



Otterbourne Church of England Primary School

Trust, Respect and Determination

## English Teaching and Learning Approach

### *Curriculum intent*

*A high-quality education in English 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. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development.'*

- National Curriculum, 2014

### **English at Otterbourne CE Primary School**

#### **Our Intent**

Our ambitious English curriculum forms a key part of learning at Otterbourne CE Primary School. High quality texts are central to this curriculum as they develop a love of reading and desire to write within the children. We believe that teaching and learning cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach and so our text led English Curriculum has been shaped by our vision to enable all children, regardless of background ability or additional needs, to flourish and become the very best version of themselves they can possibly be. During their time at our school, children will be exposed to a wide range of carefully chosen, culturally diverse, high-quality texts including picture books, novels, films, information texts and poetry. Where possible, these are related to the 'Pillars of our Curriculum' ensuring that children at Otterbourne develop a secure understanding of Sustainability and Change, Diversity and Equality and Aspiration and Well-being.

In order to support depth of thinking and learning and develop children's speaking and listening skills, we have a discursive approach to English; texts are discussed in detail and children's thoughts and opinions are listened to and valued. This allows a vocabulary rich environment where communication and language is able to be developed.

We teach the National Curriculum supported by a clear skills and knowledge progression. This ensures that skills and knowledge are built on year by year and sequenced appropriately to maximise learning for all children. The complexity of the high quality texts will increase as the children move up through the school allowing them to develop the skills appropriately. At

Otterbourne, we believe that children learn best when the learning is motivating and meaningful. Therefore, careful links are made across the curriculum to ensure that children's English learning is relevant and, wherever possible, links our reading and writing in other subjects such as geography, history and science and to first-hand experiences. It is our intention, therefore, that skills are taught in a purposeful way where they are able to be applied into writing outcomes.

At Otterbourne CE Primary School, children will be exposed to a bespoke, language rich, creative and progressive English curriculum which will not only enable them to become primary literate, but will also develop a love of reading, a deeper understanding and appreciation of the world around them and the ability to question others and develop their own informed points of view.

## **Aims**

Our aim is for every child to:

- Develop and use literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Be given the opportunity to develop a love of reading, and to become an efficient and effective reader.
- Write well in a fluent style and be able to communicate meaning effectively to a wide range of audiences, and for a wide range of purposes.
- Speak confidently to a range of audiences and for a variety purposes, and to listen effectively.

## **Implementation**

Our long-term plans for both reading and writing are based on carefully selected texts which increase in complexity and allow children to make connections and develop their understanding of our **English five golden threads**:

<b>Diversity and Representation</b>	<b>Fiction</b>	<b>Non-fiction</b>	<b>Poetry</b>	<b>Heritage/ Archaic Language</b>
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### Reading

In EYFS and year 1, we teach daily phonics sessions using Bug Club where children learn the relationship between the sounds of the spoken language and the letters or groups of the written language. As they master this and their fluency develops, we support children in understanding what they have read, encouraging them to look for 'clues' to develop their

inference skills.

As the children move up through key stage two, teaching focuses on deepening comprehension skills, developing an understanding of authorial intent and identifying how language, grammar and punctuation all contribute to meaning.

In Year R there is a focus on reading individually with children before moving to reading more frequently in groups as they move to KS1. Meanwhile, children in KS2 are exposed to more whole-class teaching of reading. All children's reading is supported by the high quality texts in our curriculum (linked to the five golden threads) which offer further scope for developing and applying skills.

Class story time (where the teachers read to the children) is held in high regard and timetabled at least three times a week. Each class (Year R to 4) has a weekly scheduled library time which allows them to choose and read books for pleasure and our older children (Years 5-6) are given the freedom to use the library whenever they need to change their books. In addition to this, each class has a book corner where children are further invited to explore and select books. KS2 children always have a class reading book available which they can access in quiet reading time. Children are expected to read at home at least five times a week. This is closely monitored and is rewarded through the use of house points. Reads are recorded in Reading Diaries (Years R to 4) and, in order to develop independence and maintain enthusiasm, this extends to Boom Reader (Years 5-6). Both are checked regularly by teachers.

