



Hartsbourne Primary School
Mission statement: Valuing Potential; Creating Opportunities

ENGLISH POLICY

DATE OF POLICY	March 2025
DATE OF REVIEW	March 2026
REVIEWED BY	Curriculum Team & SLT Teaching & Learning Committee

VISION

Community	Happy Memories	Confidence	Aspiration
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We aim to be a school where the children are at the centre of everything that we do. Decisions that we make around the curriculum and school life are carefully considered to reflect the current needs of the children. Mental health is balanced with their academic needs to nurture the whole child.

RATIONALE

At Hartsbourne Primary School we believe that language and literacy is fundamental to the overall development of the child and enables their access to the curriculum in all its aspects. We follow the National Curriculum to enable the delivery of quality-first teaching of basic and higher order reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

We will promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a command of the spoken and written word. We will deliver literacy through a creative, enriched curriculum that enables learning to take place within a relevant context, using the children's interests that are appropriate to everyday life.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Hartsbourne Primary School we aim to provide:

- A curriculum which will enable all children to attain their full potential in literacy and oracy;
- Children with the skills to become competent, confident users of language in all its forms;
- An EYFS curriculum that meets the requirements of the prime area of learning Communication and Language, as well as the specific area of learning Literacy;
- Curricula in Years 1-6 which meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in English.

We aim for children to leave Year 6:

- Reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- With a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment.
- Having been exposed to a wide range of genres, authors and famous works from our cultural literary heritage.
- With an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.



- Understanding a range of text types, media types and genres.
- Able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- Using their developing imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Having a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

To achieve this, our curriculum will provide all children with:

- A wide range of language experiences, in a variety of contexts, linked to real purposes and audiences.
- A structured, progressive and balanced range of differentiated learning opportunities, taking into account the abilities of all children.
- A range of quality resources that are stimulating and reflect the children's interests as well as supporting their language opportunities.
- Access to electronic media and ICT resources to enhance their learning as and when appropriate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

In accordance with the 2014 National Curriculum, the teaching of literacy occurs in four main areas: **spoken language, reading, writing and spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.**

Spoken Language

A strong grasp of spoken language underpins all other areas of literacy learning, therefore we believe it is vital that children can speak confidently and fluently as well as listening actively and critically to other people.

In EYFS and KS1, daily phonics sessions (following the ELS scheme of work) will focus on different elements of speech and children will learn first how to properly pronounce sounds before reading or writing them.

In Reception the daily routine will include planned and spontaneous activities that include:

- ✓ a wealth of opportunities to develop and experience speaking and listening.
- ✓ experiences that develop gross and fine motor skills both indoors and outdoors.
- ✓ sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books.
- ✓ immersion in an environment with opportunities to see a variety of written communication.
- ✓ focus activities that teach children early communication language and literacy skills.
- ✓ choosing books to take home to share.
- ✓ synthetic phonics (phase 1-3) letters and sounds taught.

High quality debate and discussion is at the heart of good literacy teaching and all children will be given regular opportunities to discuss topics in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. During this session the emphasis will be placed on listening to others as well as speaking.

Children of all ages will be given regular opportunities to speak in front of an audience as they progress through the school. These could include presentations to the rest of the class, opportunities to 'show and tell' or chances to share important events in their life with their cohort. Children will also be given opportunities to speak in front of an audience as part of a group, for example in sharing assemblies, significant assemblies (harvest, remembrance) or class/key-stage productions.



Teachers will use guidance about spoken language from the National Curriculum when assessing children's overall ability in English, rather than reporting on this area separately. Where there are particular concerns about the spoken language of a child they will be supported through a programme of intervention and/or input from a speech and language therapist, in collaboration with the school SENCo.

Reading and Phonics

Upon joining the school, children's reading abilities will be assessed and they will choose a reading book from within our reading scheme. Books will be changed regularly and children will be encouraged to read as much as possible at home. In the event that children can't or don't read at home, provision will be made to allow them to read with adults in school.

