

# HOLDEN LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## English Policy

**Date: September 2023**  
**Review Date: September 2024**

## **Rationale**

At Holden Lane Primary School, we aim to deliver a high quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe that the teaching and learning of English provides pupils with the foundation for the development of skills needed for them to access all areas of the school's curriculum, working both independently and collaboratively and that the development of English skills is central to improving a child's life chances. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school.

This policy outlines our philosophies about how we teach English and how it is embedded in the wider curriculum.

## **Aims**

Our aim is to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences which encourage pupils to become enthusiastic, confident and independent users of language both in the spoken and written form.

Therefore, we will:

- Set high expectations so pupils achieve their full potential.
- Develop confidence, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm to maintain a love of reading, writing and discussion for pleasure in order to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually and socially.
- Promote and facilitate progression and application of both skills and knowledge within speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Create a safe environment for pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively with confidence.

As part of their education at Holden Lane Primary School, we aim for pupils to:

- Have the confidence to speak clearly, expressing their ideas through the provision of purposeful opportunities for them to present their learning in a variety of contexts, including the use of ICT where appropriate.
- Learn in a language-rich environment which supports the development and eagerness to explore and extend their vocabulary.
- Make progress to becoming a correct speller, using neat, legible, joined handwriting.
- Decode and recognise sight words, reading with fluency and expression, in order to comprehend age-appropriate texts.
- Read with purpose to develop research skills, enabling them to succeed in their learning of the wider school curriculum.
- Acquire an interest in reading and be eager to read for their own enjoyment, developing a preference for certain genres and authors.
- Write clearly, accurately and with fluency for a range of purposes, developing their imagination and critical awareness.
- Develop a good understanding of the features of different genres and write in a variety of styles.
- Self-assess and refine their own writing and support other pupils through peer assessment.
- Understand how grammar and punctuation is used, progressively building on the skills taught and applying this knowledge when reading and writing.

## **Statutory Requirements**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

The English programme of study is based on four areas;

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

We use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised to teach phonics skills and as a basis for our spelling curriculum before moving onto Twinkl spelling. We introduce pre-cursive handwriting in Year 1 and this is developed through the Letterjoin handwriting sequence.

## **Teaching and Learning of English**

English teaching at Holden Lane Primary School adopts a text-based approach which exposes pupils to a variety of texts and genres. Key skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are developed and consolidated upon before pupils are stretched and challenged through a range of learning opportunities.

- Teaching and learning styles will reflect and support the overall development of English with an emphasis on modelled, shared and guided writing.
- A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used to provide all children with the opportunity to develop their skills.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to work within a variety of learning situations, including whole class work, guided work, small group work, paired work and independent work.
- Differentiated and challenging learning activities will be provided to support and extend all pupils.
- Drama and role play will be used to widen understanding of the texts being studied in English and across the curriculum.
- Support staff work with groups and individual pupils of all abilities.

## **Phonics**

See separate policy.

## **Approaches to Reading**

At Holden Lane Primary School, we aim to foster a love of reading for pleasure, encouraging pupils to be self-motivated readers. All pupils have access to the library which provides a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. These books are sorted into categories and each class has library time during each half term.

All reading scheme books are banded to ensure children have access to reading age appropriate texts which support and challenge. The reading scheme has been updated and now includes a range of Bug Club books which all pupils can also access online.

Pupils read in a variety of contexts, including one-to-one reading with a member of staff, whole class guided reading lessons, paired reading, whole class reading of a text during English lessons and through the sharing of class texts (teacher read).

During English lessons, pupils have the opportunity to listen to, read and comment on fiction texts, non-fiction texts and poetry. Shared texts used across the curriculum ensure that pupils are exposed to a breadth of different learning opportunities.

Guided reading in Years 2 to 6 is taught to the whole class using Rising Stars Cracking Comprehension resources. Over a three-week cycle, pupils read poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts with a focus on the following skills; reading fluently, listening, vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, sequencing and summarising. Opportunities are provided for pupils to read and discuss texts as part of the class, in a small group, with a partner and independently.

Pupils requiring additional support to progress their reading skills read daily with a member of staff, providing them with an opportunity to discuss their reading. Other pupils read on a one-to-one basis with a staff member throughout the week.