### Writing

At Otterbourne, our writing curriculum is based on high-quality texts, linked to our five golden threads, which have been carefully chosen to engage and inspire our children. We also build on children's first hand experiences so that writing journeys are motivating and meaningful. We employ a three-phase model when teaching writing where children are able to move from investigating the texts as readers to producing high-quality outcomes as writers. **Phase 1 (Ideas and Vocabulary)** is used to motivate the children, share and spread ideas and provide high-level and purposeful vocabulary. Ensuring our classrooms are language-rich environments builds our children's vocabulary and help them to 'feel' like writers. In **Phase 2 (Skills)** children learn and develop the skills they need to create quality outcomes. This is often supported by use of a WAGOLL. In **Phase 3 (Application)** children produce their final, well-crafted piece of writing, applying the skills they have previously learned. Children are actively encouraged to edit, refine and evaluate their writing and, in key stage 2, children miss a line out to provide active editing space.

From the outset, each writing unit has a clear form and purpose which is shared with the children so that the children's writing experiences are meaningful and the children can really

see themselves as 'writers'. In Y3/4 this develops into include Audience and in Y5/6 the children identify the Form, Audience, Purpose and Viewpoint. To ensure independence is developed over time, children are offered 2<sup>nd</sup> outcomes or 'site-of-application' writing opportunities where they can apply previously learnt skills in a new context. We teach our children that their writing books should be something to be proud of, showing steady progress, imagination, hard-work and creativity.

Throughout the three-phase learning journey, teachers are implementing our teaching and learning approach, 'Alive', which encompasses the 5 key objectives of teaching and learning at Otterbourne:

- ▶ **Assessment for Learning - challenge, scaffolds and managing misconceptions** (this is highlighted on our English unit overviews, these should be evident in the classroom)
- ▶ **Learning Journey – what it builds on and what it builds towards** (as highlighted on the English unit overviews)
- ▶ **Intention led - clear objectives and success criteria** (learning objectives are shared in all lessons and success criteria are given in **Phase 3** of the writing process)
- ▶ **Vocabulary – on display and understood**
- ▶ **Environment – working walls, layouts, adults, resources** (working walls always include a WAGOLL, vocabulary and SPAG support).

Feedback is an important part of writing lessons and we encourage and teach children to edit and improve their work in response to both whole class, peer and teacher feedback. Success criteria are provided for the final outcome pieces so that children can assess themselves and the teachers can provide feedback on the next steps. (Please see feedback policy for more information).

### *Handwriting*

Children follow the school's handwriting scheme which allows them to develop a fluent, cursive style. From September 2025, children in Year R, 1 and 2 are following Kinetic Letters, which places a high focus on making bodies stronger and correct pencil hold before learning the letters. This scheme will follow the children through the school so, from September 2026 children in Year 3 will be using kinetic letters.

The rest of the school are continuing to follow the original Otterbourne CE Primary School handwriting approach to ensure consistency in letter formation and progression. Once children have learnt how to form letters in Year R and 1, they move onto cursive handwriting in Year 2. In Key Stage 1 children write in pencil, which allows for easy erasing. In Key Stage 2, children can choose whether they would like to work in pen or pencil. Teachers will have discussions with the children about which implement supports the smoothness and speed of the writing. For children who struggle with handwriting, teachers use handwriting book lines (KS2) or kinetic letter tree branch prompts, as a scaffold in English books.

## Spelling

High value is placed on spelling across the school. Spellings, linked to our SSP (Bug Club) are learnt and sent home from Year 1.

In order to embed and further develop children's phonics across the school, children in Year 2 to Year 6 are being taught using our 5-day spelling approach.



Through this approach, all children's spellings explore a particular phoneme each week. All 44 phonemes are revisited each year as spellings develop further in complexity. Whilst building on early phonic work, this approach also embeds 3 main spelling rules that children can not learn as a one off: SWAP, DOUBLE, DROP. It also reduces high cognitive load of learning all spelling by rules. Children are taught to use syllables and sound buttons all the way through school developing their skills of segmenting. Through this approach, children's understanding of phonology is combined with developing word-building and morphology – children understand how words are formed. On a Friday, children get tested through sentence dictations so that spellings are being practiced in the context of a sentence.

