



English Policy

1. Title Page

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2. Intent

At Higham, English and the teaching of English is the foundation of our curriculum. Our main aim is to ensure every single pupil becomes primary literate and progresses in the areas of reading, writing and speaking and listening. English is embedded within all our lessons and we will strive for a high level of English for all.

We believe that all pupils 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 information they gain from texts. By using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary rich learning environments and having a clear progression of skills, the children at Higham will be exposed to a language heavy, creative and continuous English curriculum which will not only enable them to become primary literate but will also develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening.

We believe that all pupils should be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing. We want pupils to acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to spell new words effectively by applying the spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time in primary school. We want them to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. We believe that all pupils should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their writing, in part by developing a neat, joined, handwriting style by the time they move to secondary school. We believe that all good writers refine and edit their writing over time, so we want children to develop independence in being able to identify their own areas for improvement in pieces of writing, editing their work effectively during and after the writing process.

We understand the importance of parents and carers in supporting their children to develop word reading, comprehension skills, grammar, spelling and composition skills, and encourage a home-school partnership which enables parents and carers to understand how to enhance the skills being taught in school through high-quality texts. Please refer to Home School Agreement.

3. Aims

Higham Primary School shares the aims of the National Curriculum for English (2014) by ensuring 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.



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4. Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the Communication and Language, Physical Development and Literacy sections of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers January 2024.

In the Foundation Stage (Reception) children are given opportunities to:

- speak, listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and opportunities to communicate;
- make marks and give meaning to marks.

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) children learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works (using grammatical terminology).

5. Implementation

At Higham Primary School, the teaching of English allows pupils to incrementally build their skills in reading and writing within a carefully designed curriculum. We have a rigorous and well-organised English curriculum and framework that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. We use a wide variety of quality texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and film clips to motivate and inspire our children. Teachers also ensure that cross curricular links with concurrent theme work are woven into the programme of study where appropriate.

5.1 Foundation Stage

At Higham Primary School, children make a strong start in learning to read. Daily phonics sessions begin as soon as the Reception Baseline Assessment has been completed. Children are taught phonics in ability groups using the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme. Children are assessed termly and regrouped accordingly. Their Communication and Language, and Literacy skills are developed daily within our morning input and Drawing Club sessions. Drawing Club exposes the children to a range of different texts and animations and involves a short period of Time Together as a whole class followed by time with the children exploring their ideas and creativity within their drawings and writing. As a result, children are completing a piece of writing daily at the Drawing Club table.

Writing is also encouraged within the children's Get Busy Time as the environment is organised to provide plenty of opportunities to mark make and write in a purposeful and meaningful way e.g. within their imaginative games, word hunts and writing challenges. More formal opportunities to write are provided during RWI lessons. (Please refer to Early Years Foundation Stage Policy)



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5.2 Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, children continue to follow the RWI programme. These discrete phonics lessons are taught in ability groups dependent on their reading and phonic ability. Children are assessed termly and regrouped accordingly. In addition, children have daily English lessons which are based around a core high quality text. There should be opportunities for pupils to write most days either in English lessons or across the curriculum. Grammar, punctuation and spelling is also taught either as part of learning about the text or discreetly as applicable. Pupils also receive regular handwriting lessons as appropriate. When pupils have completed the RWI programme, pupils have whole class guided reading, focusing on reading comprehension and speaking and listening. Children also have regular story time to develop a love of reading. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes, adaptive class teaching and targeted teaching groups in English and reading comprehension sessions. In Year 2, from term 4, pupils use Spelling Shed to support the teaching of spellings.

5.3 Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, pupils have five weekly English lessons which are based around high quality texts. There are also opportunities for pupils to write most days either in English lessons or across the curriculum. Grammar, punctuation and spelling is also taught either as part of learning about the text or discreetly as applicable. From term 2, longer pieces of writing are expected to be completed between two and three times per term by pupils. Spelling Shed is used to teach spelling. Pupils have discrete spelling lessons each week. Pupils also have three thirty-minute whole class guided reading sessions per week, explicitly teaching the skills of reading through a range of techniques such as VIPERS (Please see below for further details). Children also have regular story time to develop a love of reading. The Accelerated Reading Programme is used to support pupils reading comprehension and vocabulary development. (Please see below for further details) Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through targeted teaching; intervention programmes e.g. RWI and differentiated adaptive class teaching.

