



ENGLISH POLICY

Last Update: September 2025

Next Update / Review: September 2026

Every Child Matters Statement

Birkdale Primary School continues to embrace "Every Child Matters" and as such, all staff actively incorporate the following key issues into all areas of both the curriculum and the physical, social and emotional aspects of school life. The key issues are:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

All staff recognise that these key issues are central to each child's happiness, progress and security as clearly expressed in the school's mission statement:

"Attainment through Caring, Challenge & Creativity"

The use of English in spoken and written form is the foundation of all learning. At Birkdale Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills and that through the English curriculum using cross curricular links where appropriate, we should help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large.

Language is an integral part of most learning and oral language in particular has a key role in teaching and learning.

This policy outlines the teaching and learning of English at Birkdale Primary School. The importance of developing successful English skills and knowledge is vital if our children are to communicate in the wider community.

Aims and Objectives

English offers children many opportunities to:

- Develop a positive attitude to speaking and listening and use language confidently in a range of contexts adapting how and what is said to suit the purpose and audience
- Participate in conversation, listening to others and responding appropriately, thinking about what has been said and the language used. Responding critically to a wide range of texts
- Communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language
- Become aware of the characteristics of standard spoken English and understand that language varies through dialect and purpose
- Develop an enthusiasm and love of reading for life to read a wide range of texts
- Use speaking and listening, reading and writing as essential tools in developing thinking
- Write for a real purpose, so that it is interesting and enjoyable
- Write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry developing an understanding of how narratives are structured through basic literacy ideas of setting, character and plot
- Write in a range of non-fiction genres structuring text in a style suited to its purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Develop their phonic knowledge, skills and understanding of spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately
- Develop a fluent, neat and preferably joined handwriting style as early as possible
- Enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

Implementation

At each Key Stage a program of study sets out what pupils should be taught. Lesson content is based on Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the English National Curriculum. The English Curriculum is divided into:

- Spoken Language
- Reading – Word Reading and Comprehension
- Writing– Transcription, Composition and Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

At Birkdale Primary we use these areas as the basis for all English planning and ensure robust coverage of all text types and genres of writing and ensure year on year progression. Lesson content is planned from the National Curriculum for Reading and Writing and is adapted to match the requirements of the unit being taught. It may also be adapted to meet the needs of individual classes, or to make links with other subject areas.

Reading

Reading Aims:

- Develop positive attitudes towards reading and read for purpose and pleasure
- Use reading skills as an integral part of learning throughout the curriculum
- Read and respond to a variety of texts whilst gaining increased level of fluency, accuracy, independence and understanding
- Develop different strategies for approaching reading and be able to orchestrate the full range of strategies.

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of reading opportunities that include:

- Shared reading
- Whole class guided reading sessions
- Regular independent reading
- 1:1 reading where required (RIG)
- Home/school reading
- Hearing books read aloud on a regular basis
- Selecting own choice of texts including ICT texts
- Reading whole texts
- Reading in other subjects including ICT texts
- Reading in the community (assemblies, school productions).

Teaching and Learning of Reading

Teachers promote and value reading as an enjoyable activity and also as a life skill. Progression in reading starts with the systematic teaching of phonics, in the context of a broad and rich Early Years

Foundation Stage curriculum, which celebrates reading for pleasure and proactively develops children's speaking and listening skills and language development. As pupils develop reading fluency throughout KS1 and KS2, teachers teach a broad range of comprehension strategies which allow pupils to engage with text in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles.

In shared reading, the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and collaboration. Texts are rich and challenging, beyond the current reading ability of the majority of the class, and are linked to the unit of work under current study.

The focus for reading is to provide practice, to develop personal response to text and crucially, reading for pleasure. Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to practice and extend reading in other subjects. Teachers monitor independent reading and discuss progress with individual pupils on a regular basis. Where pupils are working below age appropriate objectives a reading program will identify additional opportunities to read with an adult.

Guided reading

Starting in Year 2 all the way to Year 6, every class has four sessions of guided reading per week. The children have reading diaries where staff can record comments to parents about their child's reading. We have a wide range of texts we read during guided reading covering both fiction, poetry and non-fiction.

Library

All Key Stage Two classes have regular access to the School Library where the children can choose from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. In KS1, pupils can borrow books from school using the 'Lending Library' which is run by members of the School Council.

