

Upton Westlea Primary School

English Policy



“Inspire, Learn, Succeed”

Approved by staff: January 2024

Signed: K Carruthers

Approved by Governors: January 2024

Signed: L Dalton

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“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate’s loot on Treasure Island.”

Walt Disney

1. Introduction

At Upton Westlea, we see the teaching of English as a key to future success. We strive to provide a language rich environment for all the children by immersing them in a wide variety of texts from the moment they start our school. These language and literacy skills are taught through play, phonics, reading, writing and spelling activities in order that children can access the whole curriculum to their full potential.

Our inclusive English curriculum strives to embed equality and diversity by creating teaching and learning environments which are built upon British values and celebrate a diverse range of authors and texts. We aim for children to have a greater understanding of the way cultural influences and experiences of the outside world reflect and shape our English language and inspire the work of writers, readers and poets.

2. Intent – Reading and Writing

Our school mission statement is to provide every child with a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and develop the skills they need to be effective future citizens. We aim to inspire children to become good learners and achieve their best, which is embedded in our motto – Inspire, Learn, Succeed.

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum (2014) and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017).

“The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.” (NC 2014)

Through the teaching of English, we encourage children to:

- Be effective, competent communicators and good listeners, using discussion in order to learn;
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts using appropriate, technical vocabulary;
- Foster an interest in words and their meanings and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;
- Enjoy reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information;
- Be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;
- Develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy;
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately;
- Understand spelling conventions;
- Produce effective, well-presented written work.

3. Implementation-Reading

We want to support, guide and encourage children in developing positive attitudes to reading so that it is a pleasurable and meaningful activity. Children are provided with a range of reading experiences as part of the Pathways to Write methodology that is followed for English to develop writing skills. We explicitly teach reading through phonics, reading practice and shared reading whilst promoting independent reading, reading for pleasure and home reading. See school's Phonics Policy for further information.

This begins early in Nursery, when children embark upon Phase 1 Letters & Sounds whereby early listening skills are developed.

In Phase 1 phonics, children are taught about:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting (e.g. hearing that d-o-g makes 'dog')

Such learning can take place as small group adult directed task or woven into the learning environment so children almost 'stumble over phonics' on a daily basis in their play.

From Reception the children begin to learn phonics through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. In Reception, children will begin Phase 2 Phonics and it is the aspiration that they will complete both Phase 2 and 3 and start Phase 4 by the end of this academic year. Those children who require additional support with this are identified at an early stage in order that further phonic support can be given. However, these children are still included in each whole class phonics session.

In Phase 2 phonics:

Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make (phonemes). By the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, and to spell them out. They also learn some high frequency 'tricky words' like 'the' and 'go.'

In Phase 3 phonics:

Children are taught more difficult and/or less commonly used phonemes. There are around 25 of these, mainly made up of two letters such as /ai/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/. We need these sounds to be able to read and form useful words.

Alongside this, children are taught to recognise more tricky words, including '**me,**' '**was,**' '**my,**' '**you**' and '**they**'. They learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make. By the end of Phase 3, children should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 2 and 3 graphemes, blend and read CVC words made from these graphemes, read new tricky words and write letters correctly when given an example to copy.

If children have fully grasped Phase 2 and 3 in Reception, they will begin Phase 4.

In Phase 4 Phonics:

Children should be confident with each phoneme. From here on, phonics teaching is about consolidating and refining their knowledge, introducing more spelling patterns and tricky words, and increasing vocabulary.

In Phase 4 phonics, children will, among other things:

- Practise reading and spelling CVCC words ('bump', 'nest', 'belt,' 'milk', etc)
- Practise reading and spelling high frequency words
- Practise reading and writing sentences
- Learn more tricky words, including 'have,' 'like,' 'some,' 'little'

Children should now be blending confidently to work out new words. They should be starting to be able to read words automatically.

As children move into Year 1, they may have a recap on Phase 4 or start Phase 5 immediately. This will depend on the cohort and will be a joint decision made by EYFS and KS1 staff.

In Phase 5 Phonics:

Children are introduced to alternative spellings for sounds. Children master these in reading first, and as their fluency develops, we begin to see them using them correctly in spelling.

Children learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these: for example, learning that the grapheme 'ow' makes a different sound in 'snow' and 'cow'. They should become quicker at blending, and start to do it silently. They learn about split digraphs. They will start to choose the correct graphemes when spelling, and will learn more tricky words, including 'people,' 'water' and 'friend'. They also learn new phonemes: such as /ph/ as in phone and /zh/, as in 'treasure.'

By the end of Year 1, children should be able to:

- Say the sound for any grapheme they are shown
- Write the common graphemes for any given sound (e.g. 'e,' 'ee,' 'ie,' 'ea')
- Use their phonics knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words of up to three syllables
- Read all 100 high frequency words and be able to spell most of them
- Form letters correctly

Towards the end of Year 1, children sit the Phonics Screening Check to ensure they have mastered the appropriate knowledge.

When the children are secure with their sounds and can read fluently, they will have completed their phonics learning. Some children continue to require phonics teaching in year 2 and KS2 and will take part in Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up sessions in the phase they need.

