



All Saints CE (VC) First School, Busy Bees Nursery & Kingfisher Club

Policy on English

Date adopted: October 2022

To be reviewed: October 2024

Intent

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At All Saints CE First School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression*, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all of our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At All Saints CE First School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

After the systematic phonetical approach in EYFS and Year One the children will begin to learn spelling strategies and conventions whilst developing their understanding of new vocabulary. Explicit teaching of the common exception words occurs throughout the week to ensure children are able to confidently spell and apply these words within their writing.

Comprehension

At All Saints CE First School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose. Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. We use VIPERs (vocabulary, infer, predict, explain, retrieve and sequence/summarise) in Year 3 and 4 as a tool to develop the children's comprehension skills. This teaches the children to confidently use the 6 reading domains that form the National Curriculum, the areas the children need to know and understand when doing comprehension.

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English. At All Saints we know that our children need to master the following skills;

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing.

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions. We use Word Aware, which is a structured, whole school approach to promote the vocabulary development of all children. Right from EYFS, the children learn at least 3 new words each week. These words might be new concepts, linked to a text being studied or the current topic being taught in each class.

Handwriting

At All Saints CE First School we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive handwriting style. We use Letters Join's online handwriting resource and lesson planners from Year 1 onwards as the basis of our handwriting policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Children in Reception use the Little Wandle letter formation.

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Year 4, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and eventually speedy, joined up handwriting and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims

- To develop a neat, legible and speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 4, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letter forms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Expectations

- All teaching staff from Year 1 onwards, are encouraged to model the cursive style in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books
- Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Writing Composition

At All Saints CE First School, we strive for our children to be able to express themselves creatively and imaginatively through their writing. The children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different purposes and genres. Our children are exposed to many different examples of literature to develop their understanding of different texts. When children leave All Saints they should be well prepared to read and write confidently for a range of purposes and audiences.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons,
- summaries and evaluations

- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)
- Grammar, vocabulary and punctuation

We recognise that these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of these sets of skills through various methods at our school.

Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Busy Bees

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
 - sharing high-quality stories and poems
 - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
 - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
 - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

- We teach phonics for 20 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers. Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression:
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace. A ‘Catch-up’ programme has also been specifically designed to help children to catch-up to their peers and it covers phonics and reading.
- If any child in Year 3 or Year 4 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan ‘catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps.
- Children in Year 2, 3 and 4 who are ready to exit the Little Wandle programme move on and are taught spellings using the No-Nonsense Spelling programme.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week in Reception, Year One and Year Two

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
 - use books matched to the children’s secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments
 - are monitored by the class teacher
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children’s working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - decoding
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly

learn to blend and can begin to read books. In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Reading Comprehension

Teaching in Guided Reading sessions, in Year 3 and 4, focusses on developing pupils' competence in both word reading and comprehension as outlined in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Reading. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy decoding of unfamiliar printed words and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with their teacher and peers, as well as from reading and discussing a range of engaging stories, poems and non-fiction.

Home reading

- Decodable reading books are taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children from our school library, home reading book collections or from the library van.
 - We use the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources](#) to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions, read their reading practice book to an adult as often as possible.

Ensuring reading for pleasure

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books.
- Every classroom has a book area that encourages a love for reading.
- In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading area every day in their continuous provision.
- The children have a home reading diary. The parent/carer is encouraged to record comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will put comments in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- Each class visits the library van and the school library fortnightly, on alternate weeks.
- In Year 3 and 4, Everybody Read in Class (ERIC) time is used throughout the week to allow the children time to read for pleasure.

Handwriting

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. Once the children's fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used.

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place. Letter-join's lesson planners all include differentiation activities for extra practise/challenge.

Handwriting at home

Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home by using the pupil login for Letter Join. Children can watch the word and letter animations and practise and explore other handwriting resources on Letter-join.

Early Years

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- Enhancing gross motor skills such as air writing, pattern making and physical activities
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads etc.
- Becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary following the patterns used in Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised
- Correct sitting position and pencil grip

Year One and Two

Teaching progresses to two longer lessons per week:

- Continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- Strengthening cursive handwriting, learning and practise
- Numerals, capital and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practise

Year 3 and 4

In Year 3 and 4 the children continue handwriting lessons twice a week, ensuring the improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.

Writing Composition

Text Immersion

Teachers plan a range of engaging activities to help the children internalise the structure and pattern of language associated to the text type. These tasks can also be used to elicit the children's prior knowledge and areas that need to be taught

An exemplar text is provided, which demonstrates the features required at age related expectations. They are then in a position to read the text and start analysing the key features. In this way the class starts to co-construct a 'toolkit' for this type of text. Furthermore, specific features and content of the exemplar text are taught within discrete spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons, so the children learn the skills required to apply it into their planning and writing.

