



English Policy

Members of Staff Responsible	Catherine Prior (Phonics, Early Reading and Spelling), Natalie Saunders (Writing), Suzanna Chastney (Speaking and Learning)
Position	English Subject Leader
Date	September 2023
Date of next review	September 2024

Please read in conjunction with the

- *English National Curriculum*
- *English Action Plan*
- *Handwriting Policy*
- *Phonics and Spelling Policy*
- *Teaching and Learning Policy*
- *Marking Policy*

At Thurnham C.E. Infant School, we see English as a very important part of our curriculum. English is taught in discrete sessions daily and is also taught as part of cross curricular topic work. English encompasses many threads, including reading (decoding and comprehension), writing (composition and transcription), use of the spoken word and drama. All of these threads overlap and are of equal importance.

This policy is underwritten by our school Christian value of **Love**. This forms an integral part of all English teaching.

Our Super powers of **Resilience, Brain Power and Independence** underpin all our teaching and learning.

Equal Opportunities

Thurnham C.E. Infant School is committed to promoting the principles and practices of equality and inclusion. A whole school approach is used to ensure all children receive equality of opportunity - not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that each child may learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. We acknowledge and respond to the differing needs of all children, whatever their cultural or ethnic background and experiences and whatever their physical and educational needs. We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development and we undertake to make reasonable adjustments to enable all to participate and feel valued and supported.

Thurnham C.E. Infant School is fully committed to avoiding all forms of discrimination as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (including February 2013 update). This applies to all pupils, parents and staff members and includes inappropriate discrimination on grounds of gender, age, religion or belief, physical ability or disability, learning ability, other special education needs or academic or sporting ability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, family, culture or linguistic background), marital status and civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

1 Aims

Our aims at Thurnham C.E. Infant School for teaching English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;

- to help children become confident, independent, enthusiastic and reflective readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge. Children will be able to decode individual words and understand the whole text;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and to recognise its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction. Children will learn to plan and create draft versions then edit, redraft and improve their written work.

2 Teaching and Learning Style

Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a whole-class focused grammar or word building activity, a whole-class reading or writing activity, a guided or independent activity, and a whole-class session to review progress and learning. Whilst there is a proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity is an essential opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and genres, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonic games. In addition, a discrete twenty-minute phonics or spelling session is taught daily. Children use iPads and multimedia resources in English lessons where it enhances their learning. We encourage children to use and apply this learning in other areas of the curriculum.

In all classes, we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we use differentiated group work, while in others children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas through a scaffold of challenges. Class teachers and teaching assistants support children and enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals. Children are given regular opportunities to work in mixed ability groupings and use peer support and review.

3 English Curriculum Planning

At Thurnham we use the Pathways to Writing (P2W) scheme of teaching and learning. Each year group's Long Term Plan details what we teach throughout the year. Medium Term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term and these are taken directly from the P2W planning documents. These define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term and the whole year. The subject leader is responsible for reviewing and monitoring these plans. Short Term (weekly) plans provide the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson. They also include details of what the children need to do to be successful. These are shared and stored centrally. Again, these are based on the P2W scheme.

4 Spoken Word

We follow the National Curriculum (2013) guidelines for use of the spoken word. We view this as an extremely important part of English, especially in the progress towards composition and writing. It is used to orally rehearse before writing and to model the process of editing work. In KS1, all children have 'response partners' to discuss ideas with.

Children are encouraged to take turns at speaking and listening and to share and repeat ideas. Some speaking time will be structured and modelled by the teacher and some will be led by the children. Drama is used regularly and children in KS1 learn simple debating skills.

Foundation Stage have 'Show and Tell' sessions where children are encouraged to bring items in from home to talk to their peers about. This begins during Term 2.

5 Reading

We follow the National Curriculum (2013) guidelines for reading.

- **Opportunities**

We aim to help the children become fluent readers for life by introducing them to the power and pleasure of literature. Each classroom has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and each class has a book corner, both inside and outside the classroom. The emphasis will always be on reading for understanding and the children will be taught to use the full range of reading strategies i.e. phonic, semantic, syntactic, graphic and prediction.

At all levels, children will be interacting with the text, during daily story time, whole class shared reading and group reading. Guided Reading takes place daily for approximately twenty minutes. In each class, two groups will normally be working with an adult and the other children will be working on independent, structured reading activities. At Thurnham we use the Little Wandle scheme of teaching and Learning.

- **Organisation**

Reading books within the school are classified by Little Wandle Phases from Phase 1 up to Phase 5, then using the 'Book Band' system from Turquoise books to Grey. Home Reading books are stored centrally, and these are selected individually for children by Class Teachers. Packs of books for Guided Reading are stored in the Library and are classified in the same way as the home Reading books. We use a range of books that link directly to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds revised Phonics Phases, including Collins Big Cat Phonics.

