



NEWBOLD SCHOOL ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed by : Mrs J Crissey, Mrs L Billson, and Mrs V Stanborough in October 2023.

Ratified by Newbold School Board of Governors: Autumn Term 2023

Next review: Autumn term 2026

Introduction

This policy describes our practice in the teaching of English: reading, writing, phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Our approach to teaching English is inclusive and multi-faceted, incorporating oracy, drama, real contexts and high-quality literature. Our priority is to create fluent readers and writers with all the skills and knowledge they need to be confidently literate in life.

We want all children to leave Newbold School with a life-long reading habit and a love of books because reading will improve their vocabulary, inspire them creatively and improve their ability to write well.

Aims

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential element of primary education.

At Newbold School, we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is one of our highest priorities and we recognise that it is often cross-curricular and is in constant development through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching other subjects ; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'. They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well- structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

At Newbold School we encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We understand that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose - listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Representing Newbold School at events within the wider community
- Poetry recitals
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Pupil participation in assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council and Eco Council
- Talk partners
- Book talk sessions
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time

Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to

develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually'. Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

At Newbold School we recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

Ways in which we support this:

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Early Years and Key Stage One
- Pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2 are given opportunities for regular reading to adults in school and more often for those who may not get support from home
- Pupils who are struggling with reading or making slow progress are given reading support
- Each class has a carefully selected small library of books in which pupils are encouraged to choose from to support their wide range of reading
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, reading records and high quality attractive books in classrooms
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners or groups, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read, reading records and the various methods outlined above
- Pupils read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school journey at Newbold
- Pupils regularly experience a range of books in focused guided reading sessions
- Encouraging discussion about favourite stories, books and other texts

Reading Schemes

We have a wide range of reading books however the main schemes we use are:

- Jolly phonics
- Oxford Reading Tree
- Reading VIPERS

The Library

The main aims of our school library are:

- To provide a well-planned, attractive and stimulating environment
- To provide a central resource centre of books for the entire Newbold school community
- To provide a well-equipped resource centre to support teaching and learning, and to extend the school's curriculum and raise achievement and standards
- To provide a range of reading material, which reflects all ages, cultures and interest levels, and also supports the National Curriculum

Through the children's regular use of our library we aim:

- To stimulate a love of books and reading
- To encourage children to develop their own enjoyment, interest, knowledge and opinions about books
- To develop children's referencing skills
- To develop children's understanding of how libraries are organised and used and how books are categorised
- To promote care and respect for books and other resources

Writing

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

At Newbold School we recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and vision for teaching writing:

- We teach a balance of spelling, punctuation and grammar both integrated within literacy lessons and as separate, discrete lessons where necessary

- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate)
- We have a systematic approach to teaching handwriting (Newbold School's Approach to Writing - Nelson Scheme) a cold task highlights areas that need revisiting or teaching and these areas are built upon through exploring high quality texts and identifying features, skills sessions and encouraging the children to continually plan, write, edit and improve
- We revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- Pupil's work is marked in line with the school marking policy, using green pen to signify correct examples of work and purple to focus on errors and areas for development
- We focus mark at least once a week, particularly extended pieces of work in-depth and identify next steps for (and with) pupils
- Over the course of the term, each child will receive verbal feedback on some of their work, given during one-to-one writing conferences
- We use success-criteria checklists for pupils to self -assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively
- We use writing checklists, where key objectives for the year group are consistently highlighted and reinforced through editing and marking.
- We teach and promote joined handwriting to support spelling and speed from KS1 onwards
- We use drama and debate to help pupils to think about another point of view

Vocabulary

The National Curriculum makes it clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching:

- Is ongoing, progressive and systematic
- Makes links from known words
- Develops understanding of shades of meaning
- Includes 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Is subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

Teachers

- create vocabulary walls in classrooms for children's reference
- plan out the key academic vocabulary required for each subject/topic in their medium term planning

Aim: to encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary. Ways in which we support this:

- Giving pupils spelling lists/key words to take home and learn
- Displaying key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Through in-depth, word-based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesauruses and similar programmes
- Using texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Through targeted one to one/small group support, where appropriate

Spelling

Within EYFS, phonics is taught systematically through the use of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme. Where additional support is required in the teaching of phonics, interventions will be provided through the support of our SEN TA and within the classroom, using a variety of resources to match the needs of the child. The teaching of phonics is continued through the implementation of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme across Key Stage One and Two. Spelling is followed, up to Year 6, using the Jolly Phonics spelling lists. Across the school, the integration of spelling into daily writing is done through the children identifying spellings they are unsure of in their own writing, supporting learning through using appropriate resources in the classroom (eg. dictionaries, word lists, working walls, Clicker), and through teachers identifying spellings to be corrected in independent pieces of writing.

