



Abacus Primary School

English Policy

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The Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to support staff in the implementation of a clear and consistent approach to the teaching of English at Abacus Primary School, following the aims of the National Curriculum which should ensure that all children:

- ♣ 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.

Intent

At Abacus Primary School we aim to promote high standards of language and literacy throughout our English lessons. We believe that English lays the foundation for children being able to access learning in all subject areas and, therefore, underpins all of their wider education.

Reading is at the core of the curriculum and our aim is for children to read fluently and with confidence in order to acquire new knowledge to inform their learning. We prioritise developing a love of reading for pleasure and encourage children to read widely and critically.

We want our pupils to be able to confidently communicate through their writing, using a varied and appropriate range of vocabulary, supported by a sound understanding of grammatical features and accurate application of spelling patterns and rules. Through our writing approach, our aim is for children to be competent in planning, drafting, revising and editing their writing increasingly independently across a range of text types, adapting their tone and register for the intended audience and purpose. We want all pupils to take pride in their work and demonstrate this through clear, cursive handwriting from Year 1 onwards.

We aim to develop critical thinkers who are able to engage in speaking and listening activities by focusing and delivering their points clearly as well as reflecting on their own and other's contributions.

Curriculum Drivers in English

Communication

Communication lies at the heart of all English lessons at Abacus. This starts in Early Years with Communication and Language development through listening to a range of texts (stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poetry); effective questioning; high-quality conversations and role-play; and continues throughout the rest of the school. Children communicate through their written work by writing for an audience and purpose, which is linked to real-life writing opportunities as often as possible. The core principle of our writing approach, Talk 4 Writing, is that children be able to 'talk the text' before they can write it, thus acquiring a range of vocabulary and language structures that can be used throughout their learning. We place a huge emphasis on developing children's vocabulary, through engaging lesson activities, poetry slams, vocabulary parades and more, and believe that this will help further their knowledge and understanding, not only in school but in their later lives.

Engagement

At Abacus, we believe that engagement is key for effective learning to take place. All units of work start with a 'hook': something to engage and excite the children in their learning, whether it be a spaceship landing in the Early Years playground, the discovery of a dragon's egg or a mysterious message in a bottle washed up on the beach at Southend. A range of Kagan Structures are used within lessons to ensure that all children are actively learning and participating as well as scaffolding learning for others. Use of drama is a key strategy to engage pupils in lessons and they always enjoy watching performances too. There are regular visitors to school, annual trips to the pantomime and a special outing for Year 6 to see a London show. We also celebrate World Book Day, Word Read Aloud day and have enjoyed virtual and real-life visits from authors and poets which have inspired both staff and children alike. There is a great emphasis on reading for enjoyment at Abacus and initiatives such as the Book of the Month, KS1 and UKS2 Book Clubs, our reading vending machine, visits from Max (our reading dog) and regular challenges all help to engage children in their reading.

Well-being

Children's well-being is the highest priority at Abacus and English lessons offer multiple opportunities to explore this. Secure reading skills are the gateway to understanding in other subject areas and high-quality teaching and focussed interventions aim to ensure that children can access the required content. Therefore, pupils' self-esteem and confidence will continue to grow as their English skills develop.

There are a range of texts used within our English units, including coverage of a variety of authors, cultures, cross curricular links to other topics and different subject matter such as war, refugees and homelessness. These books provide opportunities for rich discussion where children can share their opinions and make learning links to their own lives.

Independence

Independence is a vital skill that children are encouraged to develop in every year group at Abacus. Pupils have access to a range of resources including dictionaries, thesauruses, ninja vocabulary books, phonics mats and topic word mats. They are encouraged to access these independently whenever they are needed, as well as referring to working walls and displays which can support them with further prompts and ideas.

Becoming proficient in the key English skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing means that children will enter the next stage of their education with the life skills needed to succeed independently.

Implementation

Roles and responsibilities

Subject leader: The subject will be led by Emily Mitchell, supported by Chloe Maskell who will have a key focus on vocabulary development. Sue Lee will lead the teaching of Phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, as well as supporting the implementation of any related interventions. The subject leaders will be supported by the Senior Management Team.

