



Whittingham C of E Primary School **Policy for English**

Introduction

This document was developed during the Spring Term 2021

It was approved by the governing body in the Spring Term 2021

This policy will be reviewed in the Spring Term 2025

A schedule for the review of this, and all other policy documents is set out in the school's cycle of policy reviews.

Our School Vision

The children know these as the 3R's:

'Hand in hand together we will become **resilient**, **respectful** and **responsible** citizens of our community and the wider world.'

Our School Aims and Values

To provide an open, secure and welcoming Christian environment for each pupil. This is expressed through daily worship which acknowledges the presence of God in our lives.

To further develop and value the partnership that exists between school and the local churches, in particular, through sharing weekly worship and to encourage an appreciation of the Christian faith and a familiarity with the local Christian heritage.

To care for each pupils' safety, happiness and well-being.

To value our pupils as individuals, developing their ability to take responsibility for themselves and their actions, promoting confidence and self-esteem, and respect for others and their environment.

To equip our pupils with the knowledge to make informed choices about having a safe and healthy lifestyle.

To offer opportunities for our pupils to become involved in the daily life of the school and to prepare them to play an active role as citizens locally and in the wider world.

To provide a learning environment, which is challenging and stimulating yet ordered and disciplined.

To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, setting realistic targets for each pupil.

To extend and reinforce our pupils learning, making expectations clear, and raising achievement levels.

To develop and maintain a mutually supportive partnership between home and school.

Rationale

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

Policy aims:

- to enable children to speak clearly, fluently, to understand and respond correctly and audibly to a range of situations, and to take account of their listeners.
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard.
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands.
- to enable children to question an idea or opinion and to support their counter argument with good reason.
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities.
- to help them become confident, independent readers.
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, who are able to read a range of materials fluently and with understanding, for enjoyment and for information.
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, for a range of audiences and purposes whilst recognising its value.
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction.
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work and to provide opportunities to improve presentation skills.

Teaching and learning styles

At Whittingham C of E Primary School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. There is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, which gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses, phonics games and

online activities. Children use computing in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning and to research information. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

In each class children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We may use a classroom assistant to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

English curriculum planning

Early Years

In Early Years, English is taught in line with the Early Years Curriculum through the Reading, Writing and Communication and Language areas of learning.

We teach English to our Early Years children in a mixed age class, through continuous provision. The provision is enhanced, through careful planning based around the children's next steps and linked to the core text used for that half term. Each topic in Early Years is based around a book, similar to the Talk4Writing ethos so that we can completely immerse the children in the text and give them hands-on experiences to ignite their interest and develop their vocabulary. We use story mapping in EYFS and the children learn to 'imitate' a story (retell it) using the story map and actions, this means they internalise the text style and language patterns. We then 'innovate' the story by changing the basic map and telling our own new versions. Every core text and topic is supported by a variety of other texts including nonfiction and fiction books.

In Reception, following on from the firm foundations created in Nursery through Phase One phonics, well-sequenced phonics teaching supports letter formation and spelling of words are taught. We follow the Read, Write, Inc phonics scheme and writing is an important and valued part of the phonics session.

In the early stages of EYFS mark making is valued and writing is implemented in the moment, engaging children in purposeful writing through their play. Adult modelling is key to children segmenting words accurately and forming letters correctly. Environment enhancements always include chances for writing to encourage learning and opportunities to meet individual children's needs.

Speaking and listening is a vital part of English in the Early Years and the children are given planned and spontaneous opportunities to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully and to practice and extend their vocabulary and conversational skills. From the start of Nursery, children are exposed to 'Phase One Phonics'. The emphasis during this phase is to get children

attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills.

Key Stage One and Key Stage Two

English is a core subject and we follow the National Curriculum to plan and ensure there is a clear progression of skills and content. The areas covered are in the National Curriculum and through our teaching are - Reading Comprehension, Word Reading (phonics), writing comprehension, spelling, vocabulary and grammar and spoken language.

In Year One, the age-related objectives, taken from the National Curriculum, are incorporated into daily phonics sessions which include a 'Get Writing' session as part of the Read, Write, Inc scheme of learning. The children are also encouraged and supported to apply and develop their reading and writing skills through all subjects and cross curricular links. Once the children are no longer taking part in the Read, Write, Inc programme they join Year Two in their daily English lessons taken from the Hamilton Trust Scheme.

From Year Two onwards, planning is taken from the Hamilton Trust scheme and teachers adapt and enhance accordingly whilst ensuring the curriculum coverage as outlined in the scheme is followed. We also ensure that planned opportunities are of the highest quality and that they address the National Curriculum.

