

Barnard Grove Primary School

English Policy

2017-2020



“English is the language of the future...the most important tools you’ll ever need, no matter what career you choose. You have the right to English.

Make it your right!”

(Benjamin Zephaniah)



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The Contribution of English to the School's Curriculum

At Barnard Grove Primary School we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. Improved performance at reading, writing and spoken language will enable our pupils to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, accurately and, ultimately, to their greater satisfaction. This will also help them to deal more successfully with other curriculum subjects, while enriching their lives beyond school. The teaching and learning of language skills are, therefore, given a high priority in our school and where possible the creative curriculum and ICT will be used as additional tools to support and enhance teaching and learning.

Our 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 word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. We strive for all of our children to be 'Primary Literate Pupils' and, by the age of 11, we aim for every child to be able to:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, having an interest in books and reading for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences;
- Have an interest in words, their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- 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 in both fiction and non-fiction;
- 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.

At Barnard Grove Primary School, we encourage all children to become independent learners and be confident in all strands of learning. The children will be given opportunities to speak in a variety of contexts and learn to listen to and value the views of others.



Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014) and include content, objectives, expectations and technical terminology for **Reading** (*Word and Comprehension*), **Writing** (*Transcription, Handwriting, Composition and Grammar*).

Curriculum Delivery

From Reception through to Year 6, children are taught English using a variety of different approaches and contexts, dependent on stage of learning, cohort specific strengths and areas for improvement and pupil numbers. This may include one or more of the following:

- **EYFS-KS1** – Read Write Inc Phonics Programme
- **KS1** – A combination of the Read Write Inc Phonics Programme and National Curriculum English teaching once the programme is complete
- **KS2** – Pupils are all taught from the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English; however, some pupils may require additional support (phonics for example) if they are not working within age-related expectations so this is built into their personalised curriculum. Furthermore, the needs and prior attainment and progress of each year group are used to inform whether pupils are taught in mixed or attainment ability sets; this is reviewed at the start of each academic year and is year group specific.

Through differentiation and the support of Teaching Assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential. Children may receive additional support if necessary outside of the English lessons. Children that have a 'One Plan' or those who are on the 'School Support' register, may also be withdrawn in order to receive small group or one to one intervention that focuses on the child's more specific individual needs.

A clear lesson objective and success criteria are features of all English lessons. Working walls support learning in the classrooms with relevant support scaffolds also available for children to access independently e.g. word banks, phonics charts etc...).

Evaluative feedback and marking are used alongside regular checking of pupils' work to celebrate successes and identify areas of weakness to address within the sequence of work. Assessment informs planning and reference is made to the National Curriculum in medium term plans. The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. We encourage children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever appropriate.

We provide a rich and varied experience for pupils to draw on in their writing and reading which should include the whole curriculum.



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The following 'approaches' to each strand of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English are summaries of the content described in more detail in each, individual policy, including:

- *Speaking and Listening Policy*
- *Reading Policy*
- *Spelling Policy*
- *Handwriting Policy*

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

The four stands of speaking and listening: ***Speaking, Listening, Group Discussion and Drama*** permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy and contribute to group discussions effectively.

We achieve this by:

- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We also encourage a respect for the views of others;
- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with them and with other adults in our school;
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts;
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies and productions, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers;
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions;
- by developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.



Approaches to Reading

Phonics and Word Reading

The teaching of phonic skills begins in Nursery and continues through Reception and Key Stage 1, using the Read Write Inc synthetic phonics programme until pupils are competent with all 44 taught phonemes and can read fluently and confidently. It is our aim that most pupils will have completed the RWI programme by the end of Year 1 when they then move on to a daily English lesson planned using National Curriculum objectives. Pupils who make 'rapid' progress throughout Year 1, are removed from the programme and taught in ability-specific groups to ensure we provide sufficient challenge to nurture their specific needs. However, some children do not make such rapid progress and continue being taught using the RWI programme into Year 2. Pupils are assessed every six weeks and groupings are fluid and flexible to ensure pupils are supported if they are struggling or accelerated if they grasp the taught sounds quickly. We have adopted the 'keep up not catch up' approach so any child who shows signs of struggling in a particular group is quickly identified for additional 1:1 catch-up phonics sessions.

If pupils are still not secure with the 44 phonemes as they enter Key Stage 2, or if their reading age, which is assessed at the start of the year, is significantly lower than their chronological age, they receive further support using one of the school's identified word reading intervention programmes (Lexia, WASP or Toe by Toe).

In Reception there is also a shared daily story time session, daily songs and a topic-related book to promote enjoyment and application of literacy skills within the EYFS environment with staff also encouraging children to use taught skills to read and write in a range of guided and independent contexts.

Comprehension

Pupils have opportunities to undertake shared, guided and independent reading throughout the school. Our English curriculum is approximately 80% text-based with the BGPS Core Book Spine being used as a guide to suggested high-quality texts for each year group's text-based English units.

