



Fleet Primary School

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English Policy

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Issue Date: April 2022

Review: April 2025

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 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 each term.

Differentiation is principally by outcome and by support; where possible all children are still working towards the same learning objectives. During some lessons the teacher will lead ability guided writing and reading groups of about six. 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. Children take books home each week to share. Reading in the early years includes talking about books as well as sharing books, reading and developing language and communication. Early reading is linked to the children's phonics learning to help them contextualise what they have learnt.

The children throughout the school have a set story time and teachers choose these texts carefully. 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 with the reading charity Bookmark. This allows children to gain more one to one time reading with a trained adult over the week.
- In Years R and 1, teachers use books which link to our 'Little Wandle' phonics programme to teach reading. In Years 2-6, teachers use a variety of different texts to teach reading.

Early reading

Early reading has a high priority at Fleet. High quality texts are at the heart of our planning and we are always taking opportunities to increase our collection in all year groups to ensure children are able to access classic and new literature. Book corners in each classroom have high status and have been recently rejuvenated to ensure they are interesting and accessible for all our children. Teachers have sorted books into genres to support children choosing texts.

Our recent adoption of the Little Wandle phonics system has raised the profile of phonics and early reading throughout the school, with whole staff training to enable all adults in school from Early Years through to Year 6 to understand the early reading journey for our children. School governors and parents have also taken part in sessions, explaining the new phonics scheme and parents have been supported by class teachers in ways to help their children at home.

A number of teaching strategies and interventions are planned to support language development at Fleet. From Nursery upwards, Word Aware is used to support the use of key vocabulary throughout the curriculum. This is shared with parents to enable further support at home through a 'Snapshot' that provides an overview of the learning planned for the term. In Nursery, Dialogic Reading takes place daily, with a high quality focus text used across the week. The children have experience of predicting the story,

hearing the story regularly, thinking in detail about the text with modelled questions, forming their own comments and questions about the text and using props to retell the story.

In Reception and Year 1, reading is taught through the Little Wandle Phonics programme with new texts that support this system. Children take home two phonetically decodable books according to the sounds they have learned in class, and two books that can be read to them to help promote a love of reading and listening to stories. Children choose these last two books independently to help them develop their own reading tastes. This system has become more rigorous this year, with books closely matched to the sounds taught so each child should be able to read the whole book given. As a school, we invested in the Collins books which have been published to go alongside the Wandle scheme. As the children progress through the school, reading books are chosen according to their reading level. Children in Year 2 and further up the school that still require phonetically decodable books are provided with these to help support their reading development. After children have developed secure phonic knowledge, they are provided with reading books that support the development of fluency, comprehension and reasoning.

6. Writing

Teachers plan writing that is linked to the termly topic in order 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. Children are encouraged to self or peer assess against these objectives. 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 tasks are also built into our topic planning. 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 often coincides with World Book Day. During that week special events and competitions aim to raise the profile of writing for all children.

7. Phonics

The school follows 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' as its systematic synthetic phonics programme. The Little Wandle phonics system supports progress from Nursery onwards. Nursery begin with Phase 1 phonics development in the Autumn term and start Little Wandle Phase 2 in the second half of Spring term. Nursery are introduced to the grapheme images and phoneme sounds at the pace suitable for the cohort, giving the children a head start ready for Reception. Once children are settled into Reception phonics sessions build gradually to develop stamina for longer sessions. Phonics is taught daily in Reception, Year 1 and in the first term of Year 2 (as required). Plans are followed carefully to ensure consistency and fidelity to the scheme across the year groups. Children who require additional support receive this in class from trained TA support.

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.

Workshops and open morning are organised for parents and carers to help them become familiar with the phonics curriculum and teachers in Reception and Year 1 share the phonics objectives regularly.

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 independent writing. We give the children lots of opportunities to practise and 'apply' their spelling knowledge and also do short spelling tests every few weeks. 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, taken from the National Curriculum. During the two-week cycle the children receive short spelling sessions which include a range of different activities to support the learning of new patterns through reading and writing, often through informal game based activities. Years 2-6 have a set of twelve spelling lists which are shared with parents and carers. Children are encouraged to practise these at home and at school and then do an informal spelling test on these words. Results are shared with children and they try to progress through the lists.