Parents in Partnership

We have held Parent Workshops on Reading and Phonics and repeat these each year so they can find out about how to support their children at home with their reading and phonic knowledge. Children are expected to read at home every night and to bring their book bags to school every day.

Reading Improvement Group (RIG)

We actively encourage parents, carers and grandparents to volunteer in school to support our children in accessing as many texts as possible and reading as frequently as possible. RIG provides opportunities for pupils who need additional reading sessions, for those who may not read at home as often as possible and also to boost children's confidence with reading.

Reading at Home, for Pleasure and across the Curriculum

Children are assessed throughout the year both individually and as part of their guided reading sessions to ensure they are reading at the correct stage of banded book. There are a wide selection of home readers for the children to choose from which are book banded. The reading scheme we use from Year 2 to 6 is Oxford Reading Tree. Once children have successfully worked their way through the bands, at the end of Year 6, they have free choice of reading book; this may involve reading their own book from own or one from school.

There is a wide selection of reading books in every class which children can also choose to read for pleasure. We encourage the children to read their home reading book or their free choice at quiet times to develop their love for and independence in reading. The children enjoy using their reading skills in every lesson and the teachers provide opportunities for this in all subjects.

Partner Classes

Every class has a partner class in the different key stage. There are many opportunities where we get together to share work. In some classes Reading Buddies from the KS2 classes visit their EYFS or KS1 partner class to read with the younger children and help them with how to read unknown words and talk about the text. This helps to develop the confidence of the older children too! The children particularly love working with their partner classes during Book Week and on World Book Day to share the work they have covered on the same theme.

Writing

Writing Aims:

- Write in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences, recognising when to use specific text types e.g. recount, persuasion, instruction, poetry, narrative.
- Form letters correctly, leading to a fluent joined and legible handwriting style, giving increasing regard to presentation
- Be increasingly aware of the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Plan draft and edit their writing to suit the purpose
- Use ICT as a literacy medium for presenting work and manipulating text.

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of writing opportunities that include:

- Shared writing
- Guided writing
- Independent writing
- Writing different text types and narrative styles
- Writing in different curriculum areas
- Handwriting - direct teaching and practice
- Collaborative writing
- Writing related to own experiences and enjoyment
- Writing from a variety of stimuli
- Planning, drafting, editing and presenting
- Using ICT

Teaching and Learning of Writing

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'. Teachers establish the purpose and audience for writing and make teaching objectives explicit to pupils so they know why they are studying a particular text type, the kind of writing activities they need to undertake and what the expected outcome will be.

The teaching sequence for reading and writing is used as a framework for planning a unit of work:

Reading and responding - Introduction to reading, enjoyment, teach reading strategies and respond.

Analysing - Analysis of texts for structural and language features. The teacher demonstrates usage of sentence and word level features. There is further consolidation of key features.

Planning and writing - Talk for writing; planning, drafting, revising, editing and presenting.

Subject-specific texts that link to work being undertaken in other areas may also be used in English lessons to support the wider curriculum. Teachers use shared writing to model the writing process. Shared reading and writing provide a context for discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word level, sentence level and text level. Activities are adapted through the use of writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support. Teachers encourage 'talk for writing', explicit links with ICT, visual literacy, drama and feedback as an integral part of the process.

Spoken Language

Spoken Language Aims:

- Communicate effectively, speaking with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency
- Participate in discussions and debate in a variety of contexts
- Listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest
- Articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary, recognising audience
- Respond to questions and opinions appropriately
- Retell stories and poems which are known by heart
- Ask questions with increasing relevance and insight.

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of speaking and listening opportunities that include:

- Planned teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills, drama, group discussion and interaction
- Talking about their own experiences, recounting events participating in discussion and debate
- Talk for writing
- Retelling stories and poems
- Expressing opinions and justifying ideas
- Listening to stories read aloud
- Presenting ideas to different audiences
- Taking part in school performances
- Responding to different kinds of texts
- Talking to visitors in school
- Listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers
- Role-play and other drama activities across the curriculum.

