English Policy

St Katharine's Knockholt Church of England (VA) Primary School

Date of policy:	September 2026
Date of last review:	September 2029
Date of next review:	September 2027
Policy authorised by:	Governing Body
Policy approved date:	November 2026

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The ability to communicate effectively with others has never been more important. A high-quality education in English teaches 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. Understanding language provides access to every other area of the curriculum and empowers children to become independent learners. We are committed to developing positive attitudes and high standards in literacy. We teach a topic- and experience-inspired English curriculum linked to the National Curriculum English Programmes of Study. We feel this provides a creative curriculum for our children, making learning fun, accessible to all and - most importantly - appropriate to their individual needs.

OUR AIMS

We aim to:

- promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word so that they can take a full and active part in all aspects of society;
- help children become confident in expressing themselves coherently, creatively and imaginatively;
- enable our children to read easily, fluently and with good understanding;
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information;
- promote an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage;
- teach our children to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences;
- develop a wide vocabulary and an understanding of grammatical, spelling and other linguistic conventions;
- promote good handwriting skills and a pride in how we present our work;
- encourage good speaking and listening skills both as tools for learning and as skills in their own right;
- promote using discussion in order to learn (ie to be able to elaborate and explain clearly one's understanding and ideas); and
- develop competence in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026).

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum; and
- become immersed in a language rich environment.

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) children are given opportunities to:

- learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say;
- learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm; and
- learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) children are given opportunities to:

- learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences;
- read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them; and
- explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works (using grammatical terminology).

ORGANISATION

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Reception children have daily discrete phonics lessons. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum. The majority of lessons are delivered through the focus topic area chosen for the particular term. Key texts are carefully selected and units of work planned accordingly. Key texts or stimuluses for English units are chosen by teachers from each year group to ensure children are exposed to a range of high-quality texts and exemplary writing models. Technology is used, wherever possible, to enhance English learning and teaching. Additional adults are used to support and further teaching and learning, under the guidance of the class teacher.

Key Stage 1

Discrete phonics lessons continue in Year 1. Children take part in guided and individual reading sessions and have regular story times in the classroom and the library to develop a love of reading. Literacy skills are further developed across the curriculum through our topic-based approach and in discrete writing lessons. Provision is made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes, differentiated class teaching and targeted teaching groups.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 literacy is developed across the curriculum contextually through our topic-based approach and in discrete writing lessons. These sessions include whole class reading, spelling, grammar, handwriting and reading aloud of a class novel. A rich variety of texts both written and digital are used in every classroom. Teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning approaches to encourage engagement, interest and high attainment in lessons.

Provision is made for children who require extra support or challenge through quality first teaching, intervention programmes (eg Toe by Toe) and differentiated class teaching.

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision. This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to applicable legal requirements.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

The National Curriculum places a significant emphasis on spoken language as a life skill and as a tool for learning. We recognise the importance of speaking and listening in pupils' development across the whole curriculum; spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The four strands of Speaking and Listening: Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction; and Drama permeate the whole curriculum. Opportunity is given within lessons for discussion and oral rehearsal of ideas before writing. Role play, hot-seating and debate are used to explore and develop ideas orally.

We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write standard English fluently and accurately, within an environment that respects other languages and dialects. We take care to correct children's misconceptions with language sensitively and celebrate any additional language skills that members of our school community may bring.

These skills are also vital for the general spiritual, emotional and intellectual development of the child, since relationships inside and outside school are best established by clearly communicating thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Children in Early Years, KS1 and KS2 enjoy regular drama lessons with a specialist teacher. Children perform and present to the school and parents in class assemblies, poetry assemblies, church services (Harvest, Easter, Christmas) and high-quality school productions.

READING

'A child who reads will be an adult who thinks.'

Through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We provide a text-rich, stimulating curriculum and environment to reflect the emphasis we place on developing good reading skills and habits.

Reading strategies are modelled daily by teachers and teaching assistants throughout every year group, with children developing their reading fluency and comprehension skills in whole class, small group and individual contexts, both in discrete reading lessons and throughout the wider curriculum.