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. Starting in Year 1 we begin to identify three commonly misspelled words underline these for children to correct and practise and this then continues from Year 2 – Year 6. Children correct these words using their reflection (editing) pens as part of response to marking within extended pieces of writing.

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. Teachers choose specific grammar objectives to cover when they are planning their English units, ensuring that there is coverage of all year group content by the end of the year. Grammar objectives are embedded within lessons. This could be through a 'starter' directly linked with the teaching objective or as the main body of the lesson. We try to embed our grammar teaching within our English lessons where possible, as this gives children context to their learning, although we do teach grammar 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. Vocabulary

We want children to expand and develop their vocabulary over their time at Fleet. We use the 'Word Aware' method to teach specific vocabulary. Teachers choose vocabulary relevant to their topic when they plan their topic overviews and teach this to children weekly. The number of words taught per week increases as children go up the school. Once children have been taught the word, they are encouraged to use it both when speaking and in their written work. New vocabulary is displayed in classrooms so that children are reminded of it frequently. It is also shared with parents and carers via our termly 'topic snapshot'.

12. 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 as 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 of all levels 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. Teachers keep informal, formative records and notes of their weekly guided reading sessions and then use these to inform their termly assessment judgements on 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 2-6 take termly ‘PIRA’ reading papers to let them get in the habit of writing their answers to comprehension style questions. These tests are used internally as part of teachers’ assessment judgements.
- 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 – including self and peer assessment

For every unit of writing, children are given ‘success criteria’ which they use to guide them with structure and language features. The number of different criteria depends on the text type and age of the year group: generally younger classes will have fewer objectives to work on than older ones. From Year 3 onwards, in extended pieces of writing children are expected to either mark specifically within their texts where they have met these success criteria or assess how well they have met them in their writing overall. In some sessions, they then work alone or with a peer to look back at their writing and, using the success criteria and their own assessment, find a place or places where they could improve or add to their work, for example by address one of the criteria they did not meet. In Year 1 (starting from Summer term) and Year 2, children are encouraged to do some self or peer assessment (for example, using smiley faces) against simple success criteria for their work in order to get them used to the idea.

Teachers plan one ‘cold write’ per term. This is an unsupported piece of writing, where the teacher gives less specific guidance and build up for the children than they usually would during a lesson. However, this piece of writing also links to a unit which has already previously been covered so children know how to address the writing. These ‘cold write’ pieces are used as part of our assessment judgements to see how far children are applying teaching independently.

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 1 or 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.

Teachers are able to choose prompts based on the child’s ability and their specific learning objectives. As the children move up through the school, the teacher familiarises the children with a range of prompts. By upper KS2, the children are expected to understand and demonstrate the ability to respond to a range of prompts. 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.

We are keen to promote independent editing skills at Fleet. Therefore, in conjunction with the green and pink system, from Summer term of Year 2 onwards, teachers also use a code to encourage children to make some independent changes to their work. The letters CL (capital letters are either used incorrectly or missing), P (punctuation is either incorrect or missing), S (something in the sentence doesn’t make sense – usually an incorrect use of tense or a missing word) and Sp (a spelling mistake of a word which has previously been given to the child) are written in the margins of the child’s work. During the review and respond sessions, children then respond to their specific comments and also look for these letters and make corrections where necessary.

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.

Home learning and parental support

We encourage parents to take an active, supportive role towards their child’s English learning at Fleet. Children in KS2 are given weekly reading tasks to complete at home. These short written tasks relate to either the class reader or their guided reading group text and are completed either in their reading diaries or by submitting to the school’s online learning platform, Seesaw. This allows parents to see what their children are reading at school. Spelling patterns are also sent home for children to learn.

In the Early Years and Year 1, children take home two phonetically decodable books weekly according to the sounds they have learned in class, and two books that can be read to them to help promote a love of reading and listening to stories.

In our termly parent meetings, parents are given specific feedback about their child’s progress in reading and writing, alongside some targets they can work on at home to support their child’s learning.