



***“Show me your way, Lord teach me your paths.” Psalms (25.4)***

## **POLICY STATEMENT - ENGLISH**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

English at Almondsbury is taught through a variety of approaches. Children are exposed to high-quality texts to engage them in their learning and encourage them to understand what makes a good writer. We often use subject knowledge gained from Topic or Science as a hook for writing and provide the children with real-life contexts for their work. Their imaginations are captured and enthused through inspiring immersions which allow for opportunities to speak, listen and use drama, in turn positively influencing their motivations to write. In addition to this, children enjoy the opportunities that we offer to perform and showcase their finished pieces.

Across the school the children take part in discrete phonics, spelling, grammar and reading sessions, as well as applying their skills in English and Topic lessons. This allows for differentiated delivery of key skills.

As stated in the National Curriculum, the overarching aim for English in primary schools is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. It aims to ensure that all pupils:

- 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
- allow pupils to 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; children should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- ensure children are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

At Almondsbury School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills, understanding and enthusiasm for the subject. We do this through daily lessons as part of a unit of

work and across other curriculum areas. Each unit of work contains whole-class and group teaching. Children will experience whole-class, shared and modelled reading and writing activities, whole-class focused word or sentence activities, guided group or independent activities and plenary sessions to review progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a variety of resources to support their work, including multimedia programmes where it enhances their learning.

## ENGLISH CURRICULUM PLANNING

### Writing

We use the learning objectives from the 2014 Primary Curriculum as the basis for implementing the English curriculum across a range of genres, appropriate to each age group. Text composition is taught as a writing process, allowing the children to use the skills of planning, writing, editing and redrafting their work in many contexts. This takes place in the English lesson as well as through other curriculum areas. Children are supported in the application of their skills through the use of modelled, guided and shared writing. Age-appropriate grammar objectives are also included within these sessions to teach the specific skills relevant to different text types. These are mapped out in termly overviews that link to the 'Reading Spine' for each key phase. 'Reading Spines' are developed by the English Team alongside the KUW Team to ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality texts that are relevant to topics taught in other curriculum areas. This also allows teachers to plan purposeful cross-curricular writing opportunities.

All plans are kept centrally, and the English subject leaders are responsible for reviewing these plans regularly. Termly English plans are devised by key phase teams through the year to ensure coverage of objectives and to plan for progression.

Weekly plans will include the following:

- Learning outcome for the week placed clearly in the context of their learning journey.
- A daily learning objective (WALT) and success criteria (WILF)
- Key questions
- Spelling and grammar opportunities
- Main teaching activities and focus, including evidence of speaking and listening, shared reading and writing
- Careful use of scaffolds to allow for adaptive teaching
- Guided writing activities with a specific learning focus linked to assessment
- Plenaries and mini-plenaries referring to the key questions
- Ongoing evaluation and next steps

Cursive handwriting is taught from Year 1 using Letter Join and develops as the children progress through the school.

### Reading

High-quality texts are central to the teaching of reading at Almondsbury. We believe that laying the foundations for a life-long love of reading is core to the happiness of our children and we therefore promote this across all curriculum areas.

In Year 1 daily reading sessions are based around the ELS work booklets promoting pupils' phonics knowledge and decoding at word level, developing reading stamina, and exploring texts to improve comprehension skills through teacher questioning.

Children engage in reading a variety of ELS phonic books matched to the progression on a one to one basis. Comprehension and reading for pleasure are developed through reading a whole class book on a daily basis.

From Year 2 onwards, all pupils participate in daily Whole Class Reading lessons. Whole-class reading sessions mean that children of all attainment bands are immersed in the same high-quality literature and the discussions that these texts promote. The whole class can share the enjoyment of a particular text and learn from one another as well as the adults in the room on a daily basis. Children are organised into mixed-ability pairs so as to allow for frequent, paired discussion and collaboration in the acquisition of new skills.