Subject leaders should also take the lead in monitoring and reporting; policy development; auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD; purchasing and organising resources; and keeping up to date with recent English developments.

Class teachers: English will be taught by every class teacher, including PPA and cover teachers. It will be supported by LSAs. Class teachers are responsible for the planning and delivery of the English curriculum, following guidance from the subject leaders. Class teachers are responsible for the assessment of the pupils in their class.

Governing Body: The overall responsibility for the teaching and learning of English lies with the school Governing Body. Their role is to monitor the delivery of the curriculum and assess the impact on children's learning.

How English is taught across the school

EYFS

At Abacus, our aim is for children to leave EYFS having developed the characteristics of good communicators. They should be able to use their phonic knowledge to decode regular words, and read and understand simple sentences. In addition, pupils should be able to develop their own narratives and write simple, phonetically plausible sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Furthermore, they should be able to listen and speak confidently, expressing themselves effectively whilst demonstrating an awareness of the listener's needs.

Reading

Weekly Whole Class Guided Reading and Comprehension lessons are recorded on separate plans. Teachers plan using the Reading Content Domains, National Curriculum and TT Education's Guide to Progression in Reading.

Children in EYFS and Year 1 have daily whole class Guided Reading sessions, focused on high quality texts, often taken from Pie Corbett's Reading Spine. In addition, children's current phonic knowledge is individually assessed each week, in order to ensure their reading book is well-matched to their understanding and, therefore, is fully decodable. Children are given a Collins Big Cat book to practise their phonics skills, as well as the choice of another book, from a wider range, to help develop reading for pleasure. Children in EYFS read 1:1 with an adult every week and every two weeks in Year 1 and 2.

Children in Year 2 have whole class Guided Reading lessons four times per week, focused on high quality texts chosen to both challenge and engage. Throughout the year, their reading books transition from the colour-banded scheme to the Accelerate Reader programme as appropriate, depending on their decoding and comprehension skills.

Children in Years 3 and 4 have twice weekly whole class Guided Reading lessons, supplemented with reading focussed English activities.

Children in Years 5 and 6 have weekly comprehension lessons, often linked to their class book, supplemented with reading focussed English activities and additional Reading Skills sessions in Year 6.

All children in KS2 access the Accelerated Reader programme, whereby their reading skills are tested half termly resulting in a given range (ZPD) for them to choose from. Children then choose 'real' books from within this range and access quizzes after each one to assess their understanding.

How Accelerated Reader works

A student's reading level is determined by a STAR Reading assessment. This is a computer-adaptive test that takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. It gives rise to the student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the ideal range of text complexity for that student. Students achieve the most significant gains in reading skills when they read books that are neither so easy as to be unchallenging nor so hard as to be frustrating.

AR Book Levels are determined with the ATOS readability formula, which measures the complexity of the text of an entire book. The formula takes into account the average sentence length, average word length, the difficulty of the words used and the total number of words in the book.

Using Book Levels and their reading range as a guide, the student then chooses books that interest them and reads them. A free online book-searching tool AR BookFinder allows students, teachers and parents to find interesting books at the appropriate level.

After finishing a book, students take an online Reading Practice quiz within AR. These quizzes check that the student has understood the book and provides an opportunity to praise the student and give verbal or written feedback.

Writing

The Talk 4 Writing approach is embedded throughout the school. The concept was developed by the author Pie Corbett and is a fun, creative yet rigorous approach to develop writers. Talk for Writing begins with enjoying and sharing stories or non-fiction texts, and during the 'Imitation Stage' the class will focus on learning these off by heart. They will then retell the text using actions and expression (and a text map to support them): this enables them to learn new vocabulary and language structures which they can use in their later writing. During the 'Innovation Stage', children adapt the original text through the shared writing approach by making key changes e.g. to the characters/setting. Finally, they write their own text independently at the 'Invention Stage'.

The genres taught can then be used in 'cross-curricular writing' or 'free writing' throughout the year to ensure the knowledge of features is retained. Short-burst writing is used throughout the unit in order for children to apply the skills taught in grammar lessons and further develop their understanding before the Invention Stage.