As children progress in both decoding and comprehension, they will be regularly assessed and advance through the reading scheme with the ultimate aim to become a 'free reader' and read books of their choice. Children will also be given regular opportunities to visit the school library to choose a book to read for pleasure. Reading records will be used to allow teachers to monitor the frequency of reading at home.

Each year group will be issued with 'reading maps', containing agreed text recommendations appropriate for their age. As children progress through their map and complete each book, they will earn rewards.

From Reception onwards, children will take part in daily phonics lessons, following the 'ELS' scheme of work. More information on the specific teaching of phonics is available in our Phonics Teaching document on the school website.

All units of English will be based around high-quality texts, in line with the year-group half-termly topic. These texts will sit at the heart of the unit of work and provide inspiration for a range of pieces of writing.

Teachers will assess the children's reading level within the book band system on an ongoing basis. Once per half-term, teachers will assess their children in reading, using a combination of their book band level, day-to-day assessment of their work in guided reading and English lessons and if appropriate, summative assessments using Testbase materials or past SATs papers.

Writing

In EYFS, children will be taught how to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing, using the tripod grip in almost all cases. Other activities to improve fine motor control will also help children develop the muscles in their hands required to manipulate a pencil correctly, as well as other related skills such as using scissors or drawing. Children will learn to write recognisable letters, most of which will be correctly formed, spell words by identifying sounds in them and represent said sounds with letters, and write simple sentences of phrases which can be read by others.

From Year 1 onwards, children will begin to work within the requirements of the National Curriculum for English and units of work will be chosen specifically by class teachers, based on their half-termly topic and centred around a high-quality text. Children will progress from writing and punctuating simple and complex sentences, to forming paragraphs and whole texts, developing their skills of critical assessment, editing and improving in order to develop their own individual writing style. Teachers have the freedom to plan writing units in a sequential fashion which suits the age and needs of the children in their class, incorporating the technical requirements of their year group's curriculum, which will be provided by the subject leadership team.

All taught literacy units will aim to have a written outcome which the children work towards creating. In the



final phase of any literacy unit the focus will be on planning, drafting, assessing, editing, improving and publishing a final piece of written literacy, incorporating skills and grammatical conventions pertinent to the year group the children are in. To assist their development as writers, the children will also be made aware of the technical requirements for their year group and be given the opportunity to learn, practise and master these skills over the course of the year.

Writing will be assessed both during lessons through AFL strategies and trend marking, and on a termly basis using the criteria for writing within that individual year group. Teachers will review a range of work when making judgements and may also refer to writing in other subjects.

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

We believe that spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation are essential tools for writing which should be taught regularly in order to develop the children's confidence and competence as writers. Whilst it is important that the children understand the theory behind the grammatical conventions pertinent to their year group, we believe it is more important that they use and apply these skills when writing. As such, all vocabulary, grammar and punctuation lessons will be taught as part of a literacy unit with the intention of being used in context, rather than for the sake of it.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, teachers will use 'ELS' and 'No Nonsense Spelling' (Year 2) to deliver requirements in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In Key Stage 2, teachers will deliver regular spelling lessons using the 'No Nonsense Spelling' scheme, ensuring that any spelling tests are pertinent to the spelling skills they have been teaching.

Handwriting

On entry, children are involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills and a tripod grip, in line with the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. Activities to develop gross motor control may include: rolling and running with a hoop, ribbon movement, chalking, painting on a large scale and Interactive White Board use. We provide opportunities for gross motor development in both the indoor and outdoor classroom. Activities to develop fine motor control may include: sand, mark making trays and tools, tracing, colouring and pattern work, using glue spreaders in small pots, painting with the tips of the fingers, cotton buds, play-dough and threading. As children get older we have specific fine motor interventions and access to equipment such as writing slopes and pencil grips to support the development of handwriting.

An example of our agreed handwriting style is included as an appendix. This style will be modelled and taught but children will not be found to have 'incorrect' handwriting providing that it is legible, fluent and joined by the end of KS2.