We use Little Wandle Letters & Sounds Revised to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in EYFS and Year 1, enabling children to decode efficiently. To increase their ability to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment, children are taught strategies for sound recognition, segmenting, blending and, ultimately, word recognition. Skilled and fluent word reading involves speedy recognition of familiar words and decoding of unfamiliar words. From EYFS to Year 2, word reading fluency is taught and practiced using a structured, repetitive model which includes: - pre-teaching of sounds, tricky words and key vocabulary - 'slow' read – segmenting/blending and correction of word reading - re-read for familiarity – increased fluency and correction of expression/reading to punctuation.

Alongside teaching decoding skills and fluency, we focus on reading for understanding (comprehension) and use discussion and questioning to promote in-depth understanding of texts.

In EYFS and Year 1, a reading practice book is sent home weekly (online). This book has been carefully matched to the correct phonics stage for the children and is appropriate for their current reading level. They should be able to read this fluently and independently and will already have encountered it in reading practice sessions in class. A sharing book (paper) is also sent home regularly from a range of schemes including Songbirds, Dandelion,

Oxford Reading Tree. This book is for parents and children to read and enjoy together, with the parent supporting the child.

In KS2, children have more responsibility for selecting books to take home and read, choosing from their class reading corner or the school library.

Each classroom has its own inspiring reading corner, with books of a suitable age range for the year group. There are also displays of both fiction and non-fiction books to reflect the termly humanities/science topic being taught. In the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, classroom libraries have been established with banded books available in a range of genres. Books are banded according to the 'Guided Reading Book Bands' compiled by the Institute of Education.

The school library is overseen by, our volunteer librarian, Mrs Lambert, and has a wide selection of books which is continually being expanded. All classes have a weekly library session and teachers make as much use of this facility as possible and encourage the children to choose a range of age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction books to enjoy at home.

Reading is further promoted and celebrated within school through workshops and taking part in Book Week and the 100 book reading challenge when reading for enjoyment is widely promoted across the school.

Parents are encouraged to read with children as often as possible, preferably daily, but at least three times per week. (see Parental Involvement section).

We believe that this combination of shared reading (teachers reading high-quality texts to their class), guided reading, whole class reading, reading practice lessons, individual reading and home reading give our children the best possible chance of becoming learners with a life-long love of reading.

WRITING

Our approach to writing aims to instil the importance of creativity and enjoyment of writing, as well as developing skills of transcription and composition, as required in the National Curriculum (2014). Writing is developed in both discrete writing lessons and through our topic-based curriculum.

Children in all Key Stages are given daily opportunities to write in a range of contexts, for a variety of purposes, and have regular opportunities to write at length in extended writing sessions. Teachers are flexible in their selection of teaching models and resources for writing but give children the opportunity to practise the following processes: planning, drafting and writing, evaluating and editing, proof reading and reading aloud/sharing. Teachers model good writing in shared writing sessions and provide opportunities for paired and small group writing tasks, as well as allowing children space and time to write independently.

'The Write Stuff', adapted to suit the needs of children at St Katharine's is used to structure and teach writing lessons. Lessons are structured into bite-sized chunks and taught under the structural framework of 'The Writing Rainbow'. The rainbow provides visual cues/lenses to children based on the ideas of writing, grammar and writing techniques. The format of each writing lesson follows an 'initiate, model, enable' structure. From Year 1 to Year 6, chotting sheets are used as a space for children to record their vocabulary ideas for each section of writing. For each chunk of writing, there is a 'Deepening the Moment' challenge that extends the children's writing and aim to develop independence and ownership over the choices the children make as authors. Children complete a piece of written work over a period of 1 to 2 weeks. When a unit of writing is finished, the children then complete an independent piece of writing, based on the genre they have practised. This gives them the

opportunity to apply their learning whilst also developing their independence as a writer. Teachers are able to use independent pieces of writing to assess their children's progress and next steps.

We recognise the importance of technology in developing English skills. Children are given opportunities to improve their writing through visual and audio stimuluses (images and short film clips) and interactive technology. In KS2, they may use the internet to conduct research to support their writing.

Spelling

In EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, spelling is taught by using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. This programme teaches phonics and the spelling of "tricky" high frequency common exception words.

In Key Stage 2, we use Spelling Shed, a scheme based on recent research, that provides repeated practice, short-term retrieval and small-step goal achievement, focusing on the relationship between sounds and written symbols as well as using morphology to help spell through meaning. It includes a range of engaging approaches including online games to motivate children to continue their spelling learning at home.