Example Immersion tasks:

- Deconstruct example text, creating a key relating to writing features (toolkit)
- Hot seating of a key character
- Descriptive writing linked to an image
- Freeze frames with thought/comment bubbles
- Story mapping
- Emotion graphs
- Debates
- Mind maps

Planning, Writing & Editing

Once the children have internalised a range of newly acquired skills, they are ready to start planning and writing. At this stage, it is important that the children feel safe to approach the planning and writing process, so the teacher constantly models and 'share writes' with the children.

We recognise that planning and writing take place together, therefore it is not always necessary to plan a text in whole. Sometimes a text can be planned and written in multiple stages. This way it allows the children to innovate and change their ideas in a developmental way.

Throughout the planning and writing stage, the teacher encourages the children to refer back to and strengthen their exemplar texts and 'toolkit'. This will encourage the children to model the structure, words and phrases, from the exemplar texts, and apply it into their planning and writing. Planning may be implicit or in the teaching. The exemplar text can also be used to support the planning and writing process. The children could plan to change an aspect of the exemplar text, rather than writing a whole new text. This approach especially helps struggling writers.

Throughout this process, the children are encouraged to share their planning and writing. This provides them with timely feedback, which they can apply immediately into editing their writing. This feedback could be from a teacher, TA or from a peer. Any changes that are made independently by the child, are to be completed using the same colour pen/pencil that they usually write. If the edits are following direct feedback, it is to be completed using a 'Green Polishing' pen.

Improving and Presenting

We recognise that children must be taught the skills of editing and improving, before they edit and improve their own writing. If required, teaching time is spent teaching these essential skills in a differentiated and focus driven manner.

Once secure, the children have time to alter their work in the light of what they have learnt. This stage will continue to focus on the next steps needed to support progression, so the children can become independent speakers and writers of this type of text. Finally, the children's writing should be published or displayed. It is important to provide children with a purpose for their writing so a classroom display or some sort of publishing is useful. Technology can be used here, to provide a meaningful and engaging cross-curricular link.

Additionally, this stage provides a further opportunity for the children to present their writing orally, therefore the teacher can plan extended opportunities for the children to fulfil spoken language objectives.

Independent Writing (Assessment)

At least once every half term, the children will be given an opportunity to complete an independent writing task. These will be selected from a unit that has been previously explored. A stimulus can be provided by the teacher or ideas shared by the children. Features of the chosen genre of writing should be discussed, sharing an oral 'toolkit' together as a class.

Pupils are then given some time to plan their writing, thinking carefully about what they will need to include to develop the style and quality of their writing.

Importantly, this stage allows the children an opportunity to reflect upon their success. Teachers are able to assess this piece of writing against ARE to ensure that a clear ongoing understanding of the child's progress is attained and any gaps in learning are and used to inform further planning.

Impact

Writing

The impact on our children at All Saints CE First School is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. By the end of Year 4, the majority of our children have made considerable progress from their starting points in EYFS. With the implementation of the writing journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children are becoming more confident writers and by the time they reach the end of Year 4, most genres of writing are familiar to them. Our children are also becoming more confident readers and they realise the importance of reading for pleasure along with reading for information.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross curricular writing standards have also improved and skills taught in the English lesson are transferred into other subjects. We hope that as children move on from us to further their education and learning that their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.

Phonics Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- Assessment for learning is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- Summative assessment is used:
 - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - Assessments will be scrutinised by the reading leader and the headteacher through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Phonics Statutory assessment

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Reading

The children will be able to name a range of books and authors that they have enjoyed reading. They have an engrained love of reading and feel confident in choosing books that suit their interest. Children are confident when discussing the content and themes of a text and are able to draw on different reading 'skills' such as inference or summarising in order to articulately express meaningful thoughts on a text.

Teachers regularly assess the children's reading in many ways through marking and conversations with pupils/colleagues. The class teacher will make a baseline assessment judgement, which will be based on early knowledge of the children and information

received from their previous year group/setting. The data is analysed and key trends are identified and support will be discussed and organised at the first pupil progress meeting.

Writing Composition

We firmly believe that the focus should be on 'learning' rather than teaching, and value the importance of our school assessment materials as a tool for all of our children in Key Stages 1 and 2. Self-evaluation and editing is key in getting children to understand what they can do well and what they need to improve on further.

Assessment in writing is an ongoing process, though summative samples are also undertaken with the children each term. Writing is assessed against year group objectives and results are then inputted into our Target Tracker assessment system where progress can be monitored. Assessment information is gathered from independent writing tasks and work during English lessons but also from the many opportunities we create for extended writing during our History, Geography and Science work. We moderate children's writing samples within school and with other schools when possible to ensure consistency.