Spelling is also reinforced in every writing unit where relevant statutory words are identified and taught in context. Teachers pick up on misspelt words in children's writing and children are encouraged to write these out correctly in purple pen as part of responding to teacher's marking. Children are taught how to use dictionaries and have free access to these in class so that by Year 5/6 they are able to independently check and correct misspelt words as part of the editing process.

### Intended impact

- Children leave us with a broader cultural capital, a deeper understanding and appreciation of the world around them and the ability to question others and develop their own informed points of view.
- Children develop a love of reading and writing and appreciate how both of these skills

can deepen their experiences of the world.

- Children have an ability to communicate to a wide range of audiences for a variety of purposes.
- The % of children working at ARE within each year group will be at least in line with national averages.
- The % of children working at Greater Depth within each year group will be at least in line with national averages.
- Pupil premium children will make good progress from their starting points and the gap between them and others is narrowed

## **Subject Organisation**

English is taught daily and frequent cross curricular opportunities are given for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. English teaching includes modelled, shared and guided work, alongside independent activities that reinforce and move learning forward. English is taught both discretely and alongside other curriculum areas, with a text-led approach.

## **Areas of English provision are as follows:**

### **1. Reading Provision**

#### **EYFS**

- Daily phonics sessions
- Reading three times a week with an adult
- Each week's learning is underpinned by a high-quality text
- One-to-one small group work with an adult
- Reading is regularly modelled by an adult, with lots of book talk

#### **KS1**

- In year 1, daily synthetic phonic sessions through the use of Bug Club – children are grouped according to which sounds they know and assessed every 6 weeks
- In KS1, Guided Reading sessions take place four times a week and follow the 'Three-reads fluency model' which allows the children to practice decoding, develop

fluency and comprehension using decodable books which match the child's reading level.

## '3 reads' approach for early readers in KS1 and KS2

Focus		Detail
First read	<b>Decoding</b>	Application of GPCs closely matched to those learnt so far - opportunity to apply taught phonics in context Encourage decoding and blending. Draw attention to previous sounds / alternative graphemes etc
Second read	<b>Fluency</b>	A chance to read again. Familiarity should enable more reading by sight and less reliance on decoding and blending. Reading with fluency includes use of: <b>intonation, expression, appropriate pace, prosody</b> Adult could model reading with fluency and children 'echo read' ie read aloud themselves with same intonation / expression
Third read	<b>Comprehension</b>	Demonstrating understanding of what has been read through questioning / discussion about events / characters etc
Further reads as required ...	<b>AfL</b>	Does the child need more than 3 reads to achieve fluency and comprehension? Balance number of reads with engagement vs need for success

- In KS1, children also have daily teacher reading time where the class reading book exposes children to high quality texts.
- Reading records are checked weekly to ensure children are reading at least x 5 per week at home. House points are given when this happens.
- Weekly library visits where children choose two books to share at home

### KS2

- We teach three whole-class guided reading sessions per week. One of these focuses on developing reading for pleasure and is named a 'reading recommendation' session. This develops excitement around books and authors and supports children to develop a reading identity. Children and teachers have the opportunity to share books they have enjoyed reading and recommend them to their peers. The other two sessions focus on developing fluency and comprehension.
- Children are expected to read at least 5 times a week at home. This is recorded in their reading diary in Y3/4. In Year 5/6, the children have a 'book of books' reading journal to record books they have read and to respond to them in their own way. This is shared in the reading recommendation session.

- There is regular reading and discussion of a class novel which we aim to have multiple copies of, allowing children to immerse themselves in the story whilst developing fluency and comprehension.
- Children in Y3/4 have weekly library visits to change their books. Children in Y5/6 are able to change books whenever they need to.

Reading is at the heart of our English curriculum. Our long-term plans contains core set of high-quality texts for each year group and outline full curriculum coverage.

