



# Fleet Primary School

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## English Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out our aims and our practice in the teaching of English: reading, writing, phonics and spelling, grammar and speaking and listening. It is informed by current national guidance and has been written to ensure consistency and progression throughout the school, reflecting a whole school agreement. English influences much of what we do at Fleet; children at our school love to read, write and perform. Where appropriate and possible, written work is related to our topic-based creative curriculum and teachers endeavour to create meaningful sessions and activities that are rich, relevant and stimulating for the children.

## 2. Aims for our policy

- To reflect and celebrate the diversity of language and culture in our school through the choice of texts that we work with
- To provide a language-rich environment that encourages children to become readers and writers
- To foster a love of books and reading by sharing stimulating, high-quality literature across a range of genres
- To effectively teach reading skills to help develop understanding and enjoyment of a range of texts.
- To teach children to become skilled and confident writers able to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To foster in pupils the confidence, self-esteem and inter-personal skills to communicate and express their opinions through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding and in a range of situations.
- To equip children with the basic tools they will need to tackle the modern world; spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting.

## 3. Planning

Lesson planning is guided by the National Curriculum, in service training and the Local Authority Literacy Consultants. Planning for writing is linked to the termly class topic and the wider curriculum. Our curriculum overview for English sets out which genres each year group will study to ensure balance and progression is achieved. Teachers use core texts as the basis for the teaching sequence which they plan using objectives from the curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and teachers use whole texts rather than worksheets. A variety of teaching methods are utilised to set learning objectives.

Differentiation is principally by outcome and by support; where possible all children are still working towards the same learning objectives. During the lesson the teacher will lead ability guided writing and reading groups of about 6. Next steps will continually be put in place for groups of children and issues will be tackled ensuring children move forward with their learning. Teachers plan time within writing sessions for children to reflect on their marked work, respond to teacher prompts and edit accordingly.

## 4. Speaking and Listening

Talk is integral to our curricular experiences; children at Fleet are encouraged to use language and communication in a purposeful way. Talk partners, drama and role-play are regularly used to practise speaking and listening skills. Many opportunities are provided for children to listen carefully to stories and discussion and respond in different ways e.g oral rehearsal as preparation for writing, assembly participation, lessons and during our regular end of the day story-time in classes. Each class performs a termly assembly, beginning in the summer term in Reception during which they showcase their topic through drama and sharing of their learning. There are also other drama events during the year including infant and junior winter shows.

## 5. Reading

At Fleet our aim is for children to have a love of reading and books as well as becoming fluent and life-long confident readers. We deem it very important that children understand that reading can have many purposes e.g. sharing ideas, understanding stories, following instructions, developing knowledge.

Parents and carers are actively involved in reading with their children, both at home and school. Reading in the early years includes talking about books as well as sharing books, reading and developing language and communication. The children throughout the school have a set story time in the afternoon just before they are collected and much thought goes into the selection of these novels. A set time is also timetabled every day to teach reading which is in the form of a rotation and includes:

- **Reading aloud to children** - to share an enjoyment of reading. It develops their comprehension, enhances their language and provides a model for their own writing.
- **Guided reading** – this enables teachers to support small groups of children who use similar reading strategies and are able to read texts at a similar level. Texts are selected by the class teacher, starting with colour banded books and moving to short stories or chapter books.
- **Shared reading** – this allows children to read together and access more challenging texts
- **Modelled reading** – the adult demonstrates specific reading behaviours e.g. comprehension and word identification strategies.
- **Independent reading** - 1: 1 reading sessions with teacher/member of the class team. There is a dedicated library area in each classroom that contain a range of high quality texts. We also are fortunate to have a whole school library which is well stocked with a variety of books. Children are encouraged to borrow books from there throughout the week.
- Although reading skills are largely taught by the adults in classes, we also have a team of volunteers who work with children to offer further support. These adults are either with reading charity Beanstalk or our own parent volunteers, who are trained by our teachers. This allows children to gain more one to one time reading with a trained adult over the week.

## 6. Writing

Teachers plan writing that is linked to the termly topic (to promote engagement) and each unit has a purposeful outcome. The children are supported in their writing in KS1 and KS2 by success criteria which allow objectives and tasks to be tangible for them and helps them measure their success and progress. Alongside writing, children learn phonics, punctuation, spelling and grammar. We teach that writing can be for a range of purposes e.g informative, narrative, discussion. Across the school children learn about the characteristics of different genres and the skills needed to write in them through sequenced activities. Extended pieces of writing are developed and encouraged. We strive to create a stimulating and supportive environment in the school and in classrooms that promote reading and writing. Writing is displayed all over the school and each classroom features a working wall that evolves as each unit of writing progresses. These walls record the spelling, punctuation and grammar strategies that are the backbone of writing composition and will support children as they develop their own independent extended pieces of writing. *(See the Teaching and Learning Policy - Dynamic classroom environments and effective resourcing)*

At Fleet we have a strong emphasis on writing creatively in addition to ensuring key writing skills are achieved. Stimulating first hand experiences are often provided e.g trips and stamina for writing is built through providing opportunities to write for extended periods e.g diaries documenting a residential trip.