Shared Reading:

Shared reading takes place within the English lesson; the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate, with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts that reflect the teaching objectives. Electronic texts are also available for shared reading.



Guided Reading:

Guided reading is taught daily either through small group carousel organisation or whole class teaching. Teachers plan using National Curriculum objectives and use the Reciprocal Reading approach to teach reading strategies as well as key skills such as: skimming and scanning.

During guided reading, the responsibility for reading shifts to the learner. During a guided reading session, the children read and respond to a challenging text with the teacher supporting.

Texts of graded difficulty are carefully chosen and matched to the reading ability of the group. It is intended that guided reading provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about reading and to further develop and extend their reading and comprehension skills. When not working with the teacher, pupils are set appropriately challenging tasks to improve their reading skills.

Individual Reading:

We do not use any one published scheme to teach reading; instead, we believe that it is important to provide pupils with a selection of reading books and experiences from different genres and subject matter, therefore we operate using 'book bands' in line with Oxford reading tree complemented by thematic books in classrooms. Children have access to a range of picture books, transition chapter books and longer reads to support the development of their individual reading skills and a diverse range of group reading books and a staged reading scheme are available both in the Key Stage 1 reading area and also the Key Stage 2 Learning Resource Centre.

Reading age tests are undertaken throughout the year to identify children who require extra support with their reading and subsequently, staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a Reading Journal where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading. Children have the opportunity to use books from the Learning Resource Centre for independent research.

The school also holds regular reading enrichment activities including author visits, reading challenges, an annual Book Week (in conjunction with World Book day), book fairs and off-curricular weeks such as Royal Shakespeare Week to further promote reading.



Approaches to Writing

To develop our children as writers we:

- treat children as writers, from the earliest stage, who have ideas that they will want to communicate, building on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment.
- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing.
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- use guided writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, amend and revise their writing.
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning.
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons.
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways.
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers.

(1) Approaches to Composition

Each year group, from Y2-6, plan units of work using the National Curriculum statutory guidance. These units cover each phase of the 'Writing Sequence'. All the units will be based on carefully chosen, high quality books/texts (taken from the BGPS Core Book Spine) and linked to wider curriculum topics where appropriate. Each English plan (usually lasting between 2-4 weeks) will cover outcomes for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing (including text, sentence and word level objectives). Each plan will also have several writing outcomes, each with a particular purpose and audience in mind.

Over the year, each year group will cover a balance of Narrative, Non-Fiction and Poetry text types. A clear set of end of year expectations are followed by each year group and incorporated into planning and assessment.

In each year group, English is taught by the class teacher; lessons follow the 'Talk for Writing' structure as well as ensuring independent learning along with a group guided session with the teacher and sometimes, a teaching assistant. The independent learning sessions are differentiated to meet the needs of the children. English is taught daily for approximately 1 hour as well as through other curriculum areas.

We have adopted the Talk for Writing philosophy that 'if children can't speak a sentence, they can't write a sentence.' Speaking and Listening forms a key element of the teaching sequence for writing and is incorporated throughout the teaching phases.



Talk for Writing involves making explicit the processes and thinking involved in the writing process so that ultimately, they can be internalised and applied by children in their own writing. Talk for Writing will be embedded in every phase of the 'Writing Sequence'. The main principles of Talk for Writing are:

- a) **Book-talk** - the extended opportunity to use talk to explore children's personal and collective responses to a text as readers.
- b) **Writer-talk** - the articulation of the thinking and creative processes involved in all stages of the act of writing; talk that helps children to think and behave like a writer (and consider themselves to be one).
- c) **Storytelling and story making** - involves the learning and repeating of oral stories, building children's confidence to develop them through telling and then extending that development into writing; later creating 'new' stories orally as a preparation and rehearsal for writing (through the sequence of: imitation, innovation and invention).
- d) **Non-fiction** - children will learn to write a variety of non-fiction texts both through the daily English lesson and the creative curriculum. These are writing to *explain, inform, entertain and persuade*. The four key components of teaching non-fiction through Talk for Writing across the curriculum are:
 - **Securing subject matter** – ensuring children become experts and enthusiasts in the topic;
 - **Imitation** – using a strong, shared text as a model from which children internalize the key language features;
 - **Innovation** – using the structure and language patterns of the model text for shared planning and writing in a new, but closely related context;
 - **Independent application** – children independently writing that text type in literacy lessons and across the curriculum.
- e) **Word and Language games** - talk games and activities are used to:
 - stimulate and develop vocabulary
 - 'warm up' the imagination, stimulate creative thinking
 - orally develop a character
 - orally develop a setting
- f) **Role-play and drama** - techniques from the Primary Framework are used regularly, such as: 'hot seating', 'conscience alley' and 'freeze-framing' etc...



(2) Approaches to Transcription (Spelling)

In Reception and Year 1, spelling patterns and GPCs are taught through the Read Write Inc Programme; this programme is in line with the National Curriculum for spelling and covers all content and objectives. However, teachers also plan daily spelling sessions to teach Reception and Year 1 common exception words from the statutory National Curriculum word lists and Year 1 pupils have an additional spelling session each day during Summer Term to ensure all National Curriculum objectives are secure.

