



Ashton West End Primary Academy

English Policy

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Mission Statement:

‘Today I am proud of my school,
tomorrow my school will be proud of me.’

Language enables us to make sense of ourselves and the world around us. We learn language in many social contexts and it permeates all the ways in which we think, feel and act.

At Ashton West End Primary Academy, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

English is at the heart of all children’s learning. English enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others’ experiences, feelings and ideas, giving this order and meaning. English is central to children’s intellectual, emotional, and social development and it has an essential role across the curriculum helping pupils’ learning to be coherent and progressive.

Contents

1. Our school's English curriculum aims.
2. Our school’s curriculum/planning:

SECTION A: Reading in Early Years and KS1 (phonics)

SECTION B: Reading from Year 2, onwards

SECTION C: Writing across the school

SECTION D: Handwriting

3. Inclusion
4. Assessment.

This policy is designed to:

- Set out guidelines for the agreed principles and approaches which underpin the teaching and learning of English in our school
- Promote consistency of approach and expectations, and continuity and progression, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English
- Recognise, acknowledge and implement the most effective classroom practices, in order to further children's learning intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically

The policy takes account of:

- The nature of our school community and the context in which teaching and learning takes place
- The collective experience and expertise of both teaching and support staff
- Educational research and knowledge about children and education

1. Our English curriculum aims:

Our aims in teaching English are that:

- Across the school, we promote a culture of reading and writing
- Children read a varied selection of texts whilst gaining an increased level of fluency and understanding
- Children develop a range of reading strategies for approaching reading: using and applying phonological, contextual, grammatical, and graphic knowledge
- Children use reading as a means of gathering information to support their learning throughout the entire curriculum
- Children enjoy writing in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences, including themselves
- Children write with increasing awareness of the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Children are able to form letters correctly, leading to a fluent and legible, cursive handwriting style
- Children express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate appropriate responses to increasingly complex questions and instructions.

Expectations

By the time children leave our school, we expect them to communicate through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding and in a range of situations. We want every child to take pleasure in reading across a range of genres and have a strong motivation to read for a variety of purposes.

2. Our curriculum/planning:

At Ashton West End Primary Academy, a large percentage of our children have English as an additional language, therefore the practise of reading and using vocabulary is extremely important to us. The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning: teachers use the National Curriculum 2014 as a starting point for creating their long and medium-term English plans.

Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working groups, using a range of teaching strategies. Clear objectives and success criteria are set for each session and are shared with pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support.

English (Reading)

SECTION A

Phonics

At Ashton West End Primary Academy, we use Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI) to give children the best possible start with their reading learning. We aim for all our children to become fluent, confident readers who are passionate about reading. Read Write Inc. (RWI) is a phonics complete reading programme which helps all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. The programme is designed for children aged 4-7. However, at Ashton West End we will continue teaching RWI to children beyond the age of 7 if they still need support in their reading.

RWI was developed by Ruth Miskin and more information on this can be found at <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/read-write-inc-phonics-guide/>

How will RWI be taught?

All children are assessed regularly by our RWI leader so they work with children at the same level. This allows complete participation in lessons. In reception, year 1 and year 2, RWI is taught every day.

Reception

In Reception all children will learn how to 'read' the sounds in words and how those sounds can be written down.

Reading

The children:

- learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups using simple picture prompts – see below
- learn to read words using Fred talk and sound blending
- read from a range of storybooks and non-fiction books matched to their phonic knowledge
- work well with partners
- develop comprehension skills in stories by answering 'Find It' and 'Prove It' discussion questions

Writing

The children:

- learn to write and form the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds with the help of fun phrases
- learn to write words by using Fred Talk
- learn to build sentences by practising sentences out loud before they write

Talking

The children work in pairs so that they:

- answer every question
- practise every activity with their partner
- take turns in talking and reading to each other
- develop ambitious vocabulary

Year One & Year Two

Children follow the same format as Reception but will work on complex sounds and read books appropriate to their reading level. Daily sessions of RWI phonics last for one hour. Once children become fluent, speedy readers, they will move on to our 'Big Cat' reading progression programme in Year Two.

Five key principles underpin the teaching in all *Read Write Inc.* sessions:

Purpose – each activity has a clear purpose, which the teacher will set out for the children at the start of the session.

Participation – all children take part in all parts of the lesson.

