to revisit/retrieve knowledge of previously learned vocabulary.

3. Knowledge of the world

When a child tries to comprehend what they are reading, they draw on their own background knowledge to try to make sense of the context and the language being used. Creating this mental representation of the situation being described is called a 'situation model'. With this in mind, we think it is vital that our curriculum is knowledge-rich, as this enhances children's schema-development and gives them a deeper knowledge of a wide range of people, places and concepts. We believe that a knowledge-rich curriculum is an essential component of an effective reading strategy.

We have timetabled different reading events into our weekly timetable. Children have at least three dedicated sessions of reading for pleasure as well as whole class reading and 1:1 sessions. All classes have a daily class story which may be linked to the shared reading text or a stand-alone story. This will be mixed with poems and rhymes which are shared and discussed throughout the week.

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided and reciprocal reading sessions. All classes make use of VIPERS to ensure that an appropriate range of skills are covered through the unit. Independent reading provides time for both assessment and 1-1 teaching. Bloom's Taxonomy is also used during these sessions to ask critical thinking questions. Daily discrete phonics lessons in EYFS and KS1 enable children to decode efficiently. This is continued into KS2 where necessary.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers; they are phonically decodable books matched to children's phonic knowledge. Teaching assistants support reading activities to ensure that children who need more support have more frequent opportunities to read with adults.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, i.e. 'World Book Day', 'World Storytelling Day', 'Roald Dahl Day', 'Shakespeare Day', School book fairs (once a year), Summer Reading Challenge and reading buddies are allocated.

Foundation Stage (Reception) - Children in the Foundation Stage classes take home 'phonetically controlled' books from the school's individual reading selection. Pupils also borrow books on a weekly basis from the class library.

Pupils read to the class teacher and teaching assistants. In addition, adult volunteers may provide an extra opportunity for pupils to read in school. Pupils have a home-school reading diary for parents and teachers to record their progress.

Children in EYFS take home blending strips (lists of 10 decodable words) and are encouraged to practice blending these at home and in school. These words are linked to the sounds that they have learnt in phonics and they will also recap previously learned sounds to ensure this learning is embedded. Information is given to parents on how to support their child in reading at reading workshops, hand outs and also in curriculum letters.

Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) - In KS1 children continue to take home a book from the school's book bands. To support children in applying their phonic skills we use a variety of reading schemes in Key Stage 1, including mixed books from Jolly Phonics, Collins, Oxford and Pearson Bug Club which are organised into reading bands. The books which the children take home, are carefully matched to the child's current reading ability and are fully decodable to allow the child to practice sounds they have learnt and therefore increase fluency and enjoyment of reading. They will progress up the book bands when assessed as ready by their class teacher. In addition to this, children have the opportunity to choose books from the class library to develop their own enjoyment of reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily and record this in their reading record. Teachers and support staff monitor the progress each child is making and ensure that the book they are reading matches their phonic knowledge. This allows the child to develop their fluency and understanding of the text as they are able to blend words and read tricky words on sight. Books are changed regularly.

Pupils will also take part in Whole Class Reading sessions; at least 3 sessions a week. These texts are linked to the current learning adventure and focus on a different skill based on the VIPERS. (vocabulary, inference, predict, explain, retrieve and sequence) The children will be introduced to new vocabulary and then varying activities e.g. true and false, making predictions as well as making links to other texts. The children are challenged with additional questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy. During these sessions, children will explore quality texts during reading instruction activities such as 'Close Reading' and 'Shared Reading'.

All children in KS1 read each week with either the Teacher or Teaching Assistant. The adults will pose a number of questions to check the children's understanding as well as keeping notes on the children's overall reading fluency and confidence when decoding words that are less familiar. Children who don't read as regularly at home are read with additionally throughout the week. Adult volunteers are also used to read with children who require additional support.

At Orchard Primary School, children in Year 3 upwards will move onto the Accelerated Reader Scheme, with children in Year 2 using the system after Christmas. This is closely monitored by the class teacher to ensure that the children are choosing age-appropriate texts and are showing that they have a good comprehension of the text they have read. *See the Key Stage Two section below for additional information on how Orchard use the Accelerated Reader Scheme.*

Key Stage Two (Years 3 -6) - In Key Stage 2 children choose books from the Accelerated Reader scheme to take home. Children choose a book at their own level and read it at their own pace. When finished, they will take a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indication that the child has understood the book. Accelerated Reader gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice. Accelerated Reader is used as part of a comprehensive reading programme in place at Orchard Primary School. While we continue to teach the skills of reading in class through

shared reading texts and whole class texts, the Accelerated Reader books chosen by the child will provide them with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed. They will also complete a Star reading test every half term which will calculate the book level that the pupil should be reading. This is called the ZPD. We have a wide selection of banded books to support appropriate text choices. We still encourage all readers to share a book at home with their adults. We believe that this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading.

