



CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by Governors: AUT24

Review date: SUM26

Subject Intent

Skills for life – We will ensure that children's writing skills are developed by focusing on the basic skills of grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. These skills are applied to all areas of the curriculum in order to provide the foundations for learning and life

The spoken word – We will focus on developing children's oracy to unlock reading, writing and a broad vocabulary. Developing children's language skills is a priority in order for children to become competent and confident communicators and develop the skills needed to express themselves

The power of reading – Our culture for reading underpins a curriculum that prioritises the power of the written word. Through the use of quality texts, books and topics we will inspire and excite young readers and writers.

Aims and Objectives

At Chalkwell Hall Infant School, our English curriculum is designed to develop pupils' ability to listen, speak, read, and write for a variety of purposes and text types, equipping them with the skills necessary for their future academic journey and beyond. We aim to foster creativity and imagination in our pupils, nurturing enthusiastic readers and writers of stories, poetry, and non-fiction texts. Recognising the 'cultural capital' gap in some of our pupils, we are committed to immersing them in a rich curriculum filled with diverse texts and language experiences to instil a lifelong love for reading and writing.

Throughout their time at our school, all pupils will be taught to:

- Apply their knowledge of phonemes to read (decode) and spell (encode) phonetically plausible words.
- Read and spell common exception words appropriate to their year group.
- Write letters accurately, legibly, and efficiently.
- Construct sentences using correct grammar and punctuation.
- Develop comprehension skills to understand and engage with a wide range of texts.

Early Reading

At Chalkwell Hall Infant School, we establish the foundational phonic skills necessary for reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through structured phonics lessons based on the 'Read Write Inc' programme. In the EYFS, pupils are introduced to environmental sounds and are encouraged to engage with rhymes, laying the groundwork for phonemic awareness. Following this, they are systematically taught the 44 phonemes in their simplest form, gaining confidence in blending and segmenting sounds. As pupils progress into Key Stage 1, they are introduced to alternative graphemes for these

44 phonemes. By the end of Key Stage 1, phonics instruction is aligned with the spelling rules prescribed by the National Curriculum (2014).

In addition to phonics instruction for reading phonetically plausible words (referred to as 'green words'), pupils also learn to recognise some words by sight. The goal of teaching sight reading is to improve fluency in developing readers. These sight words, referred to as 'red words', are specific to each year group. As pupils' phonological knowledge advances, certain red words may become decodable, or 'green' words. For example, 'he' is introduced as a red word in EYFS but becomes decodable once pupils learn that the letter 'e' can represent the 'ee' sound.

Writing

At Chalkwell Hall Infant School, we employ a range of teaching and learning approaches in our English lessons, with the primary goal of developing pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding of the English curriculum. Our daily lessons are structured to include various teaching methods such as whole-class instruction, group work, and independent tasks.

To ensure that pupils become proficient writers, technical skills—such as grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction—are taught explicitly and reinforced regularly. These essential components of writing are sometimes taught as discrete lessons or integrated within broader learning activities, depending on the context and what is most appropriate for the lesson objectives.

Our approach adopts **Story Dough and Drawing Club by Greg Bottril and the Talk for Writing (TFW) method by Pie Corbett**, enabling children to imitate orally the language they need for a particular topic, before reading and analysing it, and then writing their own version.

This process uses spoken activities to develop writing skills. Firstly by expanding and developing pupils' oral language skills, and by then scaffolding and modelling the teaching of sentence, paragraph and text construction all of which create quality writing.

It is essential that pupils are able to apply their writing skills across a range of text types, including stories, poetry, and non-fiction. Tools such as scaffolding and the 'Talk for Writing' approach are employed to support and enhance this process. Often, the context in which pupils practise their writing is linked to the current topic being studied, making the learning experience more engaging and meaningful.

Handwriting

Recognising the importance of strong fine and gross motor skills as a foundation for writing, we have integrated daily 'Funky Fingers' sessions into our Foundation Stage curriculum. These sessions provide opportunities for pupils to enhance the motor skills necessary for effective pencil control and accurate letter formation. During these sessions, teachers lead small-group writing activities where pupils apply the skills they have been taught. From the outset, correct letter formation is emphasised, though we do not use methods such as tracing over letters or 'yellow writing' in our instruction.

From September 2023, a non-cursive script has been introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as part of the Penpals programme, aimed at developing a more legible style of writing. This approach will be progressively implemented across the school, with Year 1 adopting the non-cursive script in September 2024, followed by Year 2 in September 2025.

Independent Reading

Pupils' individual reading books are carefully aligned with their progression in phonics and sight word recognition, supporting the development of early reading skills and enhancing fluency. Our colour band system includes a broad selection of books, ranging from wordless picture books to chapter books with advanced vocabulary. Pupils advance through the colour bands at their own pace, as their phonics and sight word knowledge improves. They are given opportunities to read these books with their class teacher and other adults in school, as well as taking them home to encourage reading and discussion with parents. Additionally, pupils have access to the online library 'Oxford Owl' to further support their reading development.

