

# Thaxted Primary School

## English Policy

---

|                             |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Policy Date:<br>Summer 2023 | Review Date:<br>Summer 2027 | Responsible Person: Headteacher<br>In Cooperation with: Subject Leader for English |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|

Thaxted Primary is an inclusive school. We take safeguarding very seriously and all of our policies are developed with a high priority on children's safety and in the light of our safeguarding policy. All of our school policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies. In particular, the English policy is linked to our Handwriting, Presentation and Marking & Feedback policies.

### **Intent**

---

At Thaxted Primary School, we nurture the 6Rs, which are lifelong skills: respect, responsibility, reflectiveness, resourcefulness and resilience.

We strive to provide a rich literature based education in English, which will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. We encourage the children to read for pleasure and enjoyment through literature, which supports language development, vocabulary and knowledge acquisition. Our Reading for Pleasure spines provide the opportunities for the children to grow culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We recognise that all the skills of language are essential in order for them to participate fully as a member of society.

As exemplified in The National Curriculum for English 2014, we aim to ensure 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.

### **Implementation**

---

English in the Foundation Stage is taught through the Communication and Language, and Literacy areas of the Early Learning Goals.

#### **Phonics and Early Reading**

The children in Reception and Key Stage 1 have a daily phonics session and are taught a systematic synthetic approach to phonics using Bug Club Phonics teaching sequence matched to the Bug Club reading scheme. We

supplement our teaching with PowerPoints designed by our Phonics Lead, actions (Bug Club actions) and phonic games, which we believe is rigorous, systematic and matches the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) sequence of the Bug Club approach. The progression achieves strong results for all pupils, including the most disadvantaged. Each class teacher uses the same format of teaching slides, actions and games to ensure fidelity to the scheme. Resource cards from Bug Club are used to support the teaching and for intervention sessions. All classes use the same resource materials and all staff are trained to use synthetic phonics. In addition, the children have log in details of how to access Bug Club online and teachers select books differentiated for each child's needs.

Phonics Tracker is used to monitor individual progress and opportunities are provided during the day for short, fun interventions with an adult to revisit GPCs which children may not be secure. Reading logs (Learning Diaries) and phonic assessment reading records are used for each child so that each adult working with the child can monitor progress.

Children are given a reading book, which is linked to the phonemes that they are learning at school or a book with a phoneme, which has been identified that the child needs to revisit. These reading books are fully decodable and link closely to the Bug Club phonics scheme. They slowly introduce the new GPCs as they are taught so that children can practise their newly acquired knowledge. Once children are reading fluently and proficiently, they will move away from the Bug Club books to a wider range of reading materials. All these books are coloured graded for progression purposes. These contain a variety of different reading schemes with a mixture of fiction and non-fiction materials.

We encourage children to read the book 3 times with an adult at home. The first read allows the child to practise decoding the words; the second read helps support reading fluency, whilst the final read enables them to read fluently, confidently and with expression. We also ensure that an adult listens to each child twice a week and some children will have daily reading practise.

Teachers read to the children daily and use a range of reading material to support lessons across the curriculum. Each classroom is equipped with a reading area containing a broad range of carefully selected texts. These texts are age appropriate, incorporate a range of genres and non-fiction books and have been purposely chosen to engage and inspire children's love of reading. Reception and Key Stage 1 staff have developed book cases with 30 influential books they will be using as part of their teaching and important for each child in the class to have read to them. This is reviewed yearly as new books are published. Reception children have a Tony Box for listening to stories and Year 6 read stories with the Reception children weekly. Children in KS1 visit Thaxted library termly where they take part in a library lesson planned and delivered by Essex library service staff alongside the teacher. Children are encouraged to borrow books from the library. There is also a well-stocked reading shed in the playground, which has a range of books for the children to read outside if they choose.

### **Guided Reading**

The children have group guided reading sessions with a teacher in Year 1 and Year 2 developing competence in word reading, fluency and comprehension. Trialling whole class reading in Year 2. The books are selected to introduce the children to worlds that both reflect their own as well as being able to see the world through the eyes of others. The texts they read help them to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually and socially. The children take a book home to read from the class or school library and can access Bug Club online.

