Procedure for English
2024-2026

Walton-on-Trent CE (C) Primary and Nursery School

Vision statement

To be a vibrant learning community aspiring to celebrate God's love and the uniqueness of each individual. This means offering kindness, honesty and respect to our local and global community and demonstrating courage, perseverance and ambition in order to flourish in the joy and hope of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10.10)

Values

Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Ambition, Courage and Perseverance

Motto

Living, learning, laughing in God's love

At Walton-on-Trent CE (C) Primary and Nursery School our policies and procedures have been written to comply, appropriate, with the General data Protection Regulations – GDPR 2018. Further information regarding GDPR is available on the school website.

Context

This procedure was written after consultation with staff and presented to the Governing Body. This procedure will be reviewed during the Spring Term 2026 unless significant changes occur before then.

"English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised." - *National Curriculum 2014*

Aims

The overarching aim for English at Walton-on-Trent CE (C) Primary and Nursery School is to promote high standards of English by equipping children with a strong command of spoken and written language, to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment and to equip them with the skills to write with enthusiasm in different styles effectively for different purposes.

We aim to ensure that children:

- Have a positive attitude to English as an interesting and exciting subject.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Have fluent and legible handwriting using a cursive font.
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing.
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres.
- Have an interest in words and their meanings
- Through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, creativity and critical awareness.
- 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.
- Use discussion to learn; they should be able to elaborate and clearly explain their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

English is taught daily at our school with opportunities to apply these skills available in many others of the curriculum too.

The English Subject Leader

The English subject leader is responsible overseeing the standards of English across the school. The English subject leader writes a yearly action plan and carries out monitoring and evaluation each year. This includes book scrutiny, pupil voice, learning evaluations and data analysis across the whole school in order to target and effectively support learners, in line with the School Improvement Plan.

OUR ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Speaking and Listening

At Walton-on-Trent, we appreciate the importance of spoken language in children's development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that children hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of children's confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Children should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers should ensure that children build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Children should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All children should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. They should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Reading

Reading consists of two main parts: word reading and comprehension (both listening and reading). It is essential that teaching focuses on developing children's competence in both dimensions. We note that teaching approaches are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. Phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading throughout EYFS, KS1 and for those children who need it in KS2.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (particularly of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All children at Walton are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely increases children's vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds children's imagination and opens a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

Reading begins at Walton-on-Trent in Nursery to Year 1 using the **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised** scheme. Phonics is taught daily and this is consolidated through using reading books that are matched to the sounds that the children have learnt in their phonics lessons. In these classes, reading is taught in small groups daily. The children then take these books home for independent reading consolidation, as well as book to share with their families for pleasure. Children who are not meeting age-related expectation are selected to take part in daily 'Keep-up' sessions. Assessments are carried out every 6 weeks to ascertain the effectiveness of the taught sessions and provide interventions where needed.

From Year 2 to Year 6, **Whole Class Guided Reading** takes place in each class at least once a week along with individual reading on a weekly basis. The Plazoom scheme for writing development also allows students to engage in reading aloud on a daily basis to build their speaking and listening, improve their vocabulary and different purposes and styles. For independent practice, most children read books that are matched to their **Accelerated Reader** ZPD code taken from regular Star Reading tests throughout the academic year.

In addition, there is an allocated time for sharing a whole class book. This book will be read to them by an adult every day, usually at the end of the school day, though this may be changed due to timetabling restrictions, such as having Forest School in an afternoon.

Regular reading at home (at least 5 times a week) is incentivised by using prizes and rewards at school. Reading diaries are checked at least once a week. Parents are invited to record comments and older children are encouraged to have an adult sign any comments they may have made.

Writing

Writing consists of two parts: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). At Walton-on-Trent, teaching develops children's competence in these two areas as well as developing their skills in planning, editing and evaluating their writing.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

At Walton-on-Trent, we use the Plazoom English writing scheme to assist with the writing journey. This scheme allows the children to plan, write, edit and evaluate during the writing process using a range of text types. Planning and resources are scaffolded for the mixed-ages classes to ensure that age-appropriate content are covered in accordance with the National Curriculum (2014). In addition to the writing process, the Plazoom scheme develops text type understanding, spelling, punctuation, grammar (SPAG) and reading.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

At Walton-on-Trent, opportunities for teachers to enhance children's vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing as well as within English lessons. As vocabulary increases, teachers show children how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of and ability to use figurative language. We also teach children how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning.

Children are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. Children are taught the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that they learn the correct grammatical terms in English. Explicit vocabulary lessons are taught as a part of the Plazoom Scheme during the writing process, with a focus on etymology, meaning and word classification. These lessons are at the start of every planned unit.

The National Curriculum for English clearly states the expected levels of attainment for spelling. If the children are to achieve these levels, we must take a positive approach to the assessment of spelling and

relate our teaching to the errors that the children are making. We must, therefore, be prepared to adapt to the needs of the individual child.

We do need to recognise the differences in children. i.e. some children "catch" spelling – they do not need to be taught phonic patterns or word families, they seem to learn spelling through osmosis and frequently are our very good readers, but others do not "catch" spelling and the skills have to be taught and as each child is an individual, different skills at different stages may have to be taught. There is no single answer to the spelling problems of all children. The important point is to give each child a successful strategy so that they can be autonomous in their own learning and begin to see themselves as good or improving spellers.