Planning, Assessment and Moderation

Planning

- Teachers create long-term overviews and short term plans for their classes
- Schemes of work for phonics are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions
- Where appropriate to the needs of pupils, some sessions may be taught across classes

Assessment

- Teachers assess pupil's learning during and as part of every session.
- They adapt their practice accordingly and adjust daily plans.
- Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress.
- Children are encouraged to make judgments about how they can improve their own work.
- Formal assessments of reading comprehension and grammar, punctuation and spelling are carried out at relevant points of the year to support teacher assessments
- Children are assessed termly on where they are in relation to age-related expectations in reading and writing and this is recorded in line with the school assessment policy; this data forms the basis of discussions within termly pupil progress meetings. We also use PIRA tests as part of our moderation process.

Moderation

- Relevant staff attend moderating sessions provided by the Education Department at the British Union Conference
- Moderation of writing takes place within school, as part of staff meetings, with all teaching staff involved in this process
- Book scrutiny, learning walks and pupil voice conversations take place throughout the school year, involving the English Subject Co-ordinator

Professional development

- Staff are provided with the opportunity to attend relevant courses
- Moderation takes place through an arrangement with Bracknell Forest Council occasionally within the cluster and with support from our Education Director, Mrs Lorraine McDonald.

At Newbold we are an inclusive school, setting high expectations, recognising the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13).

As stated in the National Curriculum, the overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through

widespread reading for enjoyment. Our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning ensures that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Principles

- A minimum of five hours per week is spent on English lessons at KS1 & KS2, including reading.
- Reading: word reading and comprehension
- Writing: transcription and composition.
- Spelling (Appendix 1)
- Vocabulary, grammar, punctuation (Appendix 2).
- In Early Years, English skills are taught in line with the EYFS Prime area of Learning and Development: 'Communication and Language', and in the Specific area of 'Literacy'. 'Communication and Language' incorporates listening and attention, understanding and speaking. 'Literacy' covers reading and writing.
- Phonics underpins the teaching of reading and spelling. Daily phonic sessions are taught in nursery, reception and KS1.

Guidelines for English Teaching & Learning

Planning KS1 & KS2

- Teachers should provide a variety of stimuli, experiences and activities to engage the children in their learning.
- Delivery of the National Curriculum in English is supported by the use of the Herts for Learning curriculum and assessment materials. We also dip into planning from Hamilton, Twinkl and other resources that will best support our objectives.
- Assessment for learning and differentiation should be used to ensure teaching and learning activities are focused on the needs of the children and enable them to make good progress.
- The half-termly Medium Term Plans should show learning objectives for each week and significant outcomes for a unit of work.

- As a minimum requirement, short term (weekly) planning should include Learning objectives, success criteria and expected outcomes for each session (KS1 & 2).
- Teaching and Learning should be differentiated to take account of the needs and abilities of the children in the class.
- Children should be given opportunities to use drama within the classroom to explore and develop narrative as well as to be involved in rehearsing for and performing in drama productions.

Spelling & Handwriting

- As phonics underpins the teaching of reading and spelling, daily phonic sessions should be taught in Foundation 2 and KS1. Letter names should also be learnt at Foundation stage.
- Spelling teaching should reflect the children's developing phonic knowledge (through Jolly Phonics) as well as enable them to apply rules and guidance and learn exceptions. The requirements of the programmes of study, including the word lists in the Appendix 1, should be used as a basis for teaching.
- Handwriting should be actively taught throughout Key Stage 1 & 2, with an agreed joined cursive font.
- Appropriate consideration should be given to left handed children.

