



English Policy

Agreed at (please indicate with a *):

- Full Governing Body Meeting _____
- Children and Learning Committee Meeting _____*
- Resources Committee Meeting _____

Date: 16.11.23

English Policy

“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift.”

Kate DiCamilo

1. What is the vision for English at Stamford Green?

It is our vision that our children:

- Are confident readers and writers, allowing them to access the curriculum independently.
- Learn the skills of reading from an early age, enabling them to become competent readers instilling a love and enjoyment from reading a wide range of texts.
- Become skilled writers, demonstrating control and flair across a wide range of purposes and audiences.
- Are articulate speakers, accessing and using appropriate language and vocabulary to discuss and share ideas.

2. Our English curriculum is brought to life by our seven commitments:

HAPPINESS

We know that happy children learn best and it is our aim, through our English curriculum that we instil a love of reading and writing into our children. We want our children to want to read and enjoy books, not because they have been told to. It is our desire that we foster good habits around reading. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts that children listen to and read during their English and their reading lessons. As well as developing crucial reading skills, we ensure that the children are exposed to a wide range of authors and genres to spark their interest and enrich their cultural experiences.

INSPIRING

We are aspirational for the children to see themselves as readers and authors. Our planned approach to early reading ensures that the children assimilate the skills to do this and apply their knowledge independently, allowing them to fully access the curriculum. We ensure that we inspire the children to read a range of books by an inclusive range of authors through our planned approach to texts. Our school library is a lovely, inspiring place to be and children enjoy their weekly sessions and lunchtime open sessions. Each half term, our reading newsletter is read to the children, as well as being sent home to parents/carers, to inspire the children with their reading. Each edition includes recommended reads, newly published books and adults in school talking about their lives as readers.

LEARNING

In the Early Years to Year 1, the children follow Read, Write Inc as their primary approach to reading and writing. This programme of study helps all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. Children work in small homogeneous groups to allow the children to be taught within their assessed groups so that phonics teaching is targeted to the children's abilities and needs. It also provides quicker progression and further supports building confidence in their phonetic decoding skills and reading ability. During Year 1, the children transition from Read Write Inc to English lessons, where the children build on their phonic knowledge and utilise their creative skills to write imaginatively. From Year 2 onwards, children are taught in their classes for reading, English and spelling lessons.

Thereafter, our approach to teaching English is that each half term, the children's learning is focused on a particular audience for writing. This allows children to fully be fully immersed in the writing purpose, whilst learning and progressing their writing skills. When learning about the particular writing purpose, teachers model and demonstrate the features and structure of the genre, whilst also drawing on ideas and suggestions from the children. In their English lessons, children are also taught about the important skills of editing, proofreading and improving their work.

Our approach to teaching reading is that teachers focus on a particular reading skill (e.g. prediction, inference) for a period of two weeks, using their class text. This allows the children to focus on and progress in a particular reading skill though discussion in a familiar context, whilst also learning how to apply the skills independently. We ensure that across a term, children learn and develop skills in all areas of the reading.

Our spelling lessons are focused on a particular spelling rule, using the Spelling Shed platform. Children have three lessons in school where the spelling rule is taught, explored and revised. As part of their homework, children practise the words at home online. In addition, children learn and practise eight high frequency words (taken from the National Curriculum) each week. These words are also monitored in school in a low stake spelling quiz. These words are practised frequently to enable children to retain these words and know how to spell them correctly.

There may be some children who require further support in order to keep up, not catch up. For these identified children in the EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, we provide Fast Track Tutoring as our Subject Specific Tuition. This allows the children to revise and practise reading sounds and words to consolidate their learning. For children in KS2 who need support with learning to read we offer Fresh Start. We also use Comprehension Express to support children who no longer need Read Write Inc or Fresh Start, but still need targeted provision to develop their reading skills.