Children who have entered KS2 without a solid understanding of phonics still take home a banded book to allow them to continue practicing their decoding skills and to develop their reading confidence. This is used on conjunction with their Accelerated Reader book as this is still used to assess their comprehension.

Pupils will also take part in Whole Class Reading sessions; at least 3 lessons a week. These texts are linked to the current learning adventure and focus on a different skill based on the VIPERS. (vocabulary, inference, predict, explain, retrieve and summarise) The children will be introduced to new vocabulary and then varying activities such as thoughts, actions and feelings, predictions and general retrieval and inference questions. The children are challenged with additional questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy. During these sessions, children will explore quality texts during reading instruction activities such as 'Close Reading' and 'Extended Reading'.

All classes read a class novel and we encourage children to answer questions about what the class has read together. We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

Phonics and Spelling

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1: All pupils participate in a daily spelling or phonics session. In EYFS and Year 1 pupils are taught discrete phonics using the Jolly Phonics programme. The teachers' assessment of individual children will inform the rate at which the children are able to progress through the programme and adapt their pace accordingly. Pupils can be grouped according to ability or they can be taught whole class, with additional 'keep up' and 'catch up' sessions for those children who require additional support.

All teachers ensure that they are aware of individual children's needs through formative assessments. Staff formally assess their children's progress at the end of each unit of teaching. Children who have been identified as needing further phonics support receive additional 1:1 precision teaching or small group intervention to support their acquisition of sounds, decoding/segmenting ability and recognition of tricky words.

Decodable reading books are selected carefully to match the children's stage within phonics. Teaching staff and members of support staff will choose from a list of decodable books for their specific phase which will provide more opportunity for the child to practice blending. We model how children should build up a word and then read back through the whole sentence so that they hear how each sentence should sound. Children move to the next book band when they are secure at recognising and blending the next set of phonemes.

At the end of Year 1 the children will take the statutory National Phonics Screening Check. If children do not meet the standard for the Phonics screening, then they will access interventions and retake the test in Year 2. Children who may need additional support are placed in small group phonics interventions to enable them to develop their phonological awareness.

Year 1 pupils are not given weekly spellings to take home. There are some instances where phonics support sheets may be sent home for parents to help their child through additional practice at home.

Year 2 and Key Stage Two: (Year 3 -6)

In Years 2 to 6, children will have daily explicit spelling sessions in which rules and patterns are taught for the spellings set out in the National Curriculum for their year group. We test children weekly on these spelling patterns and use this to diagnose spelling difficulties and provide targeted intervention. Spelling is differentiated within each phase and might be split into ability groups as necessary. Word lists are provided for pupils to revise at home. In addition, pupils in Key Stage 2 may be given sentences (that include that week's spelling rule) to practice at home.

At Orchard, we use the Spelling Shed programme to support children as they build their use of vocabulary. Children need to learn spelling patterns and rules, statutory words, common exceptions and personal spellings and the Spelling Shed programme allows us to do this in a little but often structure, allowing the children to revisit and review their learning, as well as learning new strategies to apply in their writing. We chose this scheme, as it gives 100% coverage of the National Curriculum for Spelling and ensures that we actively teach the children how to spell rather than just test them. Spelling with automaticity is key to getting transcription right, alongside effective and fluent handwriting.

Spellings are provided to children on a Friday across Key Stage 2 and these spellings are linked to the spelling rules taught for that week. Children have the time throughout the week to practice during their spelling sessions and parents are also asked to support their child through additional practice at home. Children have four 15-minute daily sessions, where they are introduced to the spellings. In the first session, there will be an explanation of how the words are linked (patterns, sounds or affixes). For the next three sessions, children will explore the spellings with the teachers. They will examine aspects such as the number of syllables, tricky sounds and the morphology, orthography and etymology of words. The children will also have the opportunity to complete independent activities to consolidate their learning. Spellings are then assessed in class on the Friday through low stakes quizzing, before being given their next spellings.

From time to time, focus on spelling may be raised by completing school Spellathon events, which are linked to the school houses and encourage pupils to increase spelling skills and knowledge of patterns and tricky words.

As pupils progress to Key Stage Two, discrete phonics is taught as an intervention, where needed.

Writing

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling.