Children's path to legible, fluent and joined handwriting will follow these steps across their time at Hartsbourne:

1. Write letters using the correct sequence of movements. (EYFS)
2. Form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join later. (EYFS-Year 2)
3. Learn to use the four basic handwriting joins: (Year 3)
 - diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai, ar, un
 - horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi
 - diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab, ul, it
 - horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot
4. Write legibly with a joined hand, maintaining consistency in size and spacing. (Year 4)
5. Use fluent joined handwriting for all writing (except where other forms are required). (Years 5&6)



PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Pupils identified as needing extra support in English will be given appropriate help in the classroom including small group, 1:1 and other interventions. Providing for pupils with special educational needs should take account of each pupil's particular learning and assessment requirements and incorporate specific approaches which will allow individuals to succeed, such as using texts at an appropriate level of difficulty and planning for additional support. Evidence-based successful interventions such as 'Reciprocal Reading' (pending training in 2024) 'Nessie' are available for use and support staff are trained to deliver them.

Providing for pupils with English as an Additional Language will take account of each pupil's ability and grasp of the English language. Teachers will both differentiate planning for these children but also allow them the time to be immersed in the language, modelling high quality talk at every opportunity and providing support for parents as needed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will support staff to achieve the best outcomes through:

- The allocation of appropriate resources, including human resources.
- Ensuring the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning, bearing in mind all health & safety regulations.
- Monitoring of effective teaching strategies through lesson observations, learning walks and book looks.
- Ensuring that staff development and performance management policies promote high quality first teaching.
- Ensuring that the curriculum team are providing both development and support to improve the quality of English teaching.
- Meeting regularly with class teachers in pupil progress meetings to monitor the progress of all children and discuss strategies to support those who are stuck.

Subject Leadership Team

The curriculum team for English are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry is incorporated into teachers' medium-term planning.
- Maintaining an overview of current developments within the subject and the availability of high quality resources.
- With the SLT, ensuring a rigorous and effective programme of moderation of assessments.
- Effectively manage any funding designated to English, assessment and the school library.
- Creating an action plan and meeting regularly over the course of the year to ensure improvements are being made within the subject.
- Delivering or organising relevant CPD to help class teachers develop their practice.

Class Teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for the following:

- Combining the half-termly topic, high-quality texts and the technical requirements for writing within their year group to plan engaging units of work, culminating in quality written outcomes which children take pride in producing.
- Making effective use of both formative and summative assessment in order to track children's progress carefully and ensure that teaching is reflective of the requirements of specific cohorts.
- Ensuring lessons are carefully planned and differentiated, to enable all children to make good or better progress from their individual starting points.



- To co-ordinate additional support for children who are making slow progress or stuck, in collaboration with the school SENCo and support staff.
- Modelling a high standard of spoken and written English at all times, as well as generating an environment where reading is valued and children want to read.

Support Staff

Each teaching assistant is responsible for the following:

- Providing appropriate support to children's progress in English, either as part of our quality-first teaching provision or through interventions which are additional to or different from work completed in class.
- Modelling a high standard of spoken and written English at all times.

HOME SCHOOL LINKS

We believe that opportunities to follow up school learning at home are essential to enabling the children to master literacy concepts and apply them in a variety of contexts. As such, children will be encouraged to read as often as possible at home, with reading records issued to allow teachers to track this. Reading Maps will also be provided to each year group to encourage independent reading.

Children of all ages will also receive regular literacy homework in line with the school's homework policy to give them an opportunity to develop and hone skills being learned in class. All children will be given a subscription to Reading Eggs, which can be used independently or as part of the weekly homework provision.

Progress in English will be discussed regularly at parent consultation evenings, with specific targets identified, and parents will be informed of their children's attainment and progress in literacy through their end of year report. Where children are receiving extra support or intervention in literacy, meetings will be held with parents to discuss the child's personal provision map (PPM).



Appendix – Agreed Handwriting Style

Handwriting

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z