

Bledlow Ridge School



English Policy

Date agreed: November 2023

Review date: November 2025

Aims

Our aims are that all pupils at Bledlow Ridge School, regardless of cultural background, gender or ability will develop the necessary skills to:

- Communicate clearly and effectively in speech and writing;
- Listen with concentration and understanding;
- Be enthusiastic, responsive and knowledgeable readers.

Objectives

We aim to develop pupils' abilities to use and apply their knowledge and skills of speaking & listening, reading, and writing.

To develop as effective readers, pupils should be taught:

- To read with fluency, accuracy and understanding;
- To understand and respond to the texts they read, using inference and deduction;
- The specific skills necessary in order to read for information;
- To develop understanding of and appreciation of literary texts and of non-fiction and non-literary texts;
- To identify and comment on features of English at word, sentence and text level, using appropriate terminology.

To develop as effective writers, pupils should be taught:

- Compositional skills – developing ideas and communicating meaning to a reader, using a wide-ranging vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently;
- Planning and drafting skills;
- Presentational skills – accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting;
- How written standard English varies in degrees of formality and some of the differences between standard and non-standard English usage;
- Language structure.

To develop effective speaking and listening, pupils should be taught:

- To speak with confidence in a range of contexts, adapting their speech for a range of purposes and audiences;
- To listen, understand and respond to others;
- To talk effectively as members of a group;
- To participate in a wide range of activities, including debate, role play, presentation, improvisation and recitation and to evaluate their own and others' contributions; The grammatical constructions that are characteristic of spoken standard English and to apply this knowledge in a range of contexts;
- About how language varies in form and context.

By the end of Key Stage 2, we aim for a child to be able to:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, applying a range of independent strategies to proof-read and correct;
- Enjoy books and read for enjoyment;
- Be interested in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- Understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation;
- Be developing the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
- Have at their disposal a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

Curriculum content

Pupils' abilities in the three main areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, are developed within an integrated English programme, which follows the National Curriculum for English 2014. We base our teaching on high quality texts that are chosen to complement project work as and when possible, but not to the detriment of breadth.

Phonics

Intent

At Bledlow Ridge School, we are passionate about ensuring all children become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers, and we believe that Phonics provides the foundation in supporting children to develop these skills in order for this to become achievable.

At Bledlow Ridge School we use the government validated systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) called 'Little Wandle: Letters & Sounds Revised'. The programme is designed to teach children to read from Reception to Year 2, using the skill of decoding and blending sounds together to form words. The Little Wandle programme provides a full progression through all commonly occurring GPCs (sounds), working from simple to more complex, and taking into account the frequency of their occurrence in the most commonly encountered words.

We start teaching Phonics in 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 our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Bledlow Ridge 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.

The teaching of Phonics is fast-paced, and we encourage all children to actively participate in each lesson, and by encouraging the children to take ownership of their learning we are continuously striving for excellence.

At Bledlow Ridge School we ensure that we provide all children with the fundamental skills that will enable them to be confident and fluent readers.

Implementation

At Bledlow Ridge School, we believe that reading and writing is an essential life skill and we are dedicated to enabling our children to become enthused, engaged and successful lifelong readers and writers. To support this, we practise the 'Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised' scheme and implement the following:

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for up to 30 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.

We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress:

- 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 Phonics lessons in Year 2

Phonics is taught for up to 30 minutes three times a week to pupils who did not pass the phonics screening in Year 1.

An initial assessment ensures that gaps are acknowledged and planned for. As well as filling gaps in knowledge, an emphasis on revising Phase 5 from Year 1 Summer Term is a priority. This prepares the children for the re-scheduled Screening Test taking place in June.

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 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.

Any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan precision teaching lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp sessions last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Pupils who are not yet achieving age related reading expectations have weekly interventions delivered by the class teacher. The intervention focuses on pre-teaching the guided reading text, supporting with the understanding of key vocabulary and inference of the text.