A suggested reading spine is introduced from Year 2 and sets out a minimum of 6 books teachers will read to their classes over the course of a year – changed half termly. Each book will be read for a minimum of 15 minutes per

day and will feature as part of two whole class guided reading sessions a week. The other whole class guided reading sessions will be linked texts. Linked either to the class text or to other areas of the curriculum. Poetry forms part of the linked texts and will be covered as part of English lessons. These books can change as new titles emerge in bookshops and in line with our work on reflecting diversity in school.

## **Developing Fluency and Comprehension KS2**

*'Reading fluency can be defined as reading with accuracy, automaticity and prosody. When pupils read fluently, their cognitive resources can be redirected from focusing on decoding and onto comprehending a text. For this reason, fluency is sometimes described as a bridge from word recognition to comprehension.'* (Herts for Learning for Education Endowment Foundation)

From Year 3, the children take part in whole class guided reading sessions five times per week. We use, The Teaching Booth model created by Ashley Booth to develop comprehension skills. The children access a range of stories, poems and non-fiction and high-quality discussions about the texts with a teacher. In these sessions, there will be a mixture of reading practices: Tracking whilst an adult reads, individual reading, echo reading, partner reading and Reader's Theatre. We have access to Literacy Shed to supplement the Ashley Booth resources and to ensure that the linked texts complement our curriculum cycles for teaching and learning. This ensures that the children are reading texts across all the curriculum subjects. Both use VIPERs, which is an acronym developed by Rob Smith, to aid the recall of the six reading domains of the NC assessment framework. VIPERS support the children's development in six areas: vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation (of authorial intent or impact on reader), retrieval, summarising and sequencing. The children will also get regular opportunities to read to themselves as well as listening to an adult read carefully selected class novels from our reading spines.

Alongside this, we have invested greatly in reading resources to support and supplement our teaching. These include KS2 class and group sets of books, high quality class texts for daily shared class reading influenced by the work of Doug Lemov and 'The 5 Plagues of a Developing Reader'. This ensures that we are exposing our children to: archaic language, non-linear time sequences, narrative complexity, figurative and symbolic texts and resistant texts. Juniper (Essex) Library Service supplement our reading stock; providing us with a broad range of texts that help to foster and develop a love of reading as well as supporting and extending learning across the curriculum.

To promote a love of reading and reading for pleasure, we have implemented a 'Superhero Reading Rewards' system which rewards independent reading, paired reading and reading at home. The children collect bookmarks for each of the five superheroes and a reading certificate. From year 3 to year 6 the children need to complete five tasks to achieve each superhero bookmark and they receive house points. The tasks are designed so that a bookmark can be achieved each half term, five in total over the year. On completion, children can choose a book of their choice. As the children get older, the tasks become more varied and include a discussion with the Headteacher about their favourite books.

## **Planning for speaking and listening, reading and writing**

To ensure effective coverage of the national curriculum for English, we use the Jonathan Bond Planning Tool for English. It contains all the content from the English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2. This document provides smaller learning steps based on the broad learning objectives and more detailed progression. Furthermore, it suggests additional objectives where gaps or weaknesses have been identified from research findings since that date. Following the structure of the National Curriculum, The English Kit is divided up into four key areas. It is then subdivided into sixteen strands.

| Spoken Language  | Reading  | Writing   | Transcription  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Drama</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming a reader</li> <li>• Word Reading</li> <li>• Fluency</li> <li>• Comprehension</li> <li>• Becoming a Researcher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Composing</li> <li>• Evaluating</li> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Handwriting and Presentation</li> </ul> |

Teachers create medium term plans using the 'Curriculum in terms' folder. This folder contains a document for each year group containing every objective for that year group in terms. The objectives are divided into those to teach throughout the year, and those to teach in the autumn, spring and summer terms. There are two additional folders: Curriculum in year groups and Curriculum in strands. The latter contains all of the objectives in their respective strands so progression in each can clearly be seen. These are particularly useful for teachers with mixed age classes.

A long-term overview for English details the texts used and details when in the year specific genres and text types will be taught. This ensures breadth and progression across year groups especially in mixed age groups.

Weekly planning ensures that teachers plan for specific needs of the class and ensure that objectives are broken down into smaller steps. The main teaching focus and learning outcomes are clear and how any additional adults may be used. All staff use the same planning formats and are monitored by the English co-ordinator and SLT.