The core of our approach to spelling is the word recognition and the correct spelling of the most common words used in reading and writing. In Foundation and Key Stage 1 spelling is related to phonics work. Spelling is taught by looking at word families, phonic patterns, words that relate to topic work and include work on spelling rules in the National Curriculum 2014 (i before e, plurals, silent letters etc.).

Similarly, in Key Stage 2, we take an approach to teaching spellings which links to phonics. The children are given weekly spellings to practise which all contain a sound that is spelt in several different ways (e.g. 'ay', 'ai', 'ey', 'a', 'ea' and 'et' etc…). This ensures children are aware of all the different spellings (graphemes) of a single sound (phonemes) and feel more confident applying these to different words.

We use a variety of approached to teaching and learning spellings but mainly this is through the Spelling Shed programme. Spelling tests take place in each class weekly. Spellings are differentiated to challenge children accordingly and link to the spelling patterns or word lists in the National Curriculum 2014. Children also have access to the Spelling Shed at home to practise these patterns.

Handwriting

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is in our hands that the kinesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter. An effective handwriting policy is based on a style that is quick and easy to learn. It should be neat, legible and fast. Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas such as spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content. Handwriting should be taught alongside phonic and spelling knowledge at all stages. Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.

Handwriting is taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It is modelled by the teacher then supervised. Children self and peer assess for consistency. Both specific handwriting paper and writing books are used for the learning and application of handwriting skills. Good handwriting is incentivised by the opportunity to earn a 'pen licence' for correct formation of letters, consistent fluidity and correct joins (from the final term in Year 3). Teachers model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books.

Handwriting in EYFS

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement, with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim.

Children in EYFS will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:
- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors. - Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder. In the earliest stages, children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

In Reception, this develops to:

- Pre-writing stage- patterning
- Individual letter formation
- Word formation based on letter groups
- Using a printed style

Handwriting in Years 1- 6

At Walton-on-Trent, we follow the guidance on teaching handwriting from The National Curriculum English Programme of Study.

Year 1 pupils should be taught to:
- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

Year 2 pupils should be taught to:
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Year 3-4 pupils should be taught to:
- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:
- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

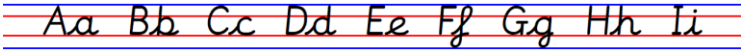
This how letter patterns lead into letter formation:

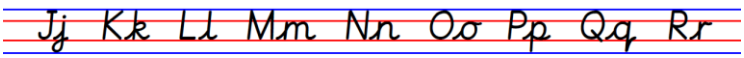
Pattern	Value of Pattern
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cccccccccccc	c o a d g q e
uuuuuuuuuuuu	i u y l t
vvvvvvvvvvvv	v w x
uuuuuuuuuuuu	i u y l t a d
rrrrrrrrrrrr	r n p m h
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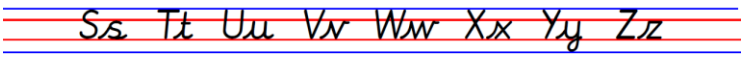
Supporting individual children:

- Children should be encouraged to use the correct pencil grip and sit with a good posture.
- Left handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other. The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handers should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents them smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-hander may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Some children with specific difficulties may benefit from using a sloping surface and special equipment e.g. triangular pencil grip for a short period of time.
- It is important to use appropriate writing materials at each stage of writing development.
- A sharp pencil is essential for all early handwriting activities.
- Fluent and neat writers should move on to pen from Summer Term Y3 if ready.
- Children need to see good examples of handwriting in classroom displays.
- Key Stage 1 children should practise their handwriting skills in the appropriate handwriting books. When Y2 pupils are ready, they practise in their writing books.
- Key Stage 2 children should practice handwriting skills in both handwriting and writing books.

Examples of cursive handwriting letter formation:







Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment in English is predominantly formative – an on-going process, over time building up a comprehensive picture of progress and achievement. This is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers will closely observe and evaluate their children's performance and competence in day-to-day classroom contexts, rather than rely on one-off assessment situations. In this way, they will build up considerable information about pupils' achievements and needs, which can then be fed back to the learners orally, through comments in the books or as targets for the individual child to work on over a period of time.

This will ensure that the teacher builds up a body of evidence that ensures that curriculum and assessment are effectively inter-related and that assessment enriches and informs teaching and learning. We use NTS Reading and SPaG tests to support teacher judgements at the end of each full term. Teacher judgements are recorded termly on Sonar. Test scores are kept on internal tracking sheets. Data across the whole school is analysed to continually drive school improvement.

Opportunities will be provided for children to contribute to their own assessment in a way that encourages them to understand what is expected, to use "purple progress pens" to edit and improve their work, motivate them to achieve it, enable them to feel a pride in positive achievement and add a realistic appraisal of weakness. Children in KS2, in particular, are encouraged to self-assess and evaluate both their own and their peer's work.

Children's progress in writing is also assessed half termly. This is through a formal piece of independent writing and the evidence collated in the children's topic books including English and non-core subjects. This will be marked against the JT MAT writing standards.

Date approved by Governing Body: 27.2.24

Date to be reviewed by the Governing Body: Spring Term 2026

Signed: D. Wildman (English Lead)