Writing

- Children should be given opportunities to write for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Planning of English units should be linked to other curriculum areas as much as possible, providing opportunities for purposeful writing.
- Text level writing objectives should be taught in carefully planned and sequenced lessons, with a clear learning journey, incorporating: an initial piece of writing, immersion in and analysis of the text type, short pieces of writing to practise relevant language features and grammar skills, planning, drafting and improving a final piece of writing.
- Learning objectives should be shared with the children and be evident in their books.
- Success criteria should be shared with the children for significant pieces of writing.
- Teachers should model the writing process on the board, referring, as appropriate, to text type features, discussing their choice of vocabulary and sentence structure and demonstrating the process of planning, drafting, proofreading and improving.
- High quality 'real' texts should be used as models for writing. Within a unit of work, different texts may be needed to address reading and writing objectives.
- A range of approaches should be used to teach grammar and punctuation, including:

- o *short warm-up sessions* to progressively build skills and consolidate learning,
- o *specific lessons* aimed at developing an area of grammar relevant to the text type. These should include:
 - using good quality texts as models,
 - the teacher modelling writing,
 - practical and creative games and activities,
 - worksheets used to *supplement* the above approaches, e.g. for homework and to prepare for end of year tests in Year 6.
- o *embedded* within English lessons, as the effect of grammatical choices are identified when discussing texts and in shared and guided writing.

Reading

- In KS1, an individual reading programme, following book band levels, should be maintained for each child, with books to be taken home and changed on a daily basis. Once a term, children should be reassessed by the teacher to ensure they are reading books appropriate to their reading ability.
- In KS1, children should read to a teacher on a weekly basis. Children identified as making less than expected progress should read to an adult on a 1-to-1 basis more frequently than this.
- In KS2, the majority of children should have free choice of books from the class library for independent reading; however, those who are not yet independent readers will continue to read banded books at school and at home.
- In KS2, children should read to a teacher at least once a fortnight, either in Guided Reading sessions or on a one-to-one basis. Children who are not yet independent readers should read to an adult at least twice a week.
- Guided Reading sessions should include a significant element of book talk, with high quality discussion with the teacher and opportunities for children to explain their understanding.
- Opportunities should be taken, within guided and shared reading and with focused activities in English lessons to develop the richness of the children's vocabulary.
- Opportunities for Independent reading should be given and every child in KS2 should read independently at least three times a week (in a quiet focussed reading atmosphere – at least 5 minutes in KS1 and 15 minutes in KS2).
- Reading records should be used in KS2 for the children and parents to record their reading at home. Teaching staff should write a short comment in the record if a pupil reads 1:1 or in a group during school.
- Children are expected to read at home, with a minimum of 3 times a week.
- Teachers should read aloud to children on a regular basis, either when sharing texts within lessons (across the curriculum) or when reading a class book.
- Reading aloud to the children should provide an opportunity to share quality texts which are beyond the children's own independent reading ability.

- Whole texts or extracts used for teaching within units of work or read to the children should include some real texts that are classics of English Literature so that the children become aware of our rich literary heritage.
- Whole school initiatives to promote enjoyment of reading and literature will be planned each year, such as book week or a whole school focus-week on a theme or a single text.

Assessment & Marking

- Summative assessments should be carried out for Reading and Writing on a termly basis using the Herts for Learning assessment criteria.
- Teachers should keep informal Assessment for Learning notes to inform their planning and differentiation; for example, annotated short term plans and learning objective assessment sheets.
- Individual writing targets should be identified and shared with each child.
- When marking, teachers should monitor progress against individual writing targets, identifying evidence for the achievement of these and setting new targets as appropriate.
- Key Writing Skills Evidence tables should be stuck and maintained at the back of children's English books.
- Teachers should provide either verbal or marking feedback to children on their work. Verbal feedback can be given immediately or following marking. A 'V' (verbal) symbol should be used to show that the teacher and child have discussed a piece of work.
- Marking should relate to learning objectives or individual targets.
- Feedback should contribute to children making rapid progress.
- When marking, teachers should look back through previous work, so that they can identify and comment on improvements over time, progress against individual targets, and achievement of previous 'wishes'.
- Green pen should be used to identify what went well/achievements and purple for identifying errors and/or next steps. These can be used along with 'stars' and 'wishes' for extended pieces of writing.
- The agreed symbols should be used to identify grammar, punctuation and spelling errors and to identify whether a piece of work is excellent (star), good (two ticks) or has met the objective at a basic level (one tick).
- Time should be allocated for children to edit and improve their writing (using 'polishing' pens, when appropriate) and to find and correct spelling errors.
- Time should be provided for children to read and, if required, respond to marking comments.
- Children should be given opportunities to undertake self- and peer-marking and to read their writing aloud.
- PIRA reading tests to be administered at the end of each term in KS1 & KS2.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Staff development will be identified in line with this policy and its guidelines.
- Aspects of English teaching and learning will regularly be the subject of staff meetings.
- A Subject Action Plan will be maintained for English and objectives identified and implemented by the Subject Leader.
- This policy will be reviewed regularly.
- Consistency of practice across the school will be monitored and evaluated by the Subject Leader.