Whole-Class Reading lessons across the school follow the same weekly structure:

- On the Friday of each week children will be given the text that will be used in class the following week. They will be asked to read this text at home and complete a short vocabulary task
- On the Monday and Friday the class book will be used as the text for guided reading discussions, allowing children to immerse themselves in these (often longer) stories. Follow up tasks may be used to support the learning
- On the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the children will engage with questions/activities/tasks based on the text that was sent home the previous Friday.

Each reading session based around the weekly extract is focused on a key reading skill (VIPERS) so that these can be clearly modelled. Teachers use effective questioning techniques linked to the 'Reading Hats' theory/ PEEL so that high-quality responses with evidence and explanation can be elicited from the pupils. Opportunities are then planned for effective follow-up tasks and independent responses so that children can apply their learning. These are differentiated where needed to allow support for key pupils and small groups.

The acquisition of vocabulary is central to our approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils are given the texts for the following week to prepare in advance and encouraged to explore tier two vocabulary identified by the class teacher. These words are then revisited through the term using strategies from the Word Aware scheme of work, allowing the children to learn more and remember more.

### Phonics

We teach phonics in Reception and Year 1 using the government recommended Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) programme. All children take part in whole class phonic sessions, keeping up interventions take place at a separate time.

All teachers follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our children to practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst building their understanding of the code of our language GPC's (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). As a result our children can tackle any unfamiliar words that they may discover.

### Spelling and Grammar

In Reception and Key Stage 1 we use the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' scheme of work alongside the 2014 Primary Curriculum. For Year 2 upwards, we use the Herts for Learning: Essential Spelling scheme. Within this scheme, spelling patterns are broken down into sequences for each year group. Every sequence tracks back to review

prior linked learning, enabling children to build on the foundations of previous year groups. Assessment is built into the sequence through application in place of weekly spelling tests.

Our reading scheme contains phonically decodable books that match to the ELS progression.

## THE FOUNDATION STAGE

We relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations. The Drawing Club approach is central to this. Child initiated activities are at the core of this stage of development alongside a range of teacher-directed activities with a special focus on the learning of phonics and key early writing skills.

## ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

### Writing assessment

The assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily, weekly and medium-term plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives to help them plan for the next unit of work.

Pupil's individual progress in writing is assessed using Arbor with objectives taken from the South Gloucestershire Teacher Assessment Framework for Writing.

Assessments are analysed by the English subject leaders and Headteacher at the end of each term and kept centrally. Children working below the expected levels for their age are identified and specific interventions or programmes are put in place to aid their progress.

Next steps in writing are identified, and children are targeted in a series of Guided Writing sessions.

At important points during the writing progress, pupils use self and peer assessment methods, so that they can assess the quality of their own and each other's writing against targets, or the success criteria of the task. The methods used for this are adapted to suit the age of the children. Time for pupil reviewing is allocated in the teachers' plans, with children using Purple Polishing Pens to respond to feedback.

Assessment milestones taken from the TAF are used to guide progress and to allow teachers to carefully plan their writing opportunities across terms and through the year to allow for steady progress. This also enables opportunities for termly moderation within and across Key Stages. Targets for each unit of work are generated linked to these.

Each classroom has an interactive 'English Learning Wall', where the processes of questioning, planning, writing and reviewing are explicitly displayed to help their understanding. Vocabulary is given prominence on these displays to ensure that the children have a bank of high-quality language to draw from. 'Talk Like an Expert' boards are also used for other subject areas and displayed in every class to ensure technical language is used appropriately and fully understood.

Formal assessments in the form of SATS, phonic screening, and grammar/spelling tests, are also used to inform staff on pupil progress.

The staff attend termly writing moderation meetings with cluster schools, where examples of writing are shared and assessed to ensure level agreements across year groups and staff. These are kept in the Assessment File, and are available to staff as a useful reference when completing pupil assessments.