TOGETHERNESS

We ensure that the reading and writing process is seen by the children as a process that we go through together. Teachers ensure that they use a variety of different techniques to model how to write a particular genre with the audience in focus. We ensure that this is done in collaboration with the children, drawing on their ideas and thoughts. There are regular opportunities for children to collaborate together through poetry, performances and presentations.

VALUES

Our twenty two values are embedded throughout our English and reading lessons. We ensure that children demonstrate resilience, effort and self-belief when they are writing, so that children can see themselves as authors. This helps to build up their children's writing stamina so that they can produce completed pieces of writing. There are regular opportunities for partner work and peer assessment, where children demonstrate honesty, humility and reflection.

AMBITION

We are ambitious for the children and their English learning so that they develop flair and control when they are writing. We are aspirational for children reading at home and expect children to read each night, fostering good reading habits. We ensure that for some children, where this does not happen, there are regular opportunities for them to read in school. We are ambitious for the children's presentation and ensure that there is a planned approach to the teaching of joined handwriting in Y1 and Y2. This ensures that children are learning to join their handwriting, when they have learnt about correct letter formation in the Early Years and Year 1. When the children are in Year 3, a handwriting pen is introduced for all children at the same time. Children can then choose as we recognise that some children prefer to use pencil over pen and different tasks may be better suited to pen or pencil.

ACHIEVEMENT

We have high expectations for the children's achievement in English and this is monitored carefully and strategically through the school's Pupil Progress Review processes. Our end of key stage outcomes in reading and writing demonstrate that children achieve above national expectations at KS1 and KS2.

In English lessons, we want children to feel success and a sense of achievement. We ensure that children feel satisfied through producing a completed piece of coherent writing, whether it be a story, a report or a biography for example.

3. By the end of Year 6 at Stamford Green, our children will...

Behaviours	The children will have developed good habits to their reading and writing. They will regularly read independently with an enjoyment and engagement and will be able to discuss a text read. They will know about books that interest them and will be open to trying out different texts to read for enjoyment. Through their weekly visits to the school library, children will love and know how to behave appropriately in this environment. The children will be able to read and write independently for a sustained amount of time.
Attitudes	The children will have a positive attitude to reading and writing and can apply the curriculum taught to them independently. The children will see themselves as readers and writers and will demonstrate this with their positive attitudes. They will enjoy having a class book read to them and will engage positively in story times. When writing, proof reading and editing will become natural to them, enabling them to improve and sense check their work.
Skills	Through the range of writing purposes taught throughout primary school, the children will know how to write for a range of audiences. They will have a wide vocabulary and will independently consider word choice. The children will have developed reading skills to enable them to predict, infer and draw conclusions about the texts that they are reading. The children will understand and apply the grammatical structures that underpin the English language. The children will know how to proof read and edit their work and will be able to develop their writing further by applying these skills.
Knowledge	Through the comprehensive reading curriculum, children will know about a variety of different genres of books and a variety of different authors. They will apply this knowledge when choosing books to read for enjoyment. The children will understand how word choice is vital when writing, will have a varied vocabulary and will know how to use a thesaurus correctly to improve their word choice. The children will know and demonstrate an understanding of the features of different genres of writing and will know how to structure each genre effectively. The children will have developed a comprehensive knowledge of grammar and spelling rules. They will be able to discuss these rules with confidence and apply independently.
Experiences	By the end of primary school, the children will have read and discussed a wide range of texts, including poetry. The children will have developed their reading skills through these texts but will be able to apply these skills to other situations too. Teachers will have ensured that the children visit the school library on a weekly basis enabling the children to have a love of reading. Children will have a secure understanding of different genres and purposes for writing and the structure that the school uses of teaching writing allows the children to develop this understanding in detail. For some children, they may have experienced further support from Read Write Inc, Fresh Start or Comprehension Express to enable them to keep up with age related expectations.
Technology	The children will have used a range of resources throughout school to enable them to become accomplished readers and writers. During reading sessions, children will have copies of the text to follow when others are reading and use in their studies. The visualiser will also be used to enlarge as necessary.