6. Spoken Language

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing and is integral across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding of reading and writing. Teachers ensure pupils are confident and competent in spoken language and listening skills, by building secure foundations through use of discussion and debate. Pupils are encouraged to listen and respond appropriately; ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge; articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions; and give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes. Pupils are taught to maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations and to consider and evaluate different viewpoints. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to participate in presentations, performances, role play and improvisations and debates. Through drama, pupils are given the opportunity and encouragement to develop and demonstrate their creative talents and imagination.



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7. Reading

We aim to create successful, fluent, readers who will monitor their understanding of what they are reading and review the text when something does not make sense. In English lessons, a core high quality text is used to explicitly teach reading strategies including inference, questioning, clarifying, summarising, prediction and activating prior knowledge. The pupils use these strategies to check how well they comprehend what they have read and overcome barriers to comprehension. Pupils develop skills in skimming and scanning, forming opinions, thinking aloud, asking questions, getting the gist, connecting to prior knowledge, inference and prediction. These skills are applied by the pupils with increased independence when interacting with texts across all curriculum areas. Pupils are exposed to a rich and varied reading curriculum which helps them develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

8. Phonics

Phonics is taught throughout the school using the Read Write Inc. - a synthetic phonics scheme - which ensures systematic coverage and progression. This programme introduces all 44 speed sounds in a dynamic and fast-paced way. Children start phonics as soon as they join our reception class and are initially taught as a whole class, focusing on children's recognition of the letter sounds and how to read and write these. Once the first sixteen initial sounds have been taught, children are then taught in smaller homogenous groups, potentially across year groups which reflect their performance in RWI phonics assessments. All groups are led either by the class teacher or by trained teaching assistant. The phonics programme also ensures that children are taught to decode unfamiliar words for spelling. Children are also taught common exception words (those that are not phonetically regular). The children are assessed regularly to ensure that they are in the appropriate group for supporting and extending their individual needs. During the summer term in Year 1, pupils undertake the statutory Phonics Screening Check which assess their ability to apply what they have learnt, and parents are informed of their child's achievement at the end of the school year. Pupils who do not pass their Phonic Screening Check continue to have intervention to support the acquisition of these key skills and are re-tested at the end of Year 2.

9. Reading at Home and Accelerated Reader

Children are encouraged to read a wide range of books in school and at home. Our reading scheme has a large variety of books that enable pupils to access reading at an appropriate level of development.

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, phonics-based scheme books are carefully selected to go home according to each individual child's phonics and reading ability. Parents are expected to read with and support their child's reading daily. This should be recorded in their child's reading record book (Please refer to Home Learning Policy). Reading books are changed at least once a week in Foundation Stage and twice a week in Key Stage 1. From RWI red group onwards children will also take home a physical copy of the RWI book they have read in class. This is to develop fluency at home as they will already be familiar with the text. Children also take home a sharing/'reading for pleasure' book.

Once pupils have acquired the sufficient reading skills to be able to independently access texts, we use the Accelerated Reader programme. Accelerated Reader is a comprehension-based reading programme that helps teachers support and monitor children's reading practice and understanding of what they have read. Pupils choose their own book to read at their own level and pace. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can



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choose either fiction or non-fiction books that are interesting to them. Our aim for all pupils is to be on the Accelerated Reader programme by the beginning of Year 3.

A 'Star Test' is completed as a baseline and then repeated regularly throughout the year, which provides teachers with the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and reading age. The scheme is structured to ensure that children have access to a wide range of texts, and allows for pupils to develop their skills within a specific level before moving to the next level.

Pupils are able to independently access books from our extensive library within their ZPD and once they have finished a text, they undertake a comprehension 'quiz' and/or vocabulary test before changing their book. Time is allocated in school daily for quiet reading and for children to complete a quiz. All pupils are expected to read at home daily. Parents, carers and pupils are asked to add comments to indicate how much pupils have read in their reading record book.

The English Leader and class teachers regularly analyse children's Accelerated Reader progress. Where a pupil is identified as not on track to make expected progress, intervention is put in place through 1:1 and small group reading support to enable them to catch up and achieve in line with their peers. If a child's ZPD reflects a secure level of competency (for example 7.5 and above) they may complete alternative activities and choose from a broader range of books in consultation with the class teacher and the English Leader.