ERIC time (Everyone Reading in Class)

ERIC time is designed to foster a love for reading among KS1 pupils, while also providing opportunities to practise reading skills in a supportive environment. By encouraging students to read independently or with a partner, this routine helps build confidence and fluency.

During this time, the class teacher will carry out group reading and/or 1:1 reading with pupils, ensuring that each child receives guidance according to their individual reading level. The texts will be carefully matched to the ability of each group and the aim will be to move pupils onto the next colour band swiftly by developing fluency.

Whole class comprehension (VIPERS time: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, Sequencing)

In addition to whole-class phonics lessons, we teach comprehension skills and reading strategies to develop pupils into proficient readers. These skills are taught through teacher-led sessions, where pupils engage with a variety of texts that are at or above their independent reading level. During these sessions, pupils are explicitly taught key comprehension skills, such as inferring, predicting, identifying word meanings, sequencing events, linking texts to their own experiences, discussing and expressing views, and asking and answering questions about the material they have read.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), whole-class reading sessions encourage pupils to actively engage with shared texts through role play, small-world activities, and story sacks. These sessions help pupils become familiar with fairy tales and traditional stories, allowing them to join in with predictable phrases, recite rhymes, and participate in poems.

Shared reading

A class story is shared with pupils every day, with texts carefully selected to ensure

exposure to a wide range of authors and genres throughout their time at our school. This approach broadens pupils' horizons beyond their immediate experiences, immerses them in rich and diverse language, and fosters a lifelong love of reading.

Assessing English

Formative assessment in every lesson enables teachers to adjust their plans effectively. Regular feedback, both written and verbal, guides pupils progress, while self-evaluation and discussions with peers encourage pupils to reflect on their work. Additionally, half-termly writing assessments allow for ongoing progress monitoring through an assessment tracker (Insight). Each pupil's writing portfolio serves as evidence of their development throughout the school year. To ensure accuracy in teacher assessments, regular moderation occurs both within the school and externally, using sample work from pupils' books for evaluation. Half-termly and termly checkpoints, which have been developed by leaders in the school, further validate these assessments.

The approach to assessing reading skills throughout the school is thorough and systematic:

Phoneme Recognition and Blending: Starting assessments early helps identify pupils who may need additional support. It's important to regularly revisit phonemic awareness, as it's foundational for reading fluency.

Use of Insight: Recording data in a centralised system allows for easy tracking of each pupil's progress. This can help in identifying trends and areas needing intervention.

Running Records/RWI Assessments: These assessments provide valuable insights into a pupil's reading fluency and comprehension. Teacher judgement, combined with these assessments, ensures a holistic view of a child's abilities.

Intervention Strategies: For pupils not meeting expected standards, targeted interventions could include small group work, one-on-one support, or tailored resources to address their specific needs.

Equal Opportunities

At Chalkwell Hall Infant School, we are dedicated to providing inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their abilities or individual needs. Our approach ensures that every child can make good progress and thrive.

Monitoring and Review

The leaders of the English curriculum at our school play a crucial role in fostering a high-quality learning environment for all pupils. Their responsibilities include:

Key Responsibilities of English Curriculum Leaders:

1. **Support for Colleagues:**
 - Provide ongoing support to teaching staff by sharing insights on current developments in English education.
 - Offer strategic direction to enhance the teaching and learning of English.
2. **Guidance on Policy Implementation:**

- Assist staff in understanding and applying school policies related to the English curriculum.
- Ensure that teaching practices align with the latest educational standards and frameworks.
- 3. **Staying Informed:**
 - Keep up to date with national and local developments in English education, including curriculum changes and innovative teaching strategies.
- 4. **Resource Awareness:**
 - Ensure that staff are aware of and have access to a variety of resources that support English teaching, including books, materials, and digital tools.
- 5. **Monitoring Implementation and Planning:**
 - Regularly monitor the implementation of the English curriculum and review planning documents to ensure consistency and quality in teaching.
- 6. **Standards Monitoring:**
 - Evaluate the standards of work in pupils' books, providing feedback to teachers on areas for improvement and celebration of successes.
- 7. **Collaboration with Outside Agencies:**
 - Liaise with outside agencies, educational consultants, and other English Leaders to share best practices and enhance our curriculum.
- 8. **Assessment Moderation:**
 - Lead the moderation of reading and writing assessments to ensure consistency and accuracy in evaluating student progress.

Role of the Governing Body:

- Members of the school's governing body are briefed on the teaching of English, enabling them to provide oversight and support.
- They play an important role in ensuring that the English curriculum meets the needs of all students and aligns with the school's educational goals.

Through this collaborative effort, we strive to create an enriching English curriculum that fosters a love for reading and writing, ensuring every child reaches their full potential.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.