Staff in Years 2 and 6 may offer children less structure or more free writing opportunities when planning for the Spring and Summer terms to ensure they can gather an adequate amount of independent writing for the moderation purposes.

Teachers place a large emphasis on poetry which is taught at the beginning of each unit as a means of developing vocabulary. Whole school poetry slams are held half-termly where each class performs for the school.

Each class promotes writing by displaying written work throughout the year on a specific writing display board. New writing is placed over previous pieces of work in order to demonstrate progress; these may be top copied pieces used to assess pupils writing, cross-curricular writing and/or writing showing their editing skills. Children are encouraged to celebrate not only their own achievements but those of others by displaying their work in the school and sharing within celebration assemblies.

Organisation

The writing planning format for each year group involves a Long Term, Medium Term Weekly Plan.

Weekly planning will include: learning objectives; whole class teaching input; individual/group tasks including differentiation; focus groups; key vocabulary; a plenary and resources including websites. Planning should show challenge to ensure progression.

Teachers plan a 'hook' at the start of each English unit to engage and motivate the children and ensure that learning is meaningful.

The same standard of English skills are expected across the curriculum and sustained writing is planned in different subject areas to provide cross-curricular writing opportunities.

Handwriting

The Letter-join handwriting scheme is used from EYFS to Year 4. The aim is for children to develop a fluent and legible, handwriting style to ensure they reach the standard expected at the end of each key stage. The planning ensures progression across year groups, and interactive and printed activities allow pupils different

opportunities for practising their letter formation throughout the week. They are also able to access materials at home through the Letter-join app. Children in EYFS begin learning printed letters before moving on to cursive. Handwriting interventions (including fine motor skills) and additional practice opportunities are planned in for children where necessary across the school. Pupils are able to earn the right to use a handwriting pen from Year 3 by demonstrating consistent cursive and appropriately sized formations, and all pupils write in pen from Year 5 onwards. Cursive handwriting is used by all staff when modelling and cursive displays are also used to support this initiative. See Appendix 2.

Phonics

See Phonics Policy

Spelling

Staff in Years 2-6 use the Rising Stars Spelling Scheme to support the teaching of spelling patterns and rules denoted in the National Curriculum, alongside the Statutory Spelling lists. The planning ensures progression across year groups and encourages revision of previously taught patterns. Additional phonics or spelling interventions are planned for children who may need more support, however, almost all children should also access the spelling rules taught for their year group. Specified children have access to the Spelling Shed app where they can practise personalised word lists as well as access teaching videos and games related to the relevant spelling patterns.

Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation are taught discretely, as well as within English lessons, from Year 1 onwards using the guidance from the National Curriculum and supplemented through resources from sites such as Grammarsaurus, the Natural Curriculum, Deepening Understanding and Twinkl, as well as Jumpstart Grammar activities.

Spoken Language

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing and is therefore prevalent in the English curriculum. The use of Talk 4 Writing aids children in developing these skills; drama activities, such as role-play, are encouraged to develop children's understanding and confidence, and the imitation of the text allows children to develop high quality language structures.

The use of poetry at the beginning of each unit allows children to explore a wider range of vocabulary and this, alongside half termly poetry slams, offers all children the opportunity to develop their performance skills.

Well-chosen class reading texts ensure children are exposed to a high level of vocabulary.

Inclusion

Pupils who have difficulty accessing the English curriculum typically have issues with speech and language, reading, spelling, handwriting and grammar. In addition, there may be issues with cognitive barriers such as memory or making connections in learning. A variety of strategies are therefore employed to try and include all pupils in English lessons as follows:

- Pre teaching of vocabulary (expressive and receptive language)
- Word/resource scrap books in which to collect their personalised tools
- Use of visual supports such as personalised key word mats and topic word mats
- Alternative recording formats such as captions with pictures, reordering pre-printed sentences, story maps/story boards, dictation, Clicker 7 app on the iPad etc
- Spelling supports such as use of a 'Try Book', word/picture spelling mats
- Talk buttons
- Sight word games
- Look, cover, write, check
- Adults record the L.O. so the child can focus on the actual writing activity
- Cursive handwriting visual prompts
- Chunked instructions, task boards, whiteboard checklists
- Coloured overlays (visual stress)
- Additional adult support
- Differentiated class work or homework (by outcome or by level of support)
- Use of video and visual content
- Resources such as Phonics Books for Catch-up Readers are used to support children in KS2 who struggle to access reading books aimed at their year group and do not want to be seen to read books aimed at much younger children. The books focus on specific phonic blends and aim to improve decoding skills