All classes also have a collection of Reading for Pleasure books that are not levelled, to encourage free choice reading during the school day and for home reading.

- In each Year Group, children take home two books each week. One will be selected by their class teacher and will be chosen to match their current phonics and reading ability. The other book will be chosen by the child from the Reading for Pleasure books and is completely free choice. Parents are asked to listen to their children read, asking questions and discussing the book. Each book should be read or shared several times over the course of the week to encourage fluency and comprehension. Parents are then encouraged to post comments on Seesaw and it is hoped there will be

an informal exchange of views between home and school.

6 Phonics and Spelling

Phonics and spelling are taught daily using the Little Wandle scheme – see separate **Teaching of Phonics and Spelling Policy** and **Spelling Marking Policy**.

7 Writing

We follow the National Curriculum (2013) guidelines for writing.

- **Opportunities**

At Thurnham C.E. Infant School we use the Pathways to Write scheme of teaching and learning. Children are encouraged to see themselves as 'writers'. Children are encouraged to write independently, attempting unknown words using their phonic knowledge.

- **Organisation**

Writing is presented to the children as a purposeful activity. The most successful writing occurs when the children are realistically motivated. Writing varies in genre from factual report to poetic expression. Children will be given the opportunity to write in an increasing variety of genres as they mature as writers. Children are encouraged to use punctuation as soon as they become confident. Once children are able, editing and improving is encouraged for certain pieces of work, with the aim of clarifying meaning and extending the vocabulary and punctuation. Our children are extended through the marking for improvement and all children know how they can make their work even better. All these aspects are covered by the P2W scheme.

8 The Foundation Stage

We teach English skills as an integral part of the EYFS Curriculum. We plan the teaching and development of English skills to the objectives set out in the Educational Programmes which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged birth to five. Progressive skill development is outlined in Communication and Language (CLL) and Literacy. In the EYFS curriculum, English cannot be covered in isolation from the other areas of learning. Opportunities to practice literacy skills (e.g. reading labels, responding to written instructions, mark-making and early writing as part of play-based learning) will be provided throughout the learning environment in the classroom and outdoor area. Children have a daily phonics lesson to develop their early reading and writing skills. 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 practice and extend their vocabulary and communication skills.

9 Contribution of English to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. Skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening enable children to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

Mathematics: The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education (PSHRE): English contributes to the teaching of PSHRE by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

English and Computing: The use of computing, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text level. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive and non-linear stories. Computers are used at whole class, group and independent level. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of a word processor permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available to encourage the framing of explicit questions. Websites are used to support independent reading (text to speech), as well as specific grammatical and spelling skills.

10 English and Our School Christian Values

Our school Christian Values of kindness, trust, sharing, respect, love and friendship underpin all aspects of English. The children work together to improve their work, demonstrating kindness, respect and friendship to others. They learn to share and respect texts and they learn to love and trust each other through stories and cooperation.

11 English and Inclusion (including EAL)

At our school we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Non-Discrimination; More Able; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. We take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs. Children who require an individualised plan (SEN) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan will have specific support and targets relating to English. These will be regularly reviewed by the class teacher. Teachers provide help by using:

- texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- visual and written materials in different formats;
- Computers and other technological aids and taped materials;
- alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;
- translators and scribes.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom we ensure the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

High Attaining Pupils - Extension activities which provide extra challenge to motivate the high achieving pupil are seen as an integral part of planning, teaching and learning.

12 Assessment and Assessment for Learning

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments are made as part of every lesson and planning is adjusted accordingly. Short-term assessments match the teaching objectives. Verbal and written feedback is given every lesson to help guide children's progress (see Thurnham Marking Policy). Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work through self-assessment and to help others through peer assessment. Children also decide whether they have met their success criteria every lesson.

Teachers make longer-term assessments each term and use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments targets are set for the school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. These records are passed onto the new teacher at the end of the year. Children are usually assessed as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding year group guidelines. We use statements provided by Kent County Council to find a 'best fit' level for each child each term.

In Year 2 we use the KS1 Framework provided by the Government to assess children as Pre-Key Stage (PKS), Working towards the Expected standard (WTS), working at the Expected standard (EXS) or Working at Greater Depth within the Expected standard (GDS). All statements in a standard must be met before the child can be shown to be working at that standard.

Children undertake the national tests and teacher assessment at the end of Year 2, although these are no longer statutory.

The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates the expected level of achievement at each stage. Teachers meet regularly to moderate examples of work across the school.

13 Resources

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through iPads. Each classroom has an interactive screen. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research. Each term the P2W scheme relates to a different text and suggested additional supporting texts are also purchased.

14 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school. The subject leader produces an action plan indicating areas for further improvement each year.