### **How we identify children who are falling behind in reading**

Our lowest 20% of readers are monitored carefully throughout the school. In Year R and Year 1, regular assessments in class ensure that children who are not keeping up are provided with extra support in small groups or 1:1. Results of the Y1 phonics test are analysed carefully and those children who do not pass are put onto our SSP catch-up programme (Rapid Phonics) which supports the children still requiring phonics in years 2-6. Our lowest 20% also read more frequently with an adult to develop fluency, are provided scaffold tasks to complete in class or have the reading scaffolded for them by a peer or adult.

The KS1 reading test and TESTBASE tests in Years 3-5 also allow us to further monitor progress and children with a standardised score of less than 100 are also given support as part of our lowest 20%. Children's reading speed is assessed termly and those with a reading speed of below 110 WCPM continue to be supported with reading fluency.

## **2. Writing Provision**

### **EYFS**

- Letter formation using Kinetic Letters
- Spelling is practiced daily as part of Bug Club Phonics
- Opportunities for writing are child-initiated and regular, intricately tied into the topic

### **Year 1**

- Building writing skills gradually: Autumn 1 focus on transcription skills (letter

formation and applying phonics), Autumn 2 focuses on transcription skills and oral composition whilst Spring Term onwards develop children's written composition skills.

- Use of weekly text drivers to promote excitement around books and encourage writing as part of continuous provision. This builds up to two-week units towards the end of the year.
- Sentence dictations as part of Bug Club

### **Year 2 and KS2**

- All NC objectives are taught through our text drivers in daily English lessons – see long term plans for coverage and progression. Units are 2-3 weeks long.
- Additional writing opportunities are provided in other areas of our curriculum; we aim for children to be writing every day.

Our detailed long-term plans for writing outline key skills and objectives to be taught from the National Curriculum as well as the genres and text types to be covered. Short term (Unit plans) include which objectives are taught from which text, building on prior learning.

### **Editing**

Children are explicitly taught the skills of editing as part of the whole writing journey, not just at the end of a piece of work. We have an editing progression document in place which outlines the editing skills that should be taught in each year group. In KS1, the children have a set of 'Must Haves' that they are taught to check for when they write. In KS2, children have 'Every Piece, Every Time' expectations to check against. Editing skills are built around editing stations, which develop in each year group:

Year 1: Grammar Garden & Spelling Square

Year 2: Grammar Garden, Spelling Square and Punctuation Point

Year 3/4: Grammar Garden, Spelling Square, Punctuation Point and Vocabulary Valley

Year 5/6: Grammar Garden, Spelling Square, Punctuation Point, Vocabulary Valley and Impact Island.

Teacher modelling is used to teach editing and teaching focuses on one editing skill at a time to support cognitive load and embed understanding.

Children are taught to use Monkey Talk (hands over ears) to help them read their writing back to themselves and Spelling Spyglass to correct spellings (reading from the bottom right to the top left).

## **Handwriting**

Children are taught to achieve a clear legible style with correctly formed letters, develop flow and speed and to understand the relationship between swift handwriting and spelling. The children learn flicks in Year R and Year 1 and are taught to join in Year 2 or 3, when they are ready. Handwriting is taught discretely, alongside spellings, with direct teaching particularly in Year R and Key Stage 1. In Year R, first handwriting is linked to the letter sounds they are learning in phonics using Kinetic Letters. Pupils who are having difficulties with handwriting receive specific support and teaching to meet their needs – bubble writing is used as an intervention from Year 3 upwards.

All teachers from Year R to Year 6 teach handwriting by modelling using the class visualizer. This allows pencil grip to be modelled as well as positioning and sizing of the letters on the lines in the handwriting book. The children practice what is modelled. Children are taught to:

- use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip, using support grips if necessary
- form lower case letters correctly in a way that will be easy to join later ie with flicks out from the letter
- form consistent letters in size and proportion and the spacing between letters and words is in place.
- when appropriate, practise and use the four basic handwriting joins
  - Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ai, ar, un
  - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders eg 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
- use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required (Y3 upwards, beginning in Year 2)

- build up speed, particularly for notes, drafts, lists

Children are encouraged to use neat handwriting in all of their writing and are expected to consistently write with care and control, appropriate to their handwriting ability and age.