We follow the Talk for Writing teaching sequence developed by educational writer, Pie Corbett. This approach is now fully embedded across the school with children being able to write for a number of different purposes and audiences within different subjects. The process starts with a creative hook, to engage the children into a particular theme or object that is being used to inspire a piece of writing. Where appropriate, the children will conduct a 'cold' piece of writing to see what features they are able to use already to create an effective story/report/letter. This provides the teacher with evidence to show what the class needs within the teaching sequence to enhance their writing further. A 'hot' task is then completed at the end of the unit to see what the children have remembered and included in their writing. KS2 pupils have a polished writing book, where they will write up their final pieces of work.

The Talk for Writing teaching sequence is built on three stages of teaching:

Imitation Phase: The children learn a text and the language that they need to use.

Innovation: The children adapt the model text with their own ideas.

Invention: The children create their own text using the language and skills that they have learnt from teacher modelling and guided and shared writing sessions.

All our Talk for Writing units link closely to our creative curriculum learning adventures and allow the children to apply subject content knowledge into their written work. Teachers model a range of writing strategies in shared and guided writing sessions in order to demonstrate the expectations we have for each unit of work. Teachers also demonstrate how phonics and spelling strategies can be drawn upon during these sessions. Cold Tasks can be used throughout the school to assess what the children already know, based on a genre of writing. The teachers then use this information to plan their writing journey, planning in additional sessions linked to certain writing skills; fronted adverbials, use of alliteration and the power of 3 for example. A long-term plan has been developed to map out the texts, genre and the specific focus for each unit; character, setting, suspense and so on. This allows teachers to ensure that there is a good coverage of genres covered within each Key Stage, allowing the children to develop their writing style. It also provides an opportunity to revisit past learning, recalling key literary features that they will need to include in their writing.

All classes have an 'All the Time Toolkit' displayed which sets out the non-negotiables when writing – at any time. This includes basic grammar and punctuation skills alongside handwriting expectations and the importance of proof reading. Additional writing toolkits, such as a suspense or description toolkit are co-constructed alongside the class to discuss the necessary skills needed to complete a quality piece of writing. These skills are demonstrated and discussed with the children, with examples of how the children are able to achieve these skills within their own work. It provides a model for the children to 'magpie' and then develop their own ideas from.

Focused writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. Children have opportunities to complete short burst writes as well as write at length in extended independent writing sessions in English and across the curriculum. Pupils make use of the working wall where modelled strategies will be displayed throughout each unit of work, as they show the process of the writing journey. The children will also make use of alphabet cards, Talking Tins, word cards, word lists, knowledge organisers, dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work.

Through our Creative Curriculum, pupils are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by real texts (newspapers, advertisements and websites), drama techniques, use of multimedia texts, visitors, visits and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group. Children will also be given the opportunity to incorporate computing skills and create multi-media and layered texts in their writing.

Regular moderation staff meetings ensure that teachers' assessment of writing is consistent across the school and that there is a clear progression between year groups. The school also takes part in writing moderation with other schools within Symphony Academy Trust.

Handwriting

We use the Penpals Handwriting scheme in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing. Children in EYFS learn how each letter is formed both in discrete handwriting lessons and as part of Phonics. The children complete daily activities of 'Squiggle whilst you Wiggle' and 'Dough Disco' in order to build the children's fine motor strength and commit some of these arm movements to their long-term muscle memory. Over the year, the children will learn how to reduce the size of their letters and look at how they sit on writing lines. As the children move into Key Stage 1, the children will formally start the Penpals scheme. They will warm up their bodies and hands in preparation to write before they are introduced to the unit and handwriting join/formation which is the focus for that session. Children are taught how to form the strokes needed for joining their letters in

Year two, but there is no expectation that children join their letters. All children in Key Stage 1 will practice their handwriting, first in handwriting books with black and red guide lines, moving into plain lined books in Spring 2. This is so that the children are able to apply what they have learnt in their practice sessions into each piece of written work.

From Year 4, children will be presented with a pen, which encourages the children to take care in their presentation and pride in their work. Children will have a focused weekly handwriting session, where they will practice their handwriting in plain lined books. Each lesson includes a range of effective pedagogical strategies to secure stronger transcription. The children continue to follow the Penpals throughout Key Stage 2, however we aim to ensure that the majority of handwriting practice is completed before the children enter Year 6. This enables the Year 6 children to focus purely on the transcription and speed of their writing to support them with writing at length. Children in Key Stage 2 also look at copying free verse in order for them to independently apply the skills that have been taught previously.

All children are expected to sit correctly, with all four chair legs and their own feet on the floor and their bodies close to the table. We will ensure left-handed pupils are also in the correct seating position. We encourage the children to hold their paper with their non-writing hand. A comfortable tripod grip will be taught from the start. For children who find a tripod grip difficult, we have a number of different plastic and foam grips for them to select the one most suitable for them. If children require additional support with their handwriting, the children will be placed in small intervention groups where the children will receive further instruction from a member of support staff. The additional practice will allow the children to secure the movements necessary to form the letters or joins and work towards their clear and legible handwriting that they can then apply across all of their learning.