Teaching and Learning of Spoken Language

Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening throughout the school day. Teachers model speaking clearly. This includes clear diction, reasoned argument; using imaginative and challenging language and use of Standard English. Listening is modelled as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others. Teachers are also sensitive in encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent children. Speaking and listening outcomes are planned for in all areas of the curriculum and speaking and listening objectives are identified in planning. Roles are shared with pupils: sometimes a pupil will be the questioner, presenter, etc. Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings. For example, these could include reading aloud as an individual, working collaboratively on an investigation, reporting findings as a newscaster, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to school, responding to a text in shared or guided reading.

Life Lessons (PSHE and SEAL) are embedded in the curriculum, and provide opportunities for children to learn to respect the views of others and the importance of speaking and listening with regard to others. Through assessment for learning strategies and by embedding the Spoken Language Objectives across the curriculum pupils are explicitly taught a range of speaking and listening strategies, skills and objectives in planned and systematic progression throughout the school.

Spelling

Spelling Aims:

To enable children to:

- Understand the alphabetic code and spell accurately in order to communicate effectively and independently in writing
- Understand the conventions of English spelling in order to be able to decode and read text independently, accurately and fluently
- Be creative and use ambitious vocabulary
- Proof read their work accurately.

Entitlement

Despite the age of electronic literacy, children still need to express themselves quickly and accurately on paper. The ability to be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill and one that society demands.

Teaching and Learning of Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar

Through the daily teaching of phonics in early reading development in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils are taught a balanced program which develops understanding of the skills in segmenting phonemes for spelling and blending them for reading. Towards the end of Year 1 and throughout Year 2, this phonetic learning leads into teaching and learning of spelling, which continues throughout KS2.

In Year 2, children will continue their journey following our phonics Little Wandle letters and sounds revised scheme, through a bridging unit. Following this unit, children will progress onto the Little Wandle spelling programme. This is designed to provide a seamless link from year 1 to year 2 and builds on children's knowledge of the alphabetic code and teaching them how to spell with confidence.

In Key Stage 2, all pupils receive a planned and structured spelling program through a Y3-6 spelling programme. Spelling conventions are taught and homework is provided along with opportunities for practise throughout the week. A small and manageable number of individual spelling errors are highlighted through marking across the curriculum. Children are given opportunities and time to review and edit their work, with a focus on checking for spelling errors and correcting themselves using word banks, a dictionary or the internet. Children who experience specific difficulties in learning to spell receive extra support as appropriate, either in class with a TA, one to one, or small group withdrawal with a TA. Links are made between teaching of handwriting and the teaching of spelling.

Grammar and Punctuation are taught both in context of the texts classes are studying and also discretely as required to teach and practise new concepts. Staff cover the grammar objectives as set out in the National Curriculum; this ensures progression of grammar skills from Years 1-6. Staff model the grammatical structures required to match a style of writing and this enables children to apply the skills they have learnt.

Handwriting

Handwriting & Presentation Aims

A consistently high standard of presentation and handwriting is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. For children and teachers this aims to foster a sense of pride and respect in their work. Self-esteem is raised when children are able to communicate meaning accurately.

Our handwriting lessons are taught systematically and promote confidence in our writers, using The MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme. By the end of year 4, our children will have developed fluid cursive writing, thus finding it much easier to concentrate on the content of writing, whilst at the same time making the correct spelling choice. Once good foundations and the basics have been established, children are then encouraged to develop their own individual style, in years 5 and 6.

Good handwriting is based on the following:

- Consistent patterns of ovals and parallel lines.
- Similar letters being of equal size and proportion.
- The distance between words being approximately the same width of a lower case 'o'.
- The length of the long vertical strokes (ascenders) and (descenders) above and below the base line, being no more than twice the height of the small letters.
- Capital letters being no higher than the ascenders strokes, and not joined to the lower case letters.
- All letters being 'seated' on the baseline.

Presentation across the school

- All books have children's names typed on the front.
- Every piece of work is dated: long date in all subjects, except maths which is the short date.
- Modelled examples are used to introduce new skills and reinforce expectations.
- All drawings and diagrams are in pencil.
- All children in KS2 write in blue biro.
- Pencil crayons, not felt pens, are used in exercise books.
- Coloured pens are used for specific reasons by children e.g. self -correcting, editing or peer assessment.
- A rubber or one single line is used to cross out mistakes or edit writing.
- Books are well kept with no writing or doodling on the outside or inside of covers.

- Children are taught where to start a new piece of work.
- Poor presentation is challenged through verbal feedback and marking.
- Tippex and correction pens are not to be used by children.