### Spoken Language

Speaking is at the heart of all learning, and adults model ambitious vocabulary through play and their everyday interactions with the children. Skilful questioning develops the children's thinking skills and encourages them to begin problem solving. Children are encouraged to ask why things happen and to explain their thinking. Oracy teaching includes the range of skills involved in all types of speech situations. These include collaborative problem solving, guiding or teaching another person, listening sensitively to another's experience, and interviewing (and being interviewed) as well as public speaking, debate and dramatic role-playing.

In the Foundation Stage, spoken language is developed through providing the children with a wide range of opportunities, such as role-play, listening to songs and stories, recounting events and activities to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and to build their relationships with adults and with each other.

### Writing

The teaching and learning of writing at Thaxted Primary School focuses on developing pupils' competence in **transcription** (spelling and handwriting) and **composition** (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) as exemplified in The National Curriculum for English 2014.

Producing writing is a complex process and therefore the children are supported to use a number of different strategies to support **composition**, including pre-writing activities; drafting, editing and revising; sharing writing and peer marking and assessing. The children are taught these strategies through modelling and structured support, which is gradually reduced as the children become more capable of completing the activity independently.

Teachers use shared, modelled and guided writing to support pupils and strategies from Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing, e.g. 'boxing-up'.

The children are encouraged to say aloud what they are going to write about and compose sentences orally before writing. They are encouraged to re-read what they have written to either an adult, learning partner or other pupils. Sentence stems and vocabulary are discussed beforehand and are displayed on the working wall. Teachers use 'thinking aloud' as a strategy to show the children how they collect ideas, draft and re-read to check for meaning and accuracy. Children reflect on their writing and write a short comment to explain what they have worked on or what they think has worked well.

We believe that reading is fundamental for children to develop as writers and therefore, texts are used as models for effective language, grammar and vocabulary. We hope that the pupils will draw on and use new vocabulary from their reading, their discussions in whole class, one-to-one, guided reading and from their wider experiences.

The children are encouraged to write for different audiences and purposes and teachers try to find creative ways to do this by either linking with a real event, a visitor in school, a fictional event related to the story the children are reading or their curriculum topic. Teachers have access to Literacy Shed Plus for texts, videos and teaching ideas along with other published schemes like Hamilton and Cornerstones.

Drama and role-play provides opportunities for pupils to develop and order their ideas through playing roles and improvising scenes in various settings.

In the Foundation Stage, writing is taught in an environment that encourages children to develop their writing skills in a variety of play and role-play situations that match their interest. They observe adults writing for a purpose and join the adult in scribed writing. They are taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds and to write short sentences in meaningful contexts. They are given the opportunity to regularly practise the correct formation of other letter shapes.

**Transcription** refers the physical processes of handwriting or typing and spelling. Purposeful practice supported by effective feedback is required to develop fluency. Our handwriting guidelines revised in September 2022 promotes the value of presentation and supports the development of a fluent, legible and eventually speedy handwriting.

The children are taught how to spell words quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. In developing this skill, children learn to write down ideas with fluency and pace. Our spelling document revised in September 2023 supports teachers in their planning and explicit teaching of spelling. We use the Jonathan Bond Planning Tool, which divides the spelling objectives from the statutory appendix into year groups and a teaching order. Our school document aligns this to the National Curriculum Rules and Guidance as this contains helpful explanations for some of the rules and exceptions. We support the teaching and learning using Spelling Shed resources. Each lesson has a main objective from the National Curriculum for spelling, which then maybe split into multiple bullet points. Each lesson has a number of modular components, which can be taught as a single lesson or split into a number of sessions to be delivered over a week. A set of words are provided as examples of the spelling pattern and these will be printed for the children and put into Learning Diaries for practise at home. Children revisit sounds and spelling patterns from earlier weeks in the scheme. The independent section can be given to the pupils as an additional session or as a homework task. A range of activities, games, spelling strategies are provided, and children can access these at home with their own logins. Morphology and etymology are both taught explicitly in the lessons. Morphology is the study of words and their parts, e.g. dis- /agree / -ment and a morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning. For example, dis- is a prefix added

before the base word; -ment is a suffix added after the base word. Etymology is the study of a word or word parts by tracing the word back to its historical roots over time.