10. Guided Reading

In Key Stage 2 and once children have completed the Read Write Inc Programme in year 2, they have a minimum of three weekly whole class guided reading lessons. Children are explicitly taught the skills of reading through the use of VIPERS. (Vocabulary, Infer, Predict, Explain, Retrieve, Sequence or Summarise). Throughout the year children will focus on fiction, non-fiction and other text types such as poetry, songs, picture books or short films. Children will read during these sessions in a variety of ways. They may hear the teacher model fluent reading and then have time to reread the same extract themselves, they may read individually and feedback, work in groups, take turns to read aloud to their peers (an opportunity to pre-read or rehearse should be given first before reading aloud). The majority of the children should be able to read the text in approximately 10 minutes. Different strategies may be used in each lesson.

Each block will usually start with a vocabulary focus which may involve a Text Crunch, (RAG rating key vocabulary from the text). Key questions for each VIPERS will be carefully planned and children may be encouraged to orally speak the answer before writing anything down, acknowledging their first answer may not always be the best. ABC cards (Agree, build upon and challenge) may be used to support this. Children should be encouraged to provide quality answers, therefore not many questions may be asked. Sentence stems and vocabulary are provided to support them in their answer where applicable. Children should be encouraged to provide evidence for their answer based on the text or picture. Children are to record written work in a specific Whole Class Reading book, with each piece of work being dated and the VIPERS indicated.



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11. Reading Culture

Each classroom has a vibrant and inviting reading area, with a range of non-fiction and poetry books relating to a variety of curriculum subjects to ensure engagement remains high. There is also a selection of books which are directly linked to the theme for the term so that pupils can apply their reading skills across the curriculum and read more widely around a subject.

Reading is celebrated in classrooms and around the school at Higham. Children are read to regularly and our bright and colourful displays celebrate the children's favourite authors, characters and books.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, i.e. 'Book Week'. Book Weeks can include visits by published authors, skilled story tellers from many cultures, performances by professional theatre groups, making books, using drama, dance and music to illustrate texts.

12. Writing

At Higham, we teach English as whole class lessons, so that all children have access to the age-related skills and knowledge contained in the National Curriculum.

Writing skills are developed through a text-based approach. High quality texts are meticulously selected in order to; 'hook' the pupils in at the start of a unit, to deepen pupils' knowledge of the wider curriculum, to immerse pupils in our rich and varied literary heritage, and to expose pupils to inference, high-level vocabulary, a range of punctuation and characterisation. Pupils explore the text in order to build an understanding of the writer's craft and develop a deep understanding of the key components of writing – planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing and then publishing.

Our pupils are exposed to a variety of genres which help them to utilise and embed their writing skills and teachers use a writing journey to plan, structure and teach their English lessons. This journey is designed to show progress, teach the pertinent year group objectives, apply and consolidate these skills and develop vocabulary. Writing is taught using the structure of Model, Share, Try and Apply as outlined below:

- **Model** – A short model/exemplar text is displayed. The text is analysed for vocabulary and grammar choices e.g. fronted adverbials, power of three, use of long or short sentences, alliteration, simile, adjectives etc.. A checklist of features is created to be used in their own writing.
- **Share** – The teacher models writing their own short piece using the checklist as a guide. Pupils offer suggestions to be included. ABC can also be used to support pupil's ideas.
- **Try** – Pupils write their own version of the paragraph using the checklist to ensure features have been included. This will be either independently or in pairs.
- **Apply** – Pupils independently apply and integrate the features into their own writing.

In Key Stage 2, longer pieces of writing will have an edit page on the left-hand side. The edit page is used for pupils to jot down their ideas, to try out different words, phrases and sentences that they may want to use in their writing, to record spelling attempts, to self-assess and make any improvements. In addition, ARMS and CUPS will also be used for pupils to revise and edit their writing. See below:



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Revise - ARMS

Add sentences or words
 Remove unneeded words or sentences
 Move a sentence or word placement
 Substitute words or sentences for others

Edit - CUPS

Capitalisation, sentences, names, places, months, I
 Usage match nouns and verbs correctly
 Punctuation . ! ? , " "
 Spelling check all words

As we believe consistency and well-taught English is the foundation of a valuable education, we ensure that the teaching of writing is purposeful, robust and shows clear progression for all children. In line with the National Curriculum, all year groups are taught the explicit grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives required for that age group. As well as teaching the objectives, teachers are able to embed the skills throughout the year in cross-curricular writing opportunities ensuring that most children are achieving the objectives at the expected level and that some children can achieve at a greater depth standard.