Writing is celebrated through displays, the school newsletter and website, assemblies and other events. We have a whole school focus on writing during our 'Writing Week' which coincides with World Book Day. During that week special events and competitions aim to raise the profile of writing for all children.

## 7. Phonics

We teach phonics using the Letters and Sounds scheme of work to enable the delivery of a progressive programme of word reading skills. Discrete phonics lessons are taught daily in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and phonics is incorporated across the curriculum where possible. At the end of Year 1, all children sit the government phonics screening check. Any children who fail to meet the expected standard are targeted for support in year 2 and will re-sit the check at the end of year 2.

- **Phase 1 (Nursery/Reception):** (this phase is mostly taught in Nursery class). Children explore sounds and develop their listening skills e.g. environmental sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration.
- **Phase 2(Reception):** By the end of phase 2, children should be able to read some VC (vowel-consonant) and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words and to spell them. They also learn to read and spell some high frequency 'tricky' words like 'the' and 'go'. The Nursery class teacher starts teaching this phase in the summer term of the school year.
- **Phase 3 and 4 (Reception):** Children begin to read and write one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes (letters to represent sound in words – l – ea – fl). They blend and segment CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant), CCVC and CVCC words for reading and spelling and use their phonic knowledge when trying to read and write more complex words.
- **Phase 5 (Throughout Year 1):** Alternative spellings for sounds are introduced. Children learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for these.
- **Phase 6 (Throughout Year 2 and beyond):**
- Phonics lessons continue to take place daily. Children are taught to read words automatically; decoding them quickly and silently because their sounding and blending routine is now established. By this phase, children should be able to read hundreds of words using one of three strategies:
  - Reading them automatically
  - Decoding them quickly and silently
  - Decoding them aloud

## 8. Spelling

Teaching children strategies for learning to spell words is important and providing lots of rehearsal opportunities is vital if words are going to be transferred into long term memory. As with learning words and rehearsing words, it is necessary to explicitly teach children how to apply their own spelling knowledge in their own independent writing. Because of this, at Fleet we have moved away from the traditional testing of spellings to a more observational form of assessment, giving the children lots of opportunities to practise and 'apply'. The aim is for children to learn about, explore, have fun with words and in the long run – become better spellers!

From Years 2-6 we use a two - weekly cycle of learning words around a particular convention or spelling pattern. During the two-week cycle the children receive short spelling sessions (see below) which include a range of different activities to support the learning of new patterns through reading and writing. At different points during this cycle the children carry out activities in their spelling journals (Years 2-4) or SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) books (Years 5 – 6).

We use the following sequence to teach the objectives and statutory requirements of the National Curriculum:

- **Revisit, explain, use**
- **Teach, model, define**
- **Practise, explore, investigate**
- **Apply, assess, reflect** Each class timetables two 20 minute or three 15 minute sessions per week for the explicit teaching of spelling. Subsequently the children are given a spelling rule or new letter sounds to learn for their home learning which they are tested on the following week.

Spelling is also taught within the context of everyday writing e.g. links to the text type the class is immersed in so children have opportunities to see how the word is used successfully and what it means, and we address individual needs during writing tasks. In Year 1 three commonly misspelled words are identified and circled for children to correct and practise and from Year 2 (spring term) – Year 6 every high frequency word misspelled is circled for the children to correct using their reflection (editing) pens.

In addition to this, KS1 children have class dictionaries. They are encouraged to ‘have a go’ at spelling a word in their dictionaries before the class team assists.

## 9. Handwriting

The Nelson handwriting scheme is used as a basis for our teaching, and teachers model and ensure that children use the correct pencil grip. There is an expectation at Fleet that children take pride and care over their handwriting. It is also crucial that they have a good standard of presentation generally.

Handwriting is timetabled to be taught 2- 3 times a week in classes and where possible is integrated across the curriculum. In the early years, there is an emphasis on fine and gross motor skills (for pre-writing) and we use a range of strategies and resources to support this e.g ‘funky fingers’, tracing, colouring within guidelines, ribbon movement, and rolling hoops. EYFS teachers also use a dyslexia-friendly scheme where the letters are categorised according to starting points and formation e.g ‘dive letters’, ‘magic c letters’, ‘tricky letters’. This moves onto correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters.