Specific Progression:

Foundation Stage

Gross Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;

Fine Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;

Writing ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Year 1

- 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.

Year 2

- 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 unjoined
- 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.

Years 3 and 4

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Years 5 and 6

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

English Curriculum Planning

The school uses the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and English National Curriculum for the curriculum planning.

We carry out our curriculum planning in English in two phases (long-term and short term). The long term planning tries to make links between areas of the curriculum so that the children experience a connected curriculum that gives English a purposeful setting.

The class teacher is responsible for writing the weekly plans for these lessons (short-term plans). These plans list the specific learning objective of each lesson, the teaching steps, adaptive learning, resources and key assessment opportunities.

The contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

English underpins the whole curriculum as children are both using and reinforcing their skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing in every area of the curriculum. Our creative curriculum allows us to teach and apply these skills across all subjects.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT helps children learn in English by providing stimuli for their work allowing time for creativity and thinking.

Children are taught to:

- Use ICT to develop their ideas and to record their creative work
- Communicate with the wider community using e-mail
- Develop their research skills and decide what information is appropriate for their work
- Begin to question the plausibility and quality of information
- Learn how to amend and present their work in different ways.

Inclusion

At our school we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. Opportunity will be found for more able children to extend their understanding. Intervention programs will be used with children who are finding it more difficult to access the English curriculum where appropriate.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors - classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and adaptive learning- so that we can 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.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English.

Assessment and Recording

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy, are continuous and in line with the age related expectations for each year group in the national curriculum.

In addition formal assessments are made termly in line with the school Assessment Policy. The school uses a range of assessment material in Key Stage 1 and 2 to inform staff's judgement of pupils' attainment and progress towards and against the end of year age related expectations. In Reception children are assessed against the age bands in all areas of the Foundation Stage and assessed against the ELGs at the end of the year. Attainment for reading, writing and SPAG are entered onto the school tracking system on SIMS at the end of each term, which are then analysed to monitor pupil progress by the Assessment Leaders.

Children's progress is reported to parents at parent's evenings and at the end of the academic year in the pupil's individual written report. Individual records are on-going and are kept by the class teacher. Please also refer to the school policy for Marking and that of Assessment.

Resources

Teachers have access to a wide range of resources.

The school:

- Is committed to reviewing the position and use of English resources.
- Will ensure the efficient deployment of existing resources.
- Is committed to updating and renewing their replacement when necessary, considering further purchasing to meet future needs.

Foundation and Key Stage 1 classrooms have a well-stocked book area with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Classroom collections are changed at regular intervals. Pupils also have opportunities to read magazines, information leaflets and ICT texts. The school library is an important resource and Key Stage 2 pupils are taught how to use it appropriately. All teachers aim to provide a stimulating reading environment, promote book ownership and borrowing, have book notice boards, and recommend books to pupils. Classroom and central displays are language rich and special displays promote authors and books. Time is allocated for teachers to read aloud to their classes.

Teachers provide opportunities to practise and improve handwriting and encourage pupils to develop a fluent legible style. Teachers model the agreed style consistently across the school. Each class has a range of materials to support the writing process. Each class also has a set of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks. Teachers use a variety of resources to support writing.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the English leaders and Head Teacher to monitor the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English. The English leaders also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The English leaders give the Head Teacher an annual summary report, an action plan and a set of curricular targets in which he evaluates strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for development. The English leaders will review long-term planning, and samples of children's work and visit classes to observe teaching in the subject.

The role of the English leaders

It is the responsibility of the English leaders to:

- Write and update the curriculum policy for English
- Monitor the long-term curriculum map to ensure coverage of the scheme of work for English
- Monitor and review short-term plans for English to ensure progression
- Aid colleagues with the planning and delivery of lessons when required
- Lead INSET and update staff
- Monitor and review standards of English teaching through e.g. lesson observations, coaching techniques
- Review standards and progress in English through analysis of SATs and in-year data
- Produce an action plan which forms part of the SDP to lead the direction and focus of English across the school
- Produce an annual report reflecting on the standards of provision for English and to set targets accordingly
- Review and order resources to enable the delivery of the English curriculum.

Chair of Governors:..... **Date**.....

Headteacher.....**Date:**.....

Agreed at the Governing Body Meeting on:.....

Minute Reference:.....

Date for Review:.....