The children are taught an English lesson which incorporates grammar, spelling, comprehension, reading and writing daily. They also complete a 'Big Write' to help them to develop their extended writing skills. Spelling is a key focus in our school and the children take part in a daily Read, Write, Inc 15minute spelling session which helps them to develop their understanding and use of spelling patterns and from there the expectation is that they will apply these in all their written work.

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Long term planning identifies the key genres to be covered throughout the course of the year to ensure coverage of a range of reading and writing genres.

Our medium-term plans give detail of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.

Class teachers follow a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

Here are some detailed examples of how English impacts upon the whole curriculum.

Mathematics

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in Early Years develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. All children are supported to use sentence stems and speaking and explaining is an essential part of our Maths curriculum. The children develop Mathematical language and use this in both written and oral responses to problems.

Personal, Health and Social education (PSHE) and Relationship Health Education

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and RHE by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

English and Computing

The use of computing, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive and non-linear stories.

Computing is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The use of large screen technology enables children to read and share learning opportunities. It also encourages more interactive learning in whole class situations, using resources such as a variety of purchased and online resources.

Age-appropriate apps are used on class Ipads to support learning and help children develop key skills. In Early Years, children use technology to listen to stories and develop an understanding that information can be retrieved from computers. In Key Stage 1 and 2 children also use the Ipads and computers to access Sumdog Spellings and Grammar, Oxford Owl, RWI Spellings, Nelson Handwriting, MyOn and Accelerated Reader.

Stories are also read aloud, filmed and shared with children and their families.

Spoken language -

We believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Much of our teaching in EYFS and KS1 is based on the principles of Pie Corbett's 'Talk4Writing' and therefore we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment. By using the Pie Corbett reading spines in every classroom, children's vocabulary is extended and developed. Further to this, we are developing key vocabulary lists linked to each topic through EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and these are displayed in the classroom, in planning and through our topic letters which we send out to families each half term.

What does this look like at Whittingham?

Questioning and taking risks with language
Presenting in-front of an audience
Reciting and reading aloud
Re-telling, role-play and drama
Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs
Talking the text – opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing
Debating
Collaborative work and reporting back following group work
Presentations
Sharing Pie Corbett reading spine books in all classrooms (these books are to be used when reading for pleasure with the children)
Key vocabulary lists shared in half termly topic letters to parents
Working walls for curriculum areas of learning with a high emphasis on questioning and technical vocabulary.

Where we feel children need additional support with their speaking and listening skills, this is picked up on at the earliest opportunity and appropriate interventions such as Early Talk Boost and Talk Boost are implemented. Where necessary we will liaise with outside agencies and refer children for speech and language assessments (see Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy).

Phonics

At Whittingham we follow the Read, Write Inc phonics programme devised by Ruth Miskin.

Read Write Inc. Phonics teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. They learn to form each letter, spell correctly, and compose their ideas step-by-step. Children learn the English alphabetic code:

first they learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend these sounds into words, then learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes. They experience success from the very beginning. Lively phonic books are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky' words and, as children reread the stories, their fluency increases. Along with a thought-provoking introduction, prompts for thinking out loud and discussion, children are helped to apply their phonics skills into writing during these sessions.

What does this look like at Whittingham?

Nursery take part in Phase One phonics activities every day. This includes things like sound discrimination, body percussion and rhythm and rhyme games and activities. This aims to ensure the children have the necessary listening skills that will prepare them for Phase Two phonics.

Reception Phonics is taught daily, starting as 20 minute sessions and increasing through the year as the children move through the programme. They are taught as a whole class or in an ability group as appropriate.

Year One Phonics is taught daily for 1 hour in ability groups with trained teaching assistants. Year Two children may also take part in these phonics sessions if they have not completed the phonics programme and passed their phonics screening at the end of Year One.

From Year Two and beyond, phonics is also taught as an intervention by trained teaching assistants. Sometimes the Read, Write, Inc 'fresh start' scheme of learning will be used to help older children develop their reading and writing skills through small groups or one to one work or we may follow other approaches as recommended by the Literacy support team from Northumberland County Council.

Reading

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies e.g. whole word recognition, rhyme and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature and children throughout the school are read to regularly using a range of texts including Pie Corbett's reading spine which are kept in a separate book box for their year groups.

The curriculum requires us to ensure that all pupils read willingly and for pleasure, developing positive attitudes to reading and guided reading sessions must allow pupils to understand, respond to and enjoy the text. As the children progress and become more fluent and independent readers and decoding has become a more automatic process and then the children are taught to use knowledge of spelling patterns and grammatical knowledge to read unfamiliar words with accuracy. They will read different texts for different

purposes and need to experience and develop higher order reading skills in order to engage fully and respond effectively. Inferential thinking, stating preferences and opinions and justifying them, understanding the different viewpoints, including their own, in a text and considering the writer's aim are among the required skills.