Additional Phonics and Reading support for vulnerable children

As needed, children throughout the school receive additional Phonics 'keep up' sessions either on a 1:1 basis or in a small group. Specific, targeted provision will be detailed in pupils' Learning Plans.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

Staff in school have been trained to teach reading using the Little Wandle scheme.

During phonics lessons, 1:1 precision teaching and small group work, all staff use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to learn and recall phonics taught. This supports pupils' understanding and reduces cognitive load.

Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.

Lesson templates, prompt cards and how to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.

The Reading Leader and SLT use the audit and prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Reading

At Bledlow Ridge School, **Reading** is fundamental.

Intent

Reading is a life skill which is the cornerstone to enabling our children to become articulate communicators and we use the National Curriculum to do this effectively. We believe that all children should have the opportunity to be fluent, confident readers who are able to successfully comprehend and understand a wide range of texts.

We want pupils to develop a love of reading, a good knowledge of a range of authors and be able to understand more about the world in which they live through the knowledge they gain from texts. It is not only key for academic success across the whole curriculum but remains a crucial lifeline which prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. The aim for all of our children is to be able to read fluently and with confidence in many subjects. The foundations for successful reading at Bledlow Ridge School are formed through our comprehensive phonics programme: Little Wandle

At Bledlow Ridge School, we understand the importance parents and carers have in supporting their child to develop both word reading and comprehension skills, and so we aim to encourage a home-school partnership which enables parents and carers to understand how to enhance the skills being taught in school through good quality texts.

Implementation

There are many layers to the effective teaching of reading at Bledlow Ridge School.

How we build our reading culture

At Bledlow Ridge School, reading is an essential part of our curriculum offer. To ensure that our reading culture is sustained and embedded we use a range of strategies that are consistently evolving to adapt to the current needs of our pupils-if they see an adult, they see a reader.

All classes have reading areas where pupils can access a range of books.

EYFS: Reading for pleasure is prioritised. The reading area is accessible to all children; there is a range of books for pupils to choose from. Cuddly toys and cushions make this area a comfortable and inviting place for children to read on their own or share a book with a friend.

Stop and Read sessions

Dedicated time on every year groups timetable for adults to read aloud a quality text.

Guided Reading

We use 'Reading Explorers Whole-class text' to support the teaching of reading from Year 2-Year 6.

Reading Explorers focusses on implementing a skills-based approach to the teaching and learning of reading, The series provides teachers with a wide variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, which allow children to access, interpret and understand what they are reading. It increases the child's knowledge and understanding of

why certain words are chosen by an author. It gives the reader the chance to speculate on the tone and purpose of the texts, as well as consider both texts' themes and audience.

Reading Enrichment

Once a year, during the autumn term, teachers share a wordless book with their class. This is used as a stimulus to inspire our children to become authors. They have the opportunity to rewrite the story, using the pictures from the book. They get to share their stories with other children and adults in the school.

Buddy Reading

Specific children get to share a book with a buddy from another class. They enjoy reading and discussing the book that they have chosen together.

Reading Eggs

Many pupils in the school have the opportunity to use reading eggs to support their development and enjoyment of reading. Reading eggs is an educational app to help children become fluent and proficient readers. The learning resource supports children's reading journey with carefully designed online reading games and activities that are easy to follow, self-paced, and highly engaging for young learners.

Language-rich texts for English lessons

Whole school texts are used throughout the year. Each class teaches specific writing through language-rich texts to engage the children.

Writing

Intent

At Bledlow Ridge School we believe literacy and speaking are key life skills. Our writing curriculum supports children to develop their spoken language skills and then apply them to their writing, across a range of genres, through teaching composition, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling. We endeavour to prepare all pupils for a successful transition to secondary school as confident, creative writers with high standards of spoken and written English. We aim to support all children to develop into articulate and imaginative communicators, who are well-equipped with the skills they need to become life-long learners.