13. Grammar and Punctuation

The Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar (PVPG) will be taught during term 1 as the English lesson in all year groups from Year 1. This is an intensive block which teaches the foundations of punctuation and grammar for each year group. Once the PVPG has been taught, SPAG will be incorporated into English lessons. This may either be taught discretely or within English lessons as part of the unit of work. Within the teaching of punctuation and grammar we will include fluency activities eg circle, cloze procedure, underline, sorting etc... and reasoning activities e.g. justify/prove, odd one out and why, always, sometimes, never etc...

14. Spelling

Spellings are taught according to the rules and words contained in Appendix 1 of the English National Curriculum. Spelling is taught as part of RWI in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Once children have completed the RWI programme, they are taught spellings using Spelling Shed. Spelling lists following particular patterns or rules are sent home at least termly via the class newsletter and are also made available on the class page of the school website. This also includes details of when each set of words will be tested either through a formal test or short dictation. The National Curriculum Statutory word lists are also tested regularly.

When marking pupil's work, we do not correct all spelling errors, as this can demoralise children and inhibit pupils' experiments with more adventurous vocabulary. Instead we focus on high frequency words, topic words and those studied in spelling sessions. (Please refer to our Feedback and Marking Policy)

15. Handwriting

In Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Year 3, handwriting sessions are taught regularly to the children and follow a cursive programme. Pupils have separate handwriting books and are expected to apply this cursive script into their daily writing. Please refer to the handwriting policy for further details.



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16. Cross Curricular English

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. In Key Stage 2, at least one piece of longer writing is expected to be produced each term for either Humanities or Science.

We recognise the important role ICT has to play in our school in the development of Literacy skills. ICT is used regularly to enhance the teaching of literacy and to give all children the opportunity to experience, read and write multimodal texts and develop visual literacy.

17. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. Teachers use formative assessment strategies daily to assess children's learning and understanding, through: effective questioning, clear learning objectives, facilitating and listening to discussion, providing feedback and the marking of work, including identifying next steps in their learning. At the end of lessons, teachers and pupils reflect on their own learning. against the steps to success criteria. These ongoing assessments inform future planning and teaching. Lessons are adapted readily and interventions are put in place where necessary. (See Feedback and Marking policy)

In Key Stage 2, pupils complete a longer test-style reading comprehension to build up stamina termly and formal SPAG assessment tests at least three times a year. Assessment takes place in all classes in line with the school's Assessment Policy.

18. 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. Through adaptive teaching pupils are supported appropriately according to their needs (See Teaching and Learning policy)

19. Equal Opportunities

We seek to ensure that all children, regardless of gender or race, receive an equal opportunity to develop their English skills. Positive images are promoted throughout the school, both in the use of language and in the provision of resources.

20. Role of the Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- Managing the RWI programme and carrying out termly assessments.
- Managing the Accelerated Reader programme.
- Supporting colleagues in the teaching of English.
- Monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the English Curriculum and advising the headteacher on any action required. This involves: moderating work between classes, lesson observations, data analysis, book scrutiny, listening to children read, pupil voice.



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- Ensure that progression of the English curriculum is consistent throughout the school and that appropriate differentiation/adaptative teaching is taking place to allow all children access to the curriculum matched to their ability and to enable them to make good progress.
- Purchasing and organising resources.
- Keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in English and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.
- Being an advocate for reading for pleasure throughout the school.
- Arrange and partake in any relevant continuing professional development.
- Reporting to Governors.

21. Parental Involvement

As a school we strive to work in partnership with our parents. There are opportunities when parents can discuss their child's progress with their teacher. Termly newsletters provide information about the English curriculum and how parents can support their children. They also emphasise the importance of reading. Parents are encouraged to read both with and to their children at home in order to promote reading. (Please refer to the Home Learning Policy) Parents are welcomed into school to support reading in the classroom.

22. Links to other school policies

This English policy links to the following school policies:

- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Feedback and Marking
- Handwriting
- Home Learning
- Learning Environment
- Teaching and Learning