At Whittingham, our children take home the Read, Write, Inc books that match the phonics sounds they are learning and also have opportunities to read other books to develop their comprehension, engagement and vocabulary skills. From Year Two (or earlier if appropriate in some instances) we use Accelerated Reader and to enhance this especially during times of home school learning we have purchased the subscription to MyOn which links to AR and provides the children with 5000 books. The children read books that match their ZPD score, this is identified as the children regularly quiz on their books as this takes into account their level of understanding as well as their ability to read the words.

Please see the grid below, this further explains what books the children read.

Child does not know all of set1 sounds and cannot blend	They take home picture book + green word cards/sound cards.
Child knows most set 1 sounds and are beginning to blend with success.	They take home sound blending book + an alternative book for storytelling (oxford reading tree/songbirds etc).
Child knows all of set 1 sounds and are blending these confidently	They take home red ditty storybook covered in school sessions (at the end of the week) + correlating bookbag book .
<p>From this point onwards, children should be taking home the storybook covered in school as part of their RWInc sessions (after it has been covered 3 times) + the correlating bookbag book. This will correlate with the level they are at in phonics and the sounds they are learning e.g (green, purple, pink....)</p> <p>We aim to have children onto accelerated reader by Year2 (or earlier if appropriate for the child). Once this occurs, the children will take home one bookbag book that links to their phonics (if still on the phonics programme) + 1 accelerated reader/alternative book that links to their ZPD scores.</p>	

How do we develop a love of reading at Whittingham?

Taking part in World Book Day and other themed days.

Having whole school reading competitions such as 'read in an extraordinary place' competition and sponsored reads.

Accelerated Reader Million Word readers get a book gift of their choice.

Children who get 100% on an accelerated reader quiz entered into regular prize drawers.

Link school trips and visitors to texts.

Regular reading allowed in all classrooms and class shared novels in KS2.

Giving children choice in their reading books.

Access to the school library which is regularly re-stocked with a range of books.

Spelling

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spellings plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school. Children learn to spell following the spelling patterns taught in Read, Write, Inc phonics initially and through learning sight words and common exception words (often referred to as tricky or red words). We use the National Curriculum as a guideline as to which spellings should be taught in each year group which is developed further as we follow the RWI Spelling Programme. As they progress through school they learn how to use different spelling patterns.

What does this look like at Whittingham?

Daily phonics lessons from Reception to Year One/Two.

Weekly spellings to learn and a spelling test in KS1 and KS2.

Explicit teaching of spelling through daily Read, Write, Inc spelling daily 15 minute lessons in KS 1 and KS2 and spelling intervention for children who need it.

We encourage children to try to spell words independently and wherever possible use a dictionary.

Handwriting

At Whittingham C of E Primary school high standards of handwriting and presentation are expected of all children. Every child should be enabled to develop a fluent, legible style of handwriting. Capital and lowercase letters should be used appropriately and the letter size should be consistent. We encourage children to take pride in all work and provide opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect these skills, and provide targeted support to any child experiencing difficulty. We place value on children taking pride and care over all work across the curriculum and handwriting is a key part of this.

Effective handwriting can support your child to understand and visualise spelling patterns more easily but we believe this also helps improve your child's writing confidence by making the process of writing simple and more enjoyable!

What does this look like at Whittingham Primary?

In Early Years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills in the provision. To further enhance this we also use specific programmes and resources such as 'Dough Disco' and 'Squiggle While you Wiggle'. As the children begin to develop their mark making skills, this moves into correct letter formation following the formation rhymes used in Read, Write, Inc phonics and the interactive resources from Nelson Handwriting.

From summer term in Y1 through to Y6 we teach handwriting joins using the Oxford Owl Handwriting scheme (online subscription and resources) - 'Nelson Handwriting'. We take the view that handwriting should be taught little and often and therefore this is taught during lessons discretely and also explicitly during Read, Write, Inc.

We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly and are ready by the end of Year One. Extra handwriting groups may occur in classes throughout the school where the class teacher feels that additional handwriting support is needed.

Our aims for the children in handwriting:

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - Forming all letters correctly (note looped 'k' once forming joins and not looping 'g' or 'y')
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

To provide a consistent approach following the letter formation that is introduced All teaching staff follow the 'Nelson's Handwriting scheme' taken from 'Oxford Owl' and model this in their own writing. Although we continue to use the letter formation prompts from RWI in Reception and Year One where appropriate.