### **Parental Engagement in Reading**

Pupils in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to read at home, beginning with picture books to aid discussion and story-telling, progressing to books which are closely matched to their phonics knowledge and ability to read sight words. Library books are also sent home to promote reading for pleasure.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are encouraged to read at home on a regular basis and this is recorded in their reading diary. Colour banded books provided for reading at home cover a range of genres and are selected by the pupils. All pupils have access to the Bug Club online library and are able to choose a range of colour banded books and reading for pleasure books.

Parents of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are invited to take part in the Parent Partnership Reading Project which encourages them to read at home each day with their child for a period of four weeks with an emphasis on the importance of comprehension as well as the decoding of texts. The pupils' reading age is assessed at the start and end of the project so that progress can be measured. The boy and girl in each class making the most progress during the project are presented with an electronic book reader. On completion of the project, pupils are able to select a book of their choice, which is presented in a celebration assembly attended by parents.

### **Approaches to Writing**

At Holden Lane Primary School, we aim to foster a love of writing as soon as the children enter our school. This is achieved through many different teaching and learning strategies.

In the Foundation Stage, communication and language, alongside opportunities to explore reading and writing, underpins the pupils' learning. Pupils have daily access to teacher-led whole class or group writing activities in addition to the many opportunities provided for child-initiated writing.

The learning opportunities pupils are provided with include:

- Opportunities to develop and experience early communication, language and literacy skills.
- Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills through play and mark-making activities.
- Sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books.
- Immersion in a print-rich environment with opportunities to develop oral language and written communication.
- Whole class shared text activities.
- ICT opportunities on iPads, computers and the interactive whiteboard.
- Daily phonics lessons in the Foundation Stage which provides the opportunity for children to practise letter formation.

- Literacy integrated throughout the Early Years curriculum.

In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They are encouraged to present their ideas to their peers and read poetry, stories or non-fiction texts as part of their everyday learning. The texts which pupils read act as a stimulus for their writing, providing opportunities for them to draft and edit fictional and non-fictional pieces of work. The pupils write either independently or as part of a guided group. Talk partners are established to enable pupils to share ideas before and during writing and to facilitate peer marking against a success criteria. Above all, we aspire to develop the pupils' enthusiasm and desire to learn.

The learning opportunities pupils are provided with include:

- Explicitly planned and taught sessions following the guidance and objectives of the statutory English curriculum.
- Objectives and success criteria that are shared with children along with differentiated resources to support and challenge all pupils.
- Discussions to prepare pupils for the writing process, including partner talk, role play and hot-seating.
- The analysis of the structural and language features of a range of fiction and non-fiction genres.
- Modelled, shared and guided writing.
- Writing for, and sharing their writing with, different audiences.
- Spelling and grammar work building on and deepening key skills. In Year 1, there is a focus on phonics which progresses into spelling rules and strategies by the end of Year 2.
- Text level work using a range of genres and texts to develop comprehension skills.
- Immersion in a print-rich environment which promotes a reading culture and develops pupils' oral and written communication.

In Key Stage 2, pupils further extend their knowledge of different genres, learning to modify their tone and vocabulary choices depending on the context of the piece of writing. As in Key Stage 1, writing activities are linked to the whole class text being read during English lessons.

The learning opportunities pupils are provided with include:

- Explicitly planned and taught sessions following the guidance and objectives of the statutory English curriculum.
- Objectives and success criteria that are shared with children along with differentiated resources to support and challenge all pupils.
- Exposure to reading and writing a range of genres.
- Grammar, spelling and punctuation work led by quality texts to develop grammatical awareness and key punctuation skills, building on and deepening key skills as pupils progress through the Key Stage.
- Extended independent writing opportunities to apply the skills learnt when writing within different genres.
- Following the writing process as a sequence of stages, planning, writing, editing and refining their own work alongside that of others through peer assessment.
- Discrete handwriting opportunities as well as encouraging this during other writing opportunities.
- Discussions to prepare pupils for the writing process, including partner talk, role play and hot-seating.
- The analysis of the structural and language features of a range of fiction and non-fiction genres.
- Modelled, shared and guided writing.
- Writing for, and sharing their writing with, different audiences.

## **Spelling**

We believe that the foundations for spelling should be put in place from an early age. Within the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the focus is on phonics with lessons taught daily. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 also learn the common exception word lists for their year groups. As pupils move towards the end of Key Stage 1, the focus changes from phonics to the learning of spelling rules and strategies.