	Our commitment and drive to children learning to read and write in the early stages of their schooling lives ensure that they are well equipped to access the curriculum with independence and enjoyment.
Sustained	The children will be well prepared for the next stage of their education as they will start secondary school as competent, independent readers and writers. The children will be able to use their reading and writing skills across other areas of the curriculum.

4. Feedback and Assessment

- a) For further information about how the school provides feedback to the children and how teachers make assessments about a child's learning, please refer to the Assessment (including marking and feedback) policy.

5. Inclusion

- a) Learning opportunities will be available to every child, regardless of race, gender, class or ability. Pupils will be encouraged to value social and cultural diversity through their learning. They will listen to, and participate in a variety of experiences in a positive and constructive manner.
- b) We recognise that in all classes, children have a wide range of abilities and so therefore we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the learning to the ability of the child.
- c) For further information, please refer to our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy and our Teaching and Learning policy.

6. Subject Organisation

- a) For all year groups, the English compendium has been written detailing the curriculum objectives that should be taught for each year group in reading and writing (including grammar punctuation and vocabulary; spelling and handwriting). The curriculum map also includes details of how each year group teaches writing for a particular purpose each term, ensuring that the children are taught a wide range of genres as they progress through the school.
- b) In order to ensure that the children use a wide range of diverse texts in their reading and English lessons, the English curriculum map includes details of the different texts that are studied in each year group giving the children a varied literary diet.
- c) All year groups have a set of expectations, in the English compendium, for reading and writing, which children should be able to achieve by the end of that year. Teachers use these expectations as a basis for their planning, to ensure that the lessons are suitably pitched with an appropriate level of challenge to enable children to meet the expected standard at the end of the year. Where possible, teachers use Learning without Limits to allow children to choose their own level of difficulty, supported by an ethos where challenge is celebrated and mistakes are seen as steps in learning.
- d) In the spring or summer term of Nursery, (depending on need), children are beginning to have discrete phonics sessions, following the Read Write Inc programme. In Nursery, the focus is on hearing sounds and beginning to recognise and form single letters sounds.
- e) In Reception and Year 1, children will have a Read Write Inc lesson four times a week. The children are taught in homogenous groups by Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants. The children are taught to recognise, read and write sounds in a 'Speed Sound' session. This is followed up by the children reading phonetically decodable books matched to their reading ability. The sessions also include writing activities linked to the reading books that they have read, which develops their writing skills.

- f) For children in Year 1, they will also have one mixed ability English lesson with their class teacher. The focus of this lesson will be to ensure that the children continue to foster a love of reading and to develop their creative writing ideas.
- g) In the summer term of Year 1, the children will begin to transition from Read Write Inc sessions in homogenous groups to mixed ability English lessons with their class teacher. For children who need further support, they will continue to follow the Read Write Inc programme.
- h) In addition to reading to their peers and an adult in their Read Write Inc sessions, children in Reception and Year 1 will also read individually to an adult at least once a week.
- i) For children in Year 2 - Year 6, children will have four, one hour English lessons per week and two, twenty minute spelling lessons. In English lessons, there is a half termly writing focus on a particular purpose and audience (e.g. writing to inform, writing to entertain) and lessons ensure that the children learn the skills of writing for a particular purpose before applying the skills to their independent writing. English lessons also incorporate grammar teaching. In the spelling lessons, children are taught spelling rules (as detailed in the English compendium) and will ensure that they practise the spelling rules and associated words. There is also a focus upon learning and practising the relevant high frequency words for that year group. Words taught in spelling lessons are practised as part of their homework (See Homework Policy).
- j) For the children in Year 2 to Year 6, they will have four, thirty minute reading lessons per week. Reading skills and objectives for the year group will be taught primarily using whole class reading texts.
- k) In all classes across the school, a love of reading is promoted through daily story/poetry times and weekly visits to the school library.
- l) Teachers take advantage of opportunities to make cross curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. There is a particular focus on writing through all subject areas and ensuring that the children's writing is appropriate to the subject e.g. writing as geographers in geography lessons. The same high standard of writing is expected in Discovery Books, as is seen in English Books.
- m) Handwriting is taught in accordance with the statutory requirements for each year group which is laid out in the English compendium and Presentation Policy. From the autumn term of Year 3, children are given the option to use a pen if they would like to and it is appropriate to the task. The use of when pen should be used is detailed in the Presentation Policy.
- n) Homework for children is set in accordance with the Homework Policy.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) The work of the English Faculty involves ensuring that the curriculum is well planned, being informed about current developments in this area and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.
- b) The English Subject Leader assists staff by leading training sessions and supporting them in the classroom. The English leader is responsible for implementing changes required by National Curriculum, attending training courses feeding back key skills and information to staff. The subject leader ensures that all staff have access to relevant CPDL.