Grammar

Grammar is taught contextually and discretely to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for children to be conversant with grammatical terminology (from the National Curriculum glossary) and to be able to demonstrate a strong grasp of English grammatical conventions in their writing. Children are taught to identify and use a range of grammatical and language devices which enhance the clarity and sophistication of the written word.

Handwriting

We teach a non-cursive handwriting script. From EYFS and at every other stage, emphasis is given to the development of neat handwriting and presentation skills across the curriculum. Children begin by practising individual letters and patterns and move towards extended patterns, sentences and longer pieces of text. Dedicated handwriting sessions take place in every class weekly.

ENGLISH ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Our topic-based, cross-curricular approach to learning enables us to ensure that English and the development of strong literacy skills are part of every lesson.

ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING and TARGET SETTING

EYFS

Ongoing records are kept of the children's progress in the seven areas of learning and development outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. These assessment records form the basis of the Early Years Learning Profile that is reported in the Summer Term. The school uses the Tapestry and Pupil Asset Assessment and Recording Systems. Detailed records are kept on the children's progress in phonics and reading.

KS1 and KS2

Progress and achievement in reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting are assessed and recorded formatively and summatively. Teachers use a range of formative assessment tools and resources to

ensure that planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Class teachers keep records that enable them to deliver an effective, creative and relevant curriculum, building on prior attainment and meeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers' assessment records are shared with the Assessment Leader (SENCO) termly and English Leader (when requested). Group or individual targets are set accordingly and shared with pupils and parents. Our Marking Policy ensures that children understand and are involved in their 'next steps'. They are encouraged to review their progress towards these through self, peer and teacher assessment.

Annual, on-line standardised tests (GL Progress Test in English and New Group Reading Test) are taken by all pupils from Y3 upwards and recorded as a summative assessment of progress.

Assessment is recorded termly on the school's assessment tracking system (Insight) and is analysed by the Class Teacher, Assessment Leader (SENCO) and the English Leader. Termly assessment meetings are held, and the analysis of the data is used to set targets and to arrange interventions and/or further support or challenge, where necessary.

Samples of work are also assessed and moderated across year groups, across the school and within our Cluster Partnership.

RESPONDING TO PUPIL WORK/ FEEDBACK/ MARKING

Written work is marked promptly in accordance with the school's Marking Policy and opportunities provided for improvement and corrections to be made. (See Marking Policy)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT – HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." ~ Emilie Buchwald

We value highly our partnership with parents and encourage an on-going dialogue with parents about reading progress through the children's Reading Record Diaries. Our expectation is that children (at every stage of their learning) read and discuss their books with their parents or carers **at least three times per week** and that parents support us in encouraging good reading routines and attitudes.

Termly curriculum letters are published on the school's web site providing information about the English curriculum. Parents can seek advice informally from their class teacher if they have any concerns about their child's progress in English. There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher more formally at Parents' Consultations Evenings. Parents receive a full school report in the summer term, detailing their child's achievements in English alongside other curriculum subjects.

Particularly good work is shared and celebrated informally with parents by class teachers, through the weekly Head Teacher's Awards system and on the Wow Work display.

Parental phonics sessions are arranged annually by the EYFS Class Teacher and English Subject Leader (Headteacher) to provide parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their child's development in phonics and reading.

The English Leader will arrange meetings to provide information and support for parents' continued involvement and support in their children's reading (and writing) progress as their children move through the school.

THE ROLE OF THE SUBJECT LEADER

The subject leader is responsible for maintaining/improving the standards of teaching and learning in English by:

- monitoring and evaluating English via lesson observations, pupil progress meetings, planning, marking and feedback, curriculum coverage and the role of teaching assistants;
- developing policy
    - auditing and supporting colleagues in CPD;
    - delivering inset and twilight training;
    - recommending resources;
    - keeping up to date with developments in English and disseminating to colleagues
    - organising special celebrations (eg: World Book Day, National Poetry Day) and visits from authors, poets and theatre companies; and
    - in conjunction with the Assessment Leader (SENCO), advising colleagues on support in English for children with SEND or other specific needs in English (eg: dyslexic tendencies, English as an additional language).

CONCLUSION

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Marking Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equal Opportunities

APPENDICES

- NC Statutory (Spelling) Appendix
- NC Statutory (Grammar) Appendix