In all year groups, teachers provide scaffolding to ensure children are taught the relevant handwriting skills for their year group. Where needed additional support and interventions will be put in place to ensure the needs of all pupils are being met.

Progression of handwriting skills:

Reception

- To use a variety of media and activities to develop muscle strength, dexterity and gross and fine motor control.
- Sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably, working towards a correct tripod grip.
- Correct formation of lower-case letters followed by upper-case letters.

Year 1

- Reinforce work from Reception
- Hold a pencil comfortably using a correct tripod grip
- Form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form digits 0-9 correctly
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting families.

Year 2

- Reinforce work from Year 1.
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Many pupils will begin using and practising basic handwriting joins. (Diagonal joins to letters with and without ascenders and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders.)
- Children working within the GDS range for writing should be able to join their handwriting by the end of Year 2.
- Children from Year 2 onwards will be able to work towards their pen license.

Years 3 and 4

- Reinforce work from Year 2.
- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters.
- To ensure consistency in spacing between letters and words.
- 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.
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice and application.
- From Year 4, all children will be writing in blue biro pens

Years 5 and 6

- To reinforce work from Year 3 and 4.
- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.
- To develop own handwriting style, ensuring speed, fluency and legibility.
- Some pupils may be able to use different forms of handwriting for different purposes.
- Choose the writing tool that is best suited for a task.

Cross-curricular Literacy Opportunities

Writing is deeply embedded within our Creative Curriculum and teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make purposeful cross-curricular links wherever possible. They will plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

The Use of Computing (see separate Computing Policy)

We recognise the important role computing skills have to play in our school in the development of English skills. We also recognise the importance of being computer literate. Computing skills are used on a daily basis to enhance teaching and learning of English and to give all children the opportunity to experience, read and write multimodal texts and develop visual literacy (see Computing Policy).

Assessment and Target Setting (see separate Assessment Policy)

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy.

Inclusion (see inclusion and SEN policy)

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual ability. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More Able pupils will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided including Donington Dynamos More Able writing sessions that take place throughout the year.

Intervention Programmes

Intervention programmes are used in all year groups to support pupils as needed. This can include: pupils who have made insufficient progress, pupils who are not working at an age-expected level, pupils who have missed school, pupils who have struggled to grasp a new concept, pupils identified as needing additional support in English.

Intervention programmes may be taught by a teaching assistant, an external provider or the class teacher. Some interventions may be taught within English lessons and others may be taught during other parts of the school day.

Interventions include: additional grammar sessions, reading comprehension, phonics interventions, Toe-by-Toe, additional guided reading or writing sessions, booster groups and Grammar for Writing. Other intervention programmes are used when the need arises as assessed by the class teacher, following pupil progress meetings. These are also included on a provision map so we are able to monitor the effectiveness of each intervention and it will be quickly adapted to meet the needs of the children in the class.

Equal Opportunities

Orchard Primary 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. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children. 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.

The Role of the Headteacher

In consultation with the English Subject leader, the Headteacher:

- Determines the ways English should support, enrich and extend the curriculum;
- Decides the provision and allocation of resources;
- Decides ways in which developments can be assessed, and records maintained;
- Ensures that English is used in a way to achieve the aims and objectives of the school;
- Ensures that there is a English policy, and identifies a English subject leader.

Role of the Subject Leader

The English subject leader should:

- Ensure the development of a scheme of work for the English curriculum. This will follow the Primary Framework guidelines and will be built around the school's curriculum topics and cover aspects of the English National Curriculum statements.
- Promote the integration of English within appropriate teaching and learning activities;
- Manage the provision and deployment of resources and give guidance on classroom organisation support,
- Inspire colleagues to deliver high quality teaching and learning opportunities;
- Analyse data to identify strengths and weaknesses in outcomes; planning for improvement accordingly;
- Write, monitor and evaluate an action plan for English for the School Improvement Plan;
- Lead training within the school, and investigate suitable courses elsewhere;
- Act as a contact point between the school and support agencies, including the LA;
- Provide technical expertise;
- Lead the evaluation and review of the school's English policy;
- Bid for and manage the budget for this curriculum area;
- Monitor and review the English provision within the school.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The teaching of English will be monitored through the School Improvement Plan by the English subject leader in the first instance and then by the Senior Leadership Team and the Headteacher. SATS results are analysed and areas for development prioritised.

Governors are kept informed via a subject report as scheduled in the Monitoring and Evaluation programme. The Governor(s) assigned to monitoring English will be kept abreast of developments, progress and changes within the subject.

L. Farrar - September 2025