From Year 2-Year 6, spelling is taught through the No Nonsense Spelling Programme, which covers all National Curriculum objectives. Children have daily, 15-minute, spelling lessons following the: assess & review, teach, practise, apply approach. Spellings are assessed on a weekly basis and error analysis is also used to identify specific weaknesses in individuals/groups/classes that are then addressed through quality first teaching and intervention if necessary.

Pupils are encouraged to 'have a go' at difficult spellings using a sheet in the front of their books and also have access to supporting resources in the classroom e.g. phonics sound charts, key word banks.

(3) Approaches to Handwriting

The school follows the '**Letter Join**' handwriting scheme, which is an online programme that provides a consistent approach to the teaching of each letter from the printing stage in Reception and Year 1 to pre-cursive in the Summer Term of Year 1 and into Year 2 and cursive in the Summer Term of Year 2 through to the end of Key Stage 2.

In Reception/Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are required to have daily, taught handwriting sessions whilst in lower KS2 (Years 3&4), to meet the additional demands of other aspects of the National Curriculum, this reduces to at least three sessions per week and two sessions in UKS2 (Years 5&6). However, if pupils are still not yet consistently joining, teachers must ensure that they receive, additional, targeted support through small group or one to one intervention. The needs of left handed children, or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention.

Handwriting begins in the EYFS with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early gross motor skills in Nursery and fine motor skills as they move into Reception. In these formative years, we believe that correct pencil grip, seating position and paper position are fundamental so are taught explicitly as part of the daily session.

The current Interim **Assessment Framework for Key Stage 2** requires pupils to '*maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed*'; therefore, at Barnard Grove Primary School, we have set high expectations that pupils will be able to consistently join their handwriting by the end of Year 3.



Cross-Curricular Links: 'Every lesson is a literacy lesson'

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links where relevant. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum, including planning several creative writing opportunities in every topic, ensuring that this writing has a purpose so that children understand the benefit of writing in these lessons.

ICT

Teachers are encouraged to use ICT to both enhance teaching and learning and also for pupils to present their writing in different ways. This is done through use of laptops for word processing and also iPad APPs to explore new ways to present work digitally, in different formats. Pupils who show specific weaknesses in fine motor skills (e.g. with a Dyspraxia diagnosis) also have access to laptops to word process longer pieces of work rather than handwriting.

Assessment and Target Setting

Work is assessed in line with the school's *Feedback and Marking and Assessment Policies*.

Teachers use developmental feedback in order to identify where children have included elements of the success criteria, set next steps targets and to give children the opportunity to revisit their work in order to make improvements.

Summative tests and teacher assessment information is also used to give 'snapshot' data, analyse trends and inform teaching and learning at key points in the year:

- Summative assessment is used at three Assessment Points throughout the year (split into 10-week blocks) in order to assess the children's Reading and Writing against the school's age-related outcomes and using summative tests. These assessments are regularly standardised during staff meeting time and moderated, each term, by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Reading ages are also assessed throughout Key Stage 2, three times per year, using the Salford Reading test; this information is then used to inform the Key Stage 2 Intervention Map for those pupils who may require additional support.
- Targets (cohort, class, group and individual) are generated as a result of formative and summative assessment information.
- Pupils in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 also take statutory SAT tests.



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Inclusion

At Barnard Grove, we teach English to all children, regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity or home background. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this (for further details see SEND policy):

- Children with identified SEND in English receive tailored support, in lessons, from Teaching Assistants;
- Children who are identified as having additional needs with reading, receive extra intervention;
- More able children in English are identified and challenged appropriately;
- Challenges for these gifted pupils are provided within English lessons or in addition through a range of wider opportunities e.g. More Able Writers' Workshops.

Parental Involvement

Parents can play a vital role in the development of English skills. We aim to foster a strong home-school partnership through bi-annual Teacher-Parent meetings where we celebrate pupils' successes and identify areas for improvement. Reading Journals are also used as a tool for communication between school and home. Half Termly Family Learning Projects always have reading and writing tasks and pupils are expected to learn spelling on a weekly basis as well. Many parents support our various enrichment events and also attend adult learning sessions delivered by the school e.g. phonics sessions.



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Role of Curriculum Team

The English Curriculum Team are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. This will involve:

- monitoring of pupil progress;
- conference with pupils regarding all areas of English;
- analysing data;
- monitoring the provision of English in line with the subject monitoring policy;
- taking the lead in policy development;
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD;
- purchasing and organising resources;
- keeping up to date with recent English developments;
- analysis of SATs results to identify areas for development;
- checking that assessment for English is carried out in line with the school's assessment policy

Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Reading, Spelling and Handwriting Policies
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Feedback and Marking Policy
- SEND Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy will be reviewed by staff and presented to governors for approval every three years.

Review Date: September 2020