Praise – we continually praise children for effort and learning, not ability.

Pace – teach at an effective pace and devote every moment to teaching and learning

Passion – teachers are very passionate about the RWI programme and this makes the children enthusiastic, too!

Children will be taught how to read as follows:

Fred Talk

We use **pure sounds** ('m' not 'muh', 's' not 'suh', etc.) so that children will be able to blend the sounds into words more easily.

At school we use a puppet called Fred to assist the children in sounding out words. We call it, 'Fred Talk'. E.g. m-o-p, c-a-t, m-a-n, sh-o-p, b-l-a-ck.

The children are taught the sounds in 3 sets.

Step 1:

Set 1 Sounds are taught in order together with rhymes to help children form the letters correctly and instantly recognise sounds ready for blending. We do not use letter names at this stage. For example, children will learn to recognise 'z' as 'zzz', as opposed to 'zed'.

Children will also use pictures for each sound to help recognise the sound and then form the shape of the sound.

Step 2:

The children are then taught **Set 2 Sounds** - the long vowels. When they are very confident with all of set 1 and 2 they are taught **Set 3 Sounds**.

Nonsense words (Alien words)

As well as learning to read and blend real words children will have plenty of opportunities to apply their sound recognition skills on reading 'Nonsense words'. These words will also feature heavily in the Year One Phonics Screening check in the summer term.

Step 3:

Children will be introduced to 'Ditty books' when they successfully begin to read single words. The short vowels should be kept short and sharp:

Children use sound-blending (Fred Talk) to read short ditties. They will bring these home once they have read and discussed the book in class. Children will then be challenged to use their developing phonic knowledge to write short sentences.

Within all the books children will have **red** and **green** words to learn to help them to become speedy readers. **Red** words are words that are not easily decodable and challenge words to extend children's vocabulary. **Green** words are linked to the sounds they have been learning and are easily decodable

During the RWI session children will read the book three times and at each new reading they will have plenty of opportunities to practise using their developing comprehension skills. Children may 'hold' or 'build' a sentence:

Hold a sentence is an activity that encourages children to remember a whole sentence while focusing on spelling and punctuation.

Build a sentence is to give children the opportunity to create their own sentence to that shows the meaning of a word and edit a sentence allows the children to critique a sentence using their knowledge of spelling punctuation and grammar. Children complete a longer piece of independent writing, which gives them the opportunity to show off their creativity and to practice their spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Order of Story books:

The expectation is that all children will leave Year One as confident speedy readers, ready to take on the challenges of Year Two. However, some children may need extra support and this will continue as they get older.

A complete list of the reading books can be found here:

https://www.ruthmiskin.com/media/filer_public/8d/ce/8dce2ad3-db51-4a64-8319-ef9ab6a19f9c/complete_list_of_read_write_inc_phonics_books_2020.pdf

At green level, children will receive a new reading book every three days. For purple – grey level, this will be every five days. The words in each book are designed that the children can read them confidently by the final day, therefore when a child reads aloud, they will sound fluent and clear.

SECTION B

Reading from Year 2 Onwards

Once children have completed the phonics programme, they will be taught to develop their reading via a whole-class teaching and learning sequence:

Day 1: the class will read for pleasure to stimulate and grow their love of reading.

Day 2: reading for fluency whereby children will develop the skill of reading aloud with emphasis.

Day 3: children will complete independent comprehension exercises, designed to deepen their understanding of texts.

Day 4: teachers will focus on improving children's comprehension skills.

Day 5: teachers will teach wider, age-appropriate learning objectives that delve even deeper into understanding and appreciating texts.

Children will also take home, and regularly change, reading books. Ashton West End uses the progressive 'Big Cat' reading books system, whereby books are colour banded according to ability.

SECTION C

English (Writing)

Writing lessons are all text based and these texts have been carefully selected to ensure that they are pitched accurately, and, where possible, so that they link with the 'Big Question' for that half term. For example, a 'Big Question' in Year 2 might be: 'What is the difference between being famous and being a superhero?'. Within this 'Big Question', the children might read texts in English lessons such as 'Supertato' by Sue Hendra and 'Superworm' by Julia Donaldson. All of their writing work will be based around these texts. Writing lessons will follow a careful cycle of analysis, word and sentence level work (incorporating the teaching of punctuation and grammar) and longer writes. Children will complete a longer write at least once every three weeks and will have a success criteria for each write through use of the class Working Wall. Teachers provide regular feedback through marking and time is allocated for children to respond to that feedback.