By the end of the Reception Year all children will have been introduced to all letters of the alphabet through patterns and introduced to independent writing. We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly from Year 2. By the end of year 6 we aim for all children to be able to write using the correct joins legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.

Extra handwriting groups take place in classes throughout the school where the class teacher feels additional support is needed.

## 10. Grammar

Grammar is given a high priority at Fleet and our objectives are in line with the new national curriculum. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is planned and taught to fit in with relevant genres of writing. Therefore objectives are embedded within the lesson. This could be through a ‘starter’ directly linked with the teaching objective or as the main body of the lesson. Grammar is also taught discretely where necessary. Teachers work hard to familiarise children with the relevant meta-language and give them the tools to identify word classes and sentence types. The overall aim to help children understand how to use grammar correctly.

Grammar teaching starts in Year 1 with basic sentence construction including full stops and capital letters. Children at Fleet are encouraged to identify word classes early on in Years 1 and 2.

## 11. Inclusion

Fleet is a very inclusive school. As previously mentioned in this policy, where possible during English lessons children work to the same objective. Children are then supported or extended on their learning through guided groups with adults in the class or resources such as word banks, sentence starters, sound mats etc. Pupils who have adult support through a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health Care Plan are given personalised reading or writing targets by the class teacher and SENDCO which they work on through the term. All children at Fleet are given many language opportunities, through speaking and drama activities both in class and in the wider school (such a class assemblies and school shows) as we understand that language development aids writing. Children are encouraged to rehearse and record work orally where appropriate. Key words, common spellings and topic vocabulary are displayed around the classroom, especially on our working walls. Children’s writing is celebrated and valued, for example by

displaying it around the school, reading it aloud in weekly sharing assemblies or publishing extracts in our school newsletter.

## APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy.

### Formative assessment in Reading

In early years, children are assessed against the 'Development Matters' goals. In KS1 onwards, teachers set guided group reading targets at regular intervals and these are all recorded in the guided reading records. Objectives are shared with the children. Running records are used to assess reading levels. These start in Reception and are continued in KS2 if a child's level of reading is a cause for concern. They are provided with appropriately levelled books until they reach 'Expected' for their Year group.

### Summative assessment in Reading

- Year 1 take the **Phonics** screening check in June
- Children in Years 2 and 6 take end of Key stage national curriculum tests which check a range of reading comprehension skills.

### Formative assessment in Writing

**Success criteria:** As mentioned, for every unit of writing, children are given 'steps to success' which they use to guide them with structure and language features. These have a minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 criteria. They are numbered and children from Year 3 (summer term) – Y6 are expected to mark where they have used these in the text. Teachers plan time within writing sessions for children to reflect on their marked work, respond to teacher prompts and edit accordingly using 'reflection' (editing) pens.

### Green and Pink marking code:

At the end of an extended piece of writing, the teachers mark each child's work. In depth marking takes place roughly once a week. The teacher highlights 2 sentences in green where the child has been successful (green for 'got it') After this they highlight a sentence/area of the writing in (pink for practise).

### Prompts:

At the bottom of the child's work, there will be a prompt for the child to improve their work in one of the following ways:

- **Example** – 2 example sentences are written which are slightly more sophisticated than the child's writing but in line with their ability level, thus extending them and supporting them. The child will be required to select the sentence they believe to be most effective.
- **Scaffold** – A sentence that has been started for the child to complete is written. This is slightly more challenging than an example prompt.
- **Reminder** – A note is written for the child to improve an area of their work allowing the child to reflect themselves on how they can improve their writing. This is the most challenging of all the prompts.

The type of prompt chosen by the teacher will be made clear to the children to familiarise them with the language.

As the children move up through the school, the teacher familiarises the children with a range of prompts. By Year 5, the children are expected to understand and demonstrate the ability to respond to a range of prompts.

## Writing samples

Each term, an assessment week is timetabled and teachers from Years 1- 6 carry out an independent writing task with each pupil in their class. The sample is marked using the Camden assessment grids writing criteria. Teachers use these grids to assess each child as 'working below', 'working towards', 'Expected' or 'Working at greater depth'.

## Summative assessment in Writing

- **Since 2013 final grades at end of KS1 and 2 are teacher assessed.** As we do termly assessments these, along with the children's English books, help to form a profile for final teacher assessments at the end of Year 6;
- Externally set and assessed Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) test takes place in Year 6.

*See Assessment Policy for more information on whole school monitoring and evaluation, tracking and work sampling.*