Within Key Stage 2, spelling strategies and rules are taught in accordance with the statutory requirements of the English National Curriculum. Alongside learning spelling rules and strategies, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also expected to learn the statutory word lists and common exception word lists for their year group.

Twinkl Spelling Scheme is used from Year 2 to Year 6. The statutory requirements have been split into half-termly overviews with weekly lists of ten spelling words each linked to one spelling rule. The words are sent home on a Friday with the rule being introduced and taught on the following Monday. Children practise their spellings on a daily basis using a range of different activities which include: look, cover, write, say, check strategy, creating glossaries, writing sentences containing the spellings, word searches, handwriting practice and spelling scribbles. Children are then tested on a Friday before a new list is sent home.

## **Grammar and Punctuation**

The statutory expectations for grammar and punctuation are taught in each year group through a weekly skills lesson. Grammar and punctuation (including their use and effect) is identified and taught in context of the text being studied when reading and writing during English lessons.

## **Speaking and Listening**

Speaking and listening is an integral part of every aspect of school life. Pupils are encouraged to listen to their peers and staff, showing respect for the person talking. We model Standard English, supporting the children's grammar and enriching their vocabulary. As pupils progress through the school, they learn how the formality of language can change depending on the situation.

Speaking and listening forms the basis of English lessons through whole class discussion of texts, small group work and partner talk which allows for collaboration of learning so that pupils can support one another in the learning process. Learning opportunities such as role play and hot-seating enable the pupils to explore themes and develop their imagination and vocabulary.

We welcome the inclusion of drama in our curriculum. Throughout the year, each pupil participates in a class assembly and Christmas service or nativity providing an opportunity for them to perform in front of an audience.

## **Cross-Curricular Opportunities**

The skills developed in English lessons are applied to the learning and presentation of work across other areas of the curriculum. Pupils read texts to deepen their understanding of a subject area in preparation for writing a range of genres to communicate their learning.

## **The Use of ICT**

We encourage the use of ICT, when appropriate, in all areas of learning. The lesson objective, success criteria and content are shared on interactive whiteboards. Laptops and iPads support pupils with their learning, for example when conducting research.

## **Assessment and Target Setting**

The assessment of English learning is continuous and informs how daily and weekly lesson plans might be amended in light of the outcomes of previous lessons. Written work is marked in-line with the school's feedback policy which is consistent across the school.

In the Foundation Stage, daily assessments are made of the pupils' progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. At the end of Reception, a final judgement based on on-going assessment information is made of the pupils' attainment in communication and language, reading and writing.

Statutory phonics screening takes place at the end of Year 1 and any pupils who have not reached the expected pass mark will be retested at the end of Year 2.

The Key Stage 1 optional SATS reading assessment, alongside on-going assessments throughout the year, supports the judgement made of the standard a pupil is working at when they leave Year 2 and to review the progress made since the Foundation Stage. Pupils' writing is teacher assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 and opportunities are provided throughout the year for Year 2 writing moderation with other schools. External moderation of Year 2 reading and writing assessments is conducted by the Local Authority on a rotational basis.

At the end of Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils complete SATS in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The outcomes of the SATS are reported to parents in addition to teacher assessment for reading and writing. Progress made by pupils between the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is also monitored.

Each half term, pupils' writing from across the curriculum is assessed against the National Curriculum objectives. Rising Stars reading assessments, alongside on-going assessments, support teachers in assessing pupils' reading against the National Curriculum objectives. The progress and attainment of prior attainment groups is closely monitored throughout the year and pupils requiring intervention are identified at Pupil Progress Meetings.

Pupils in Year 1, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 complete NFER reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments during the Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term to support teacher assessment and to provide a starting point for teaching and learning in the next year group

## **Intervention Programmes**

Some pupils require additional support to help them to make expected progress or to reach the expected level of attainment. Pupils who are not on-track to achieve this are identified during Pupil Progress Meetings and interventions are put in place to support their learning. For pupils with SEND, interventions are planned with the support of the SENDCo.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All children are provided with equal access to our curriculum. We provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

## **CPD Opportunities**

Throughout the year, PDM time is dedicated to the development of the teaching, learning and assessment of English.

Staff from Reception to Year 6 meet half-termly with the school's improvement partner at a 'text surgery' to review outcomes of the half term's reading and writing and to plan the next half term's unit of learning.

Staff in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 attend moderation meetings, which include LA and DFE updates and developments, and provide an opportunity for networking and sharing of best practice.