Spelling

The National Curriculum dictates that "(d)uring year 1, teachers should build on work from the Early Years Foundation Stage, making sure that pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using the phonic knowledge and skills that they have already learnt. Teachers should also ensure that pupils continue to learn new grapheme-

phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and revise and consolidate those learnt earlier.” At Ashton West End Primary Academy, children learn GPCs, and therefore spelling, through the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme (please see above).

From year 2 onwards, the National Curriculum encourages that “(i)t is important to recognise that pupils begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year 2. Increasingly, they should learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the ‘le’ ending in table.” From year 2 onwards, spelling is taught using the Read Write Inc. Spelling scheme. This takes place up to and including year 6. Read Write Inc. Spelling is an interactive programme which teaches spellings in a fun and engaging way. Each unit is introduced with a short video. It helps children to learn spellings with common patterns and uses rules in order to help them recall spellings as well as teaching exceptions to these rules.

Individual workbooks allow children to practise their spellings and the teaching naturally follows on from the *Spell Review* part of the Read Write Inc phonics programme taught in Early Years and Key Stage 1. Therefore, the children will become proficient at using dots (for individual sounds) and dashes (for digraphs) and prefixes and suffixes can be added to root words to help them to spell with greater accuracy, understanding and confidence.

Spelling learning is then reinforced at home with practise books whereby children practise the spellings they need to learn from each unit. During the week, the children will log the spellings they found tricky.

At the beginning of the next unit, they will do *speed spell* which will assess their ability to spell words with the previous weeks spelling pattern correctly. Again, they will log any words that were misspelt from this activity.

SECTION D:

Handwriting

At Ashton West End, we place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this.

In the early years, there is an emphasis upon fine motor skills, and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters. Across the school, letter formation is taught according to the Martin Harvey handwriting scheme. Each letter has a handwriting phrase to help the children remember the formation. We take the view that handwriting should be taught regularly, in short slots of at least 3 x 20 minutes per week. The Martin Harvey scheme uses cursive script, and we encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly. Extra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school where the class

team feel that additional handwriting support is needed. We have high expectations for handwriting and ensure that staff and pupils adhere to the policy.

3. Inclusion

At Ashton West End, each child has access to all the areas of our school curriculum. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess the needs of the children in their care in order to set appropriate, challenging objectives to ensure progress. We feel that all children irrespective of gender, race and disability should have an equal and unbiased access to learning.

All children receive quality first literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age-appropriate objectives, intervention programmes will be implemented. Furthermore, we have bilingual assistants to support children who have English as an additional language as required.

4. Assessment

Formative assessment in Reading

- In Nursery and Reception, children are assessed in their early literacy development against the Early Learning Goals.
- In Reception and year one children read daily in the RWI lessons.
- In years 2 – 6, all children are heard read by an adult at least once per week.
- All children have a Reading Learning Log with objectives updated for the 2014 Curriculum. Notes are recorded to inform assessment.

Summative Assessment in Reading

- Year 1 take the end of year Phonics test in June
- Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take end of Key Stage national tests which examine a range of reading comprehension skills
- NFER reading tests are completed termly for years 2 – 6 (all year) and year 1 in spring-onwards.
- Teacher Assessments are recorded on Target Tracker half termly. This tracks if children are working to/at/exceeding end of year expectations.

Formative Assessment - Writing

- Blue and pink marking -At the end of a piece of independent writing, the teacher marks each child's work, looking for where the child has achieved the objective from the lesson. Positive comments are made in blue, moving on comments are made in pink. Children improve their writing using purple. (See Teaching and Learning policy)
- Writing Targets are formed through teacher assessment of extended pieces of (mainly independent) writing. These are then turned into Next Steps within literacy books: the detailed assessment of the termly writing sample may provide an overarching writing target in addition to this throughout the term. Children are then grouped in writing sessions linked to their writing targets and ability. These groups are fluid and assessment is regular.

Summative Assessment in Writing

Teacher Assessments are recorded on Target Tracker half termly. This tracks if children are working to/at/exceeding end of year expectations. Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling is assessed termly using NFER tests.