For further information regarding phonics and early reading, see the phonics and early reading policy.

Shared Reading

In shared reading, the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support and guidance. Texts are rich and challenging covering a range of genres in fiction, non-fiction and poetry. A large emphasis is placed on new

vocabulary in order to aid comprehension. Questions are completed from one or more of the content domains listed below.

Key Stage 1

- 1a draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
- 1b identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information
- 1c identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
- 1d make inferences from the text
- 1e predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

Key Stage 2

- 2a give / explain the meaning of words in context
- 2b retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
- 2c summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
- 2d make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
- 2e predict what might happen from details stated and implied
- 2f identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
- 2g identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases
- 2h make comparisons within the text

Teachers will also read a class text that captures the interest of the class, whilst potentially too challenging for them to access independently. This is a further opportunity to develop inference skills and provide a variety of interesting vocabulary.

Reading Practice

In Reception and KS1, children take part in reading practise sessions, following the Little Wandle structure. This includes three reads of one text- decoding, prosody and comprehension. Some children in KS2 who are following the phonics programme will also take part in reading practice.

Home Reading

Children are encouraged to adopt a healthy attitude towards reading at home and we have an expectation that children in Early Years and KS1 read at least 3 times per week. This increases to at least 4 times per week in KS2.

Children who are learning to read and developing an understanding of phonics, will take home a fully decodable book based on their current phonic level. Where this is not possible due to lower levels of resources available for home reading, the parents are signposted to the appropriate text to access online at home via Collins ebooks. Children are also given opportunities to take home books with repeating patterns and specific high frequency words and this is at the discretion of the class teacher for the individual child. Children that have met the expected standard are provided with a colour banded book, which is usually one level below what they are reading in class. This is so they can develop confidence and fluency at home and to further support reading for pleasure. If parents request a more challenging text,

the decision is jointly made, as we believe this is the best way to support reading at home. Children are also encouraged to read their own books from home or from the library, as this truly fosters a love of reading. Children are encouraged to read their books more than once to develop fluency.

Parents are asked to sign the Reading Record to show their child has read and this also offers parents an opportunity to ask any questions regarding their child's reading journey. When children have read the expected number of times, they receive a ticket into the class sparkly box. At the end of every half term, a child's name is drawn from each box and each winner from the class is presented with a book token during celebration assembly.

Reading for Pleasure

We are always looking for ways to inspire children to want to read, in order to develop a healthy, lifelong love of reading. We want children to relish opportunities to read and we aim to cover this in a range of ways. Some of which are:

- Teachers read a story or part of a class novel to their class regularly– we want children to see how powerful a good book can be.
- Celebrating World Book Day.
- Children take part in a reading for pleasure session each week and have the opportunity to share recommendations in 'Book Club'.
- Annual Book Fair in March.
- Cross Age Book Sharing (CABS) opportunities where older and younger meet together to read.
- Local library visits.
- Collaborating with Storyhouse on projects.
- Whole school poetry day.

Implementation-Writing

We want our children to enjoy writing and understand its purpose and audience, providing regular opportunities to write across the curriculum not just in English. We aim to develop children who produce writing which is thoughtful, engaging and well-structured.

Our school uses the Pathways to Write methodology for the teaching of writing from year 1 to year 6. Pathways to write is built around units of work which develop vocabulary, reading and writing skills through a mastery approach where children have the opportunity to write for a range of purposes across all year groups. High-quality and inspirational texts are used to ensure engaging and purposeful English lessons which have strong, creative links to other areas of the curriculum.

This mastery approach to writing allows the children to develop and practice their writing skills over a series of short tasks, often focussing on only 2-3 key objectives. Towards the end of the unit, they then plan, write, evaluate and edit a longer, independent piece of writing using everything they have mastered throughout the particular unit.

Throughout each unit, the children are introduced to new skills (mastery keys) and previously applied skills (gateway keys) which will be revisited. These skills focus on developing an understanding of grammar and punctuation for each particular year group alongside the features of a particular purpose for writing. This enables the children to build up their tools for writing and helps them to apply their skills across a range of writing both in English and across all areas of the curriculum. Throughout the units, there are suggestions for extending greater depth writers within the context of the lesson.

The Pathways to Write process follows three stages:

Gateway (1-2 sessions): hooks, enthuses and intrigues young writers whilst revisiting previous mastery skills for teachers to assess.

Pathway (10 sessions approximately): introduces three new writing skills which pupils practise and apply through short and extended writing tasks.

Writeaway (4 lessons): provides pupils with an opportunity to apply mastery skills in an extended context.

The time spent at each stage may vary according to year group, previous experience, knowledge and understanding of the content of each book. It is possible for sessions to be broken down into a series of shorter lessons and extra teaching of skills may be required before further skills are taught and developed. Planning can be adapted in order to suit the needs of the cohort.