## Marking

We use marking as a key tool in assessment for learning (AFL). We have an agreed system of marking throughout the school, which provides a code for the children to understand when reviewing and amending their writing.

All staff use the 'green for good' and 'pink for think' marking system. This is used to highlight areas of success and areas for improvement. There is a progression of marking codes used through 'margin marking' which children respond to by making changes, commenting on their progress, and working with the teacher to identify their own targets and next steps. Whole-class feedback is also used as a marking strategy.

Marking always relates back to the learning objective (WALT) and success criteria (WILF).

The success of marking is reviewed once a year by the subject team.

## Reading assessment

### 1. Whole-Class Reading

Reading is currently assessed using Arbor with on-going assessments being made in the form of notes taken during class reading sessions. An individual assessment of pupil progress is submitted termly to the Headteacher. This information is also reviewed yearly by the English Subject Team so that overall success in reading throughout the school can be monitored.

### 2. Individual reading

All pupils read individually to the teacher at regular intervals throughout Key Stage 1. The frequency that pupils are heard individually is dependent on the year group they are in, and the stage they are at. This continues in Key Stage 2 until they have reached a high level of fluency and comprehension.

Children who are making progress below the expected level for their age continue to be heard regularly by teaching staff for as long as it is deemed necessary.

Reading intervention programmes are provided for those children who need extra support with reading skills, following the Essential Letters and Sounds intervention scheme.

## Reading Scheme

Our Key Stage 1 Reading Scheme consists of a variety of both fiction and non-fiction books matched entirely with the ELS progression.

Parents are encouraged to hear their child read *aloud*, in order to check fluency and understanding, as well as to encourage discussion. They are also asked to record reading done by their child other than reading from books provided by school.

This gives the teacher a broader picture of the child's reading experience and preferences, as well as information on progress.

In the Foundation Stage, key-ring words are also sent home for the children to practise harder to read and spell words and Blending Bookmarks are provided for children to practise blending skills with their parents. In Year 1 and 2 harder to read and spell words are sent home for the children to practise and a list of phonic words related to the phonic teaching each week.

Each class is able to visit our school library regularly, where they can take out fiction or non-fiction books from our very extensive range.

### Speaking and listening

Teacher assessment of speaking and listening is recorded in Year 2 and Year 6, however the development of oracy skills is given high prominence across the school. Opportunities are made throughout the curriculum to ensure that children use language to work together effectively, ensuring links are made between spoken language, learning and development. High-quality spoken language is modelled from teachers to the children. Children also have the opportunity to speak in front of peers in group work, sharing ideas, negotiating thinking, discussion such as challenge and agree, build relationships and performance opportunities.

### RESOURCES

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. There is an excellent selection of high-quality literature throughout the school for the children to read and enjoy.

The classrooms and communal areas have been developed to indicate that we are a '*Reading School*'. Each classroom is vibrant and engaging with equipment and useful learning resources clearly labelled. There are also inviting reading areas to promote reading for pleasure in class.

The classrooms have age-appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses for reference. Every year group has laminated key word mats suitable for that age group on the tables where children are working, to encourage accurate spelling. Classes provide laminated 'phonics and spelling mats', with high-frequency word lists for pupils to refer to when writing as well as 'Talk Like and Expert' displays.

All classrooms have a selection of texts within their reading areas. Access to the Internet is also available in each classroom along with iPads and other literacy-based IT packages.

The library contains a range of books for reference to support children's learning.

### SUBJECT MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the English subject team. The work of the subject team also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, by being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

An action plan is drawn up yearly. It outlines areas of strength and those for development. This is then reviewed termly by the team and discussed with the Headteacher. Staff meeting times are allocated to develop points from the action plan.

The subject team meet at least once a term in order to review progress with the action plan and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and areas for development in the subject. The subject team has specially allocated management time in order to enable them to review planning, samples of the children's work, and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school.

The named governor responsible for English meets with the subject leaders in order to review progress.

Reviewed by KG and SH Oct 2023