We also deliver a variety of interventions (as required) to support those with additional needs in English including:

- Booster phonics sessions

- ERR
- The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness
- Attack (spelling programme)
- Word Wasp/Toe by Toe/Stareway to Spelling schemes
- 60 Second Read / Comprehension booster sessions
- Handwriting/fine motor work/gym trail/dough disco/Teodorescu Percepto-motor programme
- Short burst games or tasks to build independence linked to basics skills and knowledge
- Spelling Shed activities
- Stile Tray activities
- Precision teaching
- Musical Communication
- Speech and Language programme activities as recommended by speech therapists.

We have a key group of children on the autistic spectrum for whom writing can be a particular issue and their One Plan will detail any specific interventions or approaches to be used to enable these pupils to make progress in English. There are a small number of high level needs pupils at the school who cannot access the content of their class English lessons. These pupils follow a personalised curriculum alongside their peers, thematically linked to the topic in class where possible. This may be highly differentiated work within the class setting with adult support, or a bespoke programme delivered in short bursts out of the classroom to aid concentration and attention. All such sessions in or out of class are planned for by the class teacher with support as required from the SENCO. See Appendix 3.

Resources

Each class keeps copies of their class reading texts within their classrooms. The person currently planning English within the year group is responsible for keeping the related Talk 4 Writing supporting text/guide books. Recommended research and guide books are available for staff to sign out in the staffroom.

Each class has a bookshelf for children to choose from in their class, including a selection of dictionaries and thesauruses. Accelerated Reader texts and non-fiction books are stored in the library. Collins Big Cat colour-banded books are stored outside the EYFS and Year 1 classrooms.

Staff should contact the English Leader if they require more resources.

Assessment

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment policy. Verbal and written feedback provides next steps to support children in progressing with their learning.

Reading

- Target tracker updated termly
- Pira assessments - Autumn, Spring and Summer for Year1-5 (no summer assessment for Year 2)
- SATs - Year 2 and 6
- Year 1 Phonic Screening Check
- Star Reading Tests completed half termly- Year 2 and KS2
- Accelerated Reader Quizzes completed after each book read - Year 2 and KS2

Writing

- Target tracker updated termly
- A balance of fiction and non-fiction writing to be used to assist assessment each term
- SATS Year 2 and 6
- Foundation Stage profiles

Spellings

- Phonic phase assessments
- GAPS tests each term - year 1-5 (no summer assessment for Year 2)
- SATS Year 2 and 6
- Foundation Stage profiles

Spoken Language

- Target tracker updated termly
- Teacher assessment - drama, imitation, presentations, poetry and debates

Marking and feedback will be carried out in accordance with the Marking and Feedback policy. When writing, children will be encouraged to peer and self-assess in order to develop their ability to edit work. Teachers ensure that they identify grammar and spelling errors, appropriate to their year group, in writing across the curriculum.

Home school partnership opportunities

Parents can support children with English by regularly reading with their children, promoting verbal communication and supporting them in completing homework when given. Parents may also support children in their writing by encouraging opportunities to write. Parents of children who access the Accelerated Reader programme can choose to receive emails updating them on their child's progress towards their targets and their reading quiz scores. Children's average reading minutes and their book choices are shared with parents during parent consultations.

Homework

Sumdog is used to set weekly spelling games related to the current spelling patterns in Year 2-5. Statutory spellings for each year group are sent home to be learnt over the year.

English homework is given fortnightly in Years 1-5 which could focus on reading, writing or grammar linked to the children's current learning.

Children in Year 6 are set homework from the Rising Stars workbooks to aid their revision. Maths and GPS are set weekly whilst Reading is set fortnightly. All children also have access to Spelling Shed where they can complete assignments set by the class teacher, practise personalised word lists and revise all spelling patterns taught so far.