Spelling

Phonics provides an essential core for the teaching of spelling and is taught daily from Nursery to Year 1 (see phonics above). Once children have finished their phonics programme, they then follow Little Wandle Spelling in KS1. Pathways to Spell begins in KS2. This is designed for whole class teaching of the National Curriculum Objectives and makes direct links with our Pathways to Write units of work so vocabulary and spelling patterns are linked. Each week combines consolidation of previously taught spelling patterns and rules in conjunction with new teaching with opportunities to reflect on learning. Learning is sequenced in five stages:

- Review - Pupils spend time revisiting a previously taught spelling objective. This will often link to the mastery focus to support pupils with underpinning knowledge required for the new pattern or rule.
- Explain - Pupils explore and investigate new words and spellings. They will be given time to identify rules and patterns, hypothesise and explain their findings with their peers.
- Practise - Time is given for pupils to practise using the new rule or patterns through a variety of multi-sensory activities in small groups, with partners or independently.
- Apply - Pupils have the opportunity to apply the rules with greater independence within sentences. This will take the form of dictation several times each term.
- Reflect - Time for pupils to think about their learning and how well they were able to apply their new knowledge. They will think about strategies that have helped them learn best to develop their metacognition.

Vocabulary development

We believe that the acquisition of vocabulary is vital to making progress across the whole curriculum. A 'developing vocabulary' section is identified at the beginning of each planning unit and these words are then displayed in each classroom on each working wall. Often, this vocabulary has clear links with other curriculum subjects enabling our children to encounter and use newly acquired vocabulary more frequently in their speaking and their writing. Words from the National Curriculum (which are relevant to the topic) are also included in the vocabulary section. Words from this section are often used as 'Word(s) of the Day' from Year 1 to Year 6 and are displayed as such. Children are encouraged to use these words in their written work.

Handwriting

In KS1 and KS2, Letter Join is used to develop a clear and legible handwriting style. We use bespoke books with triple-lined paper in English. Gaps between lines are progressively reduced in accordance with children's age and development with the removal of triple-lined paper at year 6. Each week, a handwriter of the week is chosen and their work is celebrated and placed on the handwriting washing line.

Inclusion in writing

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve their potential in English, regardless of gender, ethnicity, home background or special educational need. In the main, inclusive practices outlined in the Inclusion, SEND and Pupil Premium policies are adhered to in English. We adapt activities in order that all learners are able to access lessons. Those in need of further support are formally identified during pupil progress meetings which are held at least termly but may also be informally identified by the class teacher prior to that.

EYFS – Writing

At Upton Westlea, children in the Early Years develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult-led and child-initiated activities. This involves giving children the opportunity to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Themes are carefully selected using the children's interests and adult directed themes in order to promote learning and by giving the children the broad range of knowledge and skills so that they may progress.

Throughout each day, literacy activities are organised through the theme. Our children are encouraged to mark make and to become emergent writers. As their phonic knowledge develops and their confidence at using tricky words increases, the children begin to apply what they have learnt in adult-led and child-initiated activities. We also ensure activities are available to support children in developing their fine and gross motor control such as finger gym.

4. Impact – Phonics & Reading

Assessment is used to monitor progress in phonics and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Assessment for learning is used:

- daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
- weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

Summative assessment is used:

- every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the keep-up support that they need.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

There is also a fluency assessment that is conducted after the children have completed Year 1 Spring 2 sessions.

Each term, children from year 1 to year 6 complete National Test Style (NTS) standardised tests if appropriate. From these tests, strengths and areas for development are identified through the marking of the different content domains. From this, planning for shared reading can be tailored to adapt to the needs of the cohort or of groups of children. Since the pandemic, teachers have also been asked to closely track the progress of the lowest 20% of readers in their class and to put in place strategies to bridge the gap.

Impact – Writing

Each day, class teachers mark the children's work in accordance with the school's Feedback and Marking Policy. Teachers use these daily, formative assessments to adjust planning for the following lesson in order to meet the needs of their class. Teachers may then wish to revisit an objective from a previous year group or recap elements of the lesson before moving forward in the sequence of lessons. This may be with individuals, a group or the whole class.

After each writeaway stage, which will be completed independently, class teachers assess each child's writing against the assessment foci for that particular unit of work. This may only be 2-3 writing objectives per unit. This is recorded on INSIGHTS.

Pupil Progress meetings are held each half term to discuss children's progress and attainment. Throughout the year, there are opportunities to moderate writing within school and with other schools in the local authority. The Year 2 and Year 6 teachers attend half termly writing moderation meetings led by the local authority. The teaching and learning of writing is monitored by Senior Leaders and the Subject Lead through lesson observations, book scrutinies and pupil voice interviews.

Impact in EYFS

As well as the Little Wandle Assessments completed each half term, each child's progress is assessed against the Development Matters and the statutory framework for EYFS.

5. Health and Safety

There is a separate subject risk assessment (if required) which is completed by the subject leader to assess any risks and ensure measures are put in place to when needed to ensure the safety of our pupils and staff.

6. Inclusion and Equality Statement

Upton Westlea Primary School is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

At Upton Westlea Primary School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristics:

- gender;
- ethnicity;

- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity.

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.