Children are given spelling rules related to the statutory appendix in week 1 and common exception words from the statutory spelling lists are given to the children in week 2 along with any personal spellings identified through individual writing. Topic words may be added to these word lists. The children are tested each week on their spellings. Teachers are encouraged to give pupils opportunities to apply and practise their spellings by writing simple dictated sentences that include words taught.

## **Homework**

---

All children have access to a book to take home and read at home. Children record their reading in a learning diary, which they bring to school each day. Parents are encouraged to sign this and record for younger children. When 'Superhero' activities have been completed teachers, learning support staff and parents initial that they have seen the activity. Other online reading resources are shared with the children. Active Learn Bug Club can be accessed from home for Key Stage 1 children and accessible for some children using Bug Club in Key Stage 2. Spellings are given to the children weekly in their learning diaries and parents are encouraged to support their children with practising and learning these. The Spelling Shed App is a resource with games and activities to support children at home along with other online spelling resources. Children from Year 2 to Year 5 have a writing homework book and are given writing tasks to complete each week. The teacher and children respond to these tasks in class.

## **Children with SEND**

---

All children are encouraged to take an active part in English lessons. Children with SEND have One Plan targets and some may have WPS booklets with specific targets identified. Teaching and learning is carefully adapted and differentiated for some children with SEND. The teacher through structured tasks, adapted activities, resources and learning support staff for some pupils, provides support for these children. They may also complete additional activities outside of the English lessons as part of an intervention programme or precision teaching support.

## **Assessment and Record keeping Procedures**

---

Throughout the year teachers, make ongoing formative assessments about a pupil's knowledge and skills, as outlined in the National Curriculum for English; these assessments inform next lessons and future planning, teaching and learning.

Pupils' progress and achievements are:

- Monitored by careful observation of their performance and attainment related to the expectations for their year group;
- Moderated through analysis of samples of work by staff both within and across Key Stages;
- Discussed at length at Pupil Progress Meetings;
- Addressed and actioned through the creation of termly Class Action Plans.

Children's awareness of their individual progress is developed through self-evaluation, discussion, marking and feedback throughout the year. Teachers use their ongoing assessments to make a summative judgement about whether a child is 'working towards', 'expected' or 'at greater depth' in line with the national curriculum for their year group. Progress and attainment are logged termly on Target Tracker. Assessment information is used to

inform the teacher of interventions or 'catch up' programmes that may be needed. Pupil progress is discussed in termly meetings and is communicated to the next teacher.

Teachers record the outcomes of formative and summative assessments using National Curriculum checklists, which are in the front of the child's English book. Mid-way through the year, a child's attainment in English is reported to parents in their annual report and achievements against targets summarised at the end of the year. Children are formally assessed using optional reading SATs in year 2 and external tests in year 6.

White booklets called 'Phonics and Spelling Records' are used in EYFS to record individual children's attainment in reading and spelling. These white booklets also contain assessment sheets for phonics and tricky words in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, teachers hold word lists for Years 3 & 4 and 5 & 6 and keep a record of children's progress in reading and spelling these words. Reading tests are carried out termly using Bug Club reading assessments in KS1 and Rising Stars in KS2. At the beginning of the academic year, a group reading test is carried out to determine standardised reading scores and ages and this supports decisions about which colour banded books children will be placed on as appropriate for the stage of reading fluency. Group and whole class guided reading assessment grids to record outcomes from lessons for individual children.

In Foundation Stage, children are assessed continuously throughout the year in line with the EYFS Framework using observations of child-initiated activities and professional judgement against the age bands of the EYFS curriculum. Baseline assessment is carried out at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year pupils are assessed whether they are working at an emerging, expected or exceeding level with the Early Learning Goals. A Foundation Stage child's attainment in English is reported to parents in their annual report at the end of a school year.

## **Links to other policies or guidance**

---

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- WHAT book
- Inclusion/SEND Policy
- Marking and Feedback
- The National Curriculum for English 2014
- The Reading Framework July 2023
- The Oracy Skills Framework

## **Review Procedure**

---

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school Policy Schedule. See table at beginning of policy for review date.