### **Phonics and Spelling**

Phonics is taught using the SSP (Systematic, Synthetic Phonics) phonics programme, Bug Club. Phonics lessons are taught daily in Year R and Year 1. Year 2 and Key Stage 2, children are being taught with a phoneme focus whilst also following the expectations outlined in the National Curriculum spelling appendix for the appropriate year group. Spellings are learnt in a variety of ways including word sorts, splitting them into syllables, using sound buttons, identifying misspellings and practicing their weekly word lists at home. Weekly spelling dictations are administered by the class teacher and progress is monitored using a termly SWST.

Children are encouraged to become independent in their spelling and are taught how to use dictionaries, working walls, word banks and thesauruses to support this. High frequency words are corrected as a matter of course appropriate to the age and stage of the children. Vocabulary is a high priority as part of our English lessons and new vocabulary is specifically taught – we want our children to leave our school ‘vocabulary-rich’.

### **Oracy**

Children are taught to develop their competence in spoken language and listening to enhance the effectiveness with which they are able to communicate across a range of contexts and to a range of audiences. English lessons provide opportunities to work in groups of different sizes – in pairs, small groups, large groups and as a whole class. In Phase 1 of our 3 phase writing process (ideas and vocabulary) children are provided with opportunities for drama and discussion. When planning for Oracy, objectives are taken from our speaking and listening progression document ‘Communicating the Curriculum’. These have been planned in progressively across as part of our English Long Term Maps across the school. Pupils are taught how to take turns and when and how to participate constructively in conversations and debates. There is a focus on increasing pupils’ vocabulary, ranging from describing their

immediate world and feelings to developing a broader, deeper and richer vocabulary to discuss abstract concepts and a wider range of topics, and to enhancing their knowledge about language as a whole.

In addition, we aim to provide children with a range of first-hand experiences for developing confidence in speaking skills through leading a range of church services during their time at school and through planning and delivering Wild Worship services to a younger audience in Y5/6.

### **Special Educational Needs** (See SEND and inclusion policy)

Children with specific speech and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought when appropriate. Children with difficulties in reading and writing will be given appropriate support within the classroom as well as additional support outside the classroom, if necessary. At Otterbourne, we support children with their reading and writing in different ways, including booster groups, individualised programmes and extra reading sessions.

Children with specific needs, and children who are considered more able, have their needs addressed by scaffolding and differentiation where necessary, however we have high expectations of all children, and believe 'no child should be left behind'. Therefore, all children follow the same texts and are included in all lessons, from the same starting point. Opportunities for extended and sustained writing are the main outcome for every learning journey.

Various intervention programmes operate when appropriate and advice from the SENDCO is sought when necessary. Provision maps identify which children require specific intervention programmes and how much support is in place.

### **Role of the Subject Leader (including monitoring)**

The English subject leader and Early Reading lead work closely together to:

- Raise standards of English and literacy across the school.
- Monitor, observe and review planning, teaching and learning.
- Liaise with to identify steps to be taken in weak areas after each assessment period

- Lead and developing English provision in the school.
- Provide guidance and support to staff
- Keeping up to date on current initiatives and updating staff.
- Organising and maintaining English resources and maintaining a list of English resources available to staff.
- Leading INSET and staff meetings/training for staff in all areas of English and Literacy teaching.
- Regularly reporting to governors

### **Resources**

All classrooms have a wide range of English resources to aid the teaching and learning of English. These include Bug Club phoneme charts for all classrooms. With support of parents, in KS2 we aim to have a copy of every guided reading text per pair, plus extra for pupil premium children. The English Subject Leader should be informed of any resources in need of replacement or any missing resources.

### **Home/School Partnership**

We recognise that the role of the family is central in supporting the child's language development as a speaker, reader and writer. Therefore, the support and encouragement of parents in the teaching of English is sought and valued. Children take home books that they can share and enjoy with their parents. Children are expected to read at home at least three times per week for 10-20 minutes a night. They have a home/school reading diary in which the children parents are encouraged to write. Regular reading is rewarded in school with house points.

Date: September 2025

Review date: September 2026