- c) The Early Reading Leader ensures that Read Write Inc is delivered consistently across the school through coaching and by leading training sessions. The Early Reading Leader is responsible for working closely with the school's Read Write Inc consultant to ensure that the programme is delivered effectively to ensure that all children make excellent progress with their reading and writing. The Reading Leader liaises with the Year Group Leaders of Learning to carry out half termly assessments and to ensure that the children are grouped appropriately.

Appendix A - Approach to developing good pencil grip in the Early Years

Pencils and pens are the tools used for the vital skill of handwriting. The correct use of tools needs to be taught and practised until it becomes a habit.

An efficient pencil grip allows a person to write comfortably and legibly. A non-efficient grip can make learning to write a challenge and use of writing later on tiring and uncomfortable.

It is much better to teach good habits than to fix poor ones at a later time.

At Stamford Green we ensure that children develop pre-grip skills:

- Gross motor control which includes core strength and body awareness.
- Finger awareness through naming fingers and their function
- Finger songs and games
- Understanding of hand dominance – which is their 'worker' hand and which is their 'helper' hand.
- Fine Motor skills including manipulating small parts and activities that involve resistance.
- Using chunky tools in mark making

50% of three year-olds have the fine motor skills to hold a small crayon with correct grip.

Once children have the pre-grip skills required, pencil grip is taught through:

- Explicit teacher demonstration of nip, flip, grip
- Practice of 'Pencil Pick-ups' to practise forming a good grip without writing.
- Practice of pre-writing/scribbling in correct pencil grip to develop good pencil pressure.
- Correction of poor grip so that habits are not built.

EYFS year-group focuses

Nursery – 2 year olds	Children join in activities that develop gross motor control and core strength. Children use chunky tools for mark-making. Children can name their fingers (see below) Develop body awareness.
Nursery – 3 year-olds	Children join in activities that develop gross motor control and core strength. Children use small tools especially pencils and crayons which support their fine motor development and encourage good pencil pressure. Children are explicitly taught correct pencil grip using 'nip, flip, grip'. Children learn about which is their dominant hand (worker hand) and which is their 'helper hand'
Reception	Children are explicitly taught correct pencil grip using 'nip, flip, grip'. Children take part in adult-led activities specifically practising correct grip without writing e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Nip, flip, grip' practice • Pencil pick-ups • 'Aim and scribble' activities • Songs Children use small tools (pencils, crayons, short thin pens etc as their hands are small and to encourage precision. Children know which is their dominant hand (worker hand) and use their other hand as their 'helper hand'.

All children should develop good pencil grip habits by the end of Reception.

Writing

When children are learning to write letters and numbers they learn:

- To use good posture at the table with both feet on the floor.
- To use their other hand to stabilise the paper (helper hand).
- To always begin with the pencil in correct grip.

Assessment

Repetition and practice are key to developing efficient pencil grip. Children from the age of 3 are assessed half-termly to monitor who is able to:

1. Pick up a pencil with correct pencil grip when asked to by an adult.
2. Use correct pencil grip throughout writing/drawing activities without reminders (i.e. who has a habit of correct pencil grip)

These assessments will inform planning to support children to develop correct pencil grip.