From Year 1 all children who are considered ready are expected to begin joining their handwriting and all children will have implemented this by Year 2. In Key Stage One letter formation is taught as a series of 'letter families' in accordance with Read, Write, inc teaching.

Handwriting may be taught in a variety of ways such as a dedicated weekly lesson in Key Stage One and Two and also for those who continue to need further support in Year 3 Especially with the Nelson Handwriting subscription- (The subscription scheme runs R-Y4). It may also form an activity 2 x per week alongside the timetabled Accelerated Reader See class timetable for most up to date.

From Key Stage Two teaching staff will monitor handwriting closely and will provide support and intervention when necessary. Once children have met and demonstrated skill in prescribed handwriting style, their own style can be developed but this will be closely monitored to ensure high standards are maintained. Issues identified will be picked up with those who need it, or in a whole class handwriting lesson (as it is felt necessary to address misconception). All children have a handwriting book in which they will record this work.

Children should write with a pencil (or black pen (not biro) when a 'handwriting pen licence' is given in Class Three). Pencils should be reasonably sharp and all pens used should have a rounded nib. A tripod grip is encouraged.

Literacy Coordinators and Senior Leaders will monitor children's writing and presentation in **all** books regularly. The following will be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line expected standard.

Grammar

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and identifying word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work. We use Hamilton Trust whose coverage for grammar is planned and linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What does this look like at Whittingham Primary?

We start with the basics of sentence construction including full stops and capital letters; Children begin to identify word classes early on (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) and are exposed to this language through their Read, Write, Inc sessions. The 'Get Writing' Read, Write, Inc sessions provide Reception and Year One with grammar coverage, in line with the National Curriculum expectations for their age. From Year Two the children are taught Grammar through their daily English lessons using the Hamilton Trust Scheme of Learning and this is embedded into what they do but also taught explicitly. We also buy into a subscription from Year 1-Y6 for Grammar

Writing

What does this look like at Whittingham?

We aim to make writing engaging and exciting and link our writing to hooks in Early Years and throughout the school where appropriate.

For example, making a poster in Early Years for something that has gone missing.

We write for a variety of reasons, including real life purposes. For example, writing persuasive letters to politicians.

Writing is displayed all over the school on writing displays.

We provide stimulating first hand experiences called 'hooks' e.g. trips/activities.

Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking.

Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to marking and feedback.

Writing is linked to class topics to promote engagement

We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write for extended periods through our sustained longer pieces of writing. This is kept in a separate book, previously called 'Big Write'.

SEN/D, Inclusion and the English Curriculum

At our school we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those who are more able and those learning English as an additional language. For further details see separate policy: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively.

We take steps to enable children to have access to a full range of activities involved in learning English in and out of the classroom. For example, a theatre trip.

Teachers provide help by using:

- ☐ texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- ☐ visual and written materials in different formats;
- ☐ Computing resources, including ipads.

Assessment for learning

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress which children are encouraged to act upon by improving and re-drafting (D.I.T). Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work through given success criteria grids for longer writing tasks. Please see the marking policy for further information.

Children complete half-termly writing assessments and weekly tasks to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help us to plan the next unit of work. Reading will be monitored regularly using teacher judgement and through the use of Accelerated Reader 'Star Reader' assessments from Year Two (and in some instances from Year 1). Children from Reception will also be assessed regularly to make sure they are able to read the high frequency words for their age and will undergo half termly Read, Write, Inc phonics assessments.

All children (Y2 - Y1 if off RWI as appropriate – Y6) complete weekly spelling tests based from the RWI spelling scheme and in addition spellings from High Frequency word lists.

Resources

Classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts and there is also a further central store in the school hall. Children have access to dictionaries,

thesauruses and also the Internet through their classroom computers and laptops. The library contains a range of genres to support children's individual research and each class has a selection of topic appropriate reading materials.

Each classroom also has a box of key books recommended in the 'Pie Corbett Reading Spine' which is specific to the year group and age of the children. This is a core of books that *'aim to create a living library inside a child's mind'* and include classic and essential reads that help children to engage at a deeper level.

We use these books to read aloud, regularly, to all children in every year group and believe this is vital so that children develop their narrative language and vocabulary, foster a love for reading and deepen their comprehension skills.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the subject leader. The work of the subject coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school.

The subject leader for English is Erin Fletcher (KS2) who is currently being covered by Belinda Athey during her absence, supported by Toni Dick who is lead for phonics.

Date of implementation:

Signed: Head teacher Chair of Governors