Children in EYFS are expected to read with their parents every day. They are expected to read regularly in Years 1 and 2 and at least three times per week in Years 3-6.

Impact

Monitoring and reporting

It is the responsibility of the subject leader to evaluate the teaching and learning of English through monitoring including: pupil progress and attainment; scrutiny of planning and books; observing lessons; attaining pupil perceptions; and analysing the quality of the learning environment.

Findings will then be reported back to SMT, the headteacher and governing body in the required formats. Subject Leader Release forms will be completed detailing how any release time has been used.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in February 2023 by the subject leader.

Other Policies to be read in conjunction:

- Phonics Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Marking and feedback Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Homework Policy

SEND and English

1. Recommended strategies to support differentiation:

a) QFT

- Link new learning to what pupil already knows, for example, start a lesson with a class mind-map of what they already know about a subject
- Specific activities are differentiated appropriately, eg words for spelling practice, times tables practice, methods of recording.
- A range of aids and resources is easily accessible to support learning and aid independence, such as letter charts, word banks of high frequency words and key vocabulary, dictionaries etc
- Staff provide writing frames and templates (eg writing up a science experiment) to help structure thinking.
- Staff provide prompt sheets: questions to answer, key words to build each section or paragraph around, sentences or paragraphs to put in correct order, paragraph openings, etc.
- Marking policies celebrate positive aspects of pupils' work and how their work can be developed/improved.
- Key topic vocabulary is introduced explicitly with the use of concrete, visual supports.
- Visual supports are used to reinforce language learning and development.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to listen to adults reading to them in a quiet environment.

b) Additional School Intervention and Support

- Specific feedback is given – self-evaluation and teacher/peer evaluation.
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and key concepts is used
- Increased use of alternative methods where pupils to demonstrate and record their learning, eg matching labels to pictures/diagrams/maps, mind-maps, iPads, PowerPoint presentations, making posters, oral presentations, role-play.
- There is increased use of appropriate technology to support learning.
- Pupils benefit from being prompted to listen through the use of a verbal or non-verbal prompt.
- Pupils should be given specific praise related to good listening and attention skills

<p>Additional School Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••••	
<p>Resources/Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	
<p>General comments:</p>	

N.B. Feedback will be given using the school format of two stars and a wish and may include reference to SEND monitoring if relevant.

Key Stage Teaching

FOUNDATION

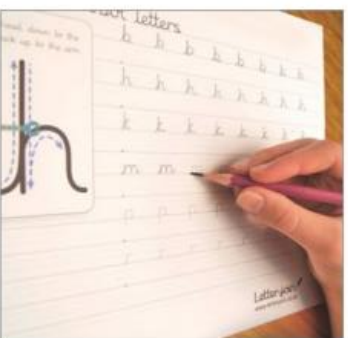
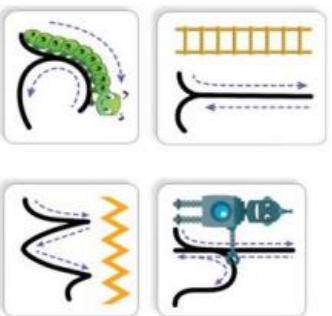


- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib.
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns in a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays, felt pens, crayons, pencils, IWB, iPads/tablets.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.



RECEPTION

- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stance.
- Understand that letters are written on a base line and that all cursive letters 'start on the line' and 'end with a hook'.
- Begin to form some recognisable joined-up cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understanding different shaped letter families.

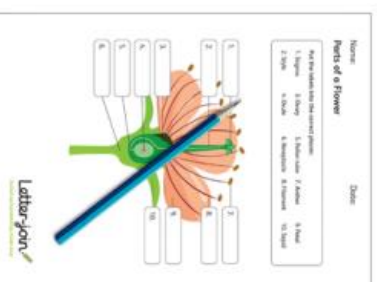


Key Stage Teaching

KEY STAGE 1



- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are to be used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.



KEY STAGE 2

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

- **Quality:** Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- **Speed:** Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take "quick notes" at a faster pace.
- **Stamina:** Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.



Have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes:

- Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as '+' instead of 'and', can be used.