Our teachers are enthusiastic and passionate, and model high expectations, providing all children with the tools and knowledge necessary to become successful writers. By modelling high standards of writing, we aim for each child to grow as a confident and independent writer, who is able to analyse and edit their own work to ensure it is effective and appropriate for the audience and purpose. We strive to ensure that English is enjoyed by all pupils and that it challenges them to be creative and produce high-quality pieces of writing.

Implementation

At Bledlow Ridge School our pupils are stimulated by a wide range of books which support them in writing for different purposes and for a range of audiences. These books are carefully selected by teachers to ensure they link into our topics and continue to encourage our pupils' love for reading. This allows us to teach the characteristics of different genres, features of layout and presentation effectively. Teaching is planned so that grammar and punctuation is taught in the context of the individual literacy units as set out in the National Strategies for English. We have a whole school medium term plan document which ensures that a sufficient progression of skills and genres are taught as the children move through the school. Teachers model the process

of writing to ensure children produce high quality pieces of work. Children are given daily feedback and scaffolds where appropriate: we believe that 'in the moment' feedback is the most effective way to allow children to make immediate progress. Children are taught and encouraged to independently edit their work using purple pens. We differentiate and support each child to ensure that they are challenged to make excellent progress. Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities to use computing to support teaching and learning in English lessons are planned for and used as appropriate.

Pupils are taught to write for different purposes and for a range of audiences; their writing is celebrated around the school on numerous displays.

Children work towards creating longer pieces of writing at the end of a unit (usually one long piece every two weeks), as well as an extended piece of writing in a different curriculum area every half term. This helps children to develop writing stamina, confidence and independence, and helps them to apply their learning from their spelling and grammar lessons throughout the week.

Speaking and listening

We aim to ensure skills coverage and progression throughout the school, and to assess whether children meet national expectations.

The National Curriculum (2014) places emphasis on children being able to organise their thoughts and ideas for the purposes of debate, discussion, explanation and narration. There is also more focus on social awareness; one of its objectives is: 'gaining, maintaining and monitoring the interest of the listener(s).' Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils and opportunities are given across the curriculum for children to revisit, apply and extend the speaking and listening skills that they have been explicitly taught.

Statutory requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1 and 2 (2013) and in the English Appendix 1 and 2 (2013):

'The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum 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. The national curriculum for English 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
- 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; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

The Governing Body

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

Organisation and management

The English Curriculum is delivered primarily using the National Curriculum for English 2014. The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum.

Teaching and learning

As in all other curriculum areas, teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and pupils are grouped accordingly. This includes year group teaching; pupils grouped together who are of similar or mixed ability or pupils working in pairs or individually, as is deemed appropriate for the teaching session planned.

Differentiation

In line with the general aims of the school and in particular the aims of the SEND Policy; work in English is clearly differentiated so that the needs of all able pupils are met. Differentiation may be by outcome, especially perhaps most in the area of speaking and listening, but in addition to this, teachers will also differentiate by:

- Teaching strategies, methods, pace and language:
- Use of different teaching materials and resources for different groups of pupils or individuals;
- Task;
- Level of intervention provided;
- Level of autonomy and choice offered to pupils.

Assessment

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy. In addition to this, tests include the following:

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Reading and Spelling Tests Years 1-6

Optional SATs papers in Years 3, 4 and 5

SATs Years 2-6

All pupils are given regular written and oral feedback and next steps in their written work. Children are assessed against the National Curriculum using targets in the back of their books. This support pupils to take ownership of their own learning and understand what they need to achieve.

Appropriate interventions are planned for those children who do not meet expectations during termly pupil progress meetings with SLT, SENCD0 and class teachers.

Pupil work is moderated on a regular basis to ensure consensus among teachers (internally and externally). Pupils are also assessed according to national expectations pupil progress in English is reported to parents in an interim report and the annual written report.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment.

Equal opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity or home background.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through regular and effective monitoring. This monitoring and resultant evaluation will reflect on the teaching, effectiveness of materials used and pupil progress. It will be carried out using the medium-term planning sheets, work sampling, learning walks and lesson observation. The aim, as in all curriculum areas, is to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning.