



---

## English Policy

Shirland Primary School

October 2022

---

Last Reviewed	October 2022
Written By	Fiona Banks
Reviewed By	Chair of Governors
Next Review Date	October 2025

## English Curriculum Policy

### Overview

At Shirland Primary School, we aim to deliver a high-quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of English skills is central to improving a child's life chances. Teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills they have acquired in a range of contexts. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school.

### Intent

At Shirland Primary School, we want children to leave the primary phase of their education able to;

- 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;
- 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;
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate;
- develop an understanding, enjoyment and confidence in all areas of English;

### Implementation

The teaching and implementation of the English Curriculum at Shirland Primary School is based on the National Curriculum. To achieve this, the focus of teaching is on developing the progression of skills in the key strands of ;

- Reading (phonics and comprehension)
- Writing
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Speaking and listening
- Handwriting

Each strand is taught in discrete units, with opportunities to revise and apply them in context. Skills are built on and revisited throughout the learning journey from EYFS to Year 6, as appropriate. Where appropriate, links are made with overall termly topics. English is taught

in time slots totalling 1 hour and 45 minutes per day from Years 1-6, and is a central part of the continuous provision in EYFS.

Care will be taken to give each child the opportunity to learn regardless of race, religion, language or gender, which links closely to our work on protected characteristics.

## **SPELLING**

### **Implementation**

Children are taught a set of spelling rules or common exception words identified for their year group each week in an identified 20-minute daily slot. These are based on the 'Twinkl Planit' scheme and are identified in the English overviews and English unit planning. Teaching includes activities to ensure understanding of the meaning of words taught, recognition of rules, patterns and exceptions, and use in context through dictation exercises. Spellings are sent home weekly and tested. In addition, common errors in spelling identified by the teacher and specific topic-related words are taught as part of the relevant unit. We encourage pupils to attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies, and to write an increasingly wide range of words from memory.

### **Impact**

Children complete spelling assessments termly to assess progress and identify gaps in attainment. Spelling in context also forms part of the children's writing assessment at each independent writing point, allowing gaps to be addressed.

Children who are working below national expectations learn a mix of spellings identified as gaps and age-appropriate spellings to ensure progress. They also benefit from a range of tailored interventions.

## **HANDWRITING**

### **Implementation**

In EYFS and Year 1, children are taught letter formation alongside phonics.

In Year 2 to Year 6 children are taught from the Nelson Handwriting scheme which focusses on joining skills. Handwriting is taught explicitly, children receive modelled sessions and short bursts of practise opportunities weekly. Year 2 and 3 consolidate this skill by using English books with handwriting lines. Year 4 onwards use handwriting books to record their practise. High expectations of handwriting are needed. Teachers model good handwriting (e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books). A variety of fonts are used in classroom labels and displays, to reflect the different typography styles seen in the real world.

In addition to the convention of not joining capital letters, children are also taught that the following letters are best left un-joined;

- all descenders: g, j, p, q, y
- b, f
- x and s is joined from the lead in only

Children who have an established handwriting style which does not follow our taught approach (for example children who have come from a different school) will not be expected to change their style as long as it is neat, joined and legible.

## **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 recognisable letters as the ultimate aim. Children take part in activities to support this including activities requiring hand-eye coordination, using one-handed tools and equipment, drawing lines and circles using gross motor movement, manipulating objects, using anticlockwise movement and retracing vertical lines. They are taught to begin to form recognisable letters, use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

## **Impact**

Handwriting is assessed as a component part of writing assessments.

Children who are working below national expectations are supported in a variety of ways;

- 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, if they find this helpful.
- 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.

## **GRAMMAR**

### **Implementation**

Children are taught grammar specific to their year group. This is mapped out for all year groups in the curriculum overviews. Grammar is taught through both specific lessons and through its use in context in class texts, as appropriate. There are opportunities to revisit, embed and build upon grammar objectives throughout the years.

### **Impact**

Children complete termly assessments and are also assessed as part of their independent writing.

Children who are working below national expectations are offered opportunities to work in small supported groups on specific objectives.

## **SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

### **Implementation**

Speaking and listening skills are taught throughout EYFS to KS2. The skills are taught specifically, where appropriate, during English lessons and are identified on the English planning. Additionally, speaking and listening skills are embedded throughout the curriculum through teacher expectations and activities.

### **Impact**

Children are not formally assessed for speaking and listening. Staff assess through observation.

Children who are working below national expectations are considered for referral to Nurture Group, where they have the opportunities for small group speaking and listening skills to be developed.

## **WRITING**

### **Implementation**

The teaching of writing skills takes place during the English lesson. Children are given the opportunity to investigate and identify the features of good writing before writing themselves. Teachers employ a range of techniques taken from a variety of sources as best fits their class. Teachers provide modelled examples and opportunities for group, paired and independent work to build skills and confidence. Correct form, syntax and word order are modelled consistently. Children are regularly involved in shared writing as well as being given the chance to write by themselves. Opportunities to practise writing skills are present throughout the curriculum where appropriate. Planning/drafting/editing are used to improve both the context and the conventions of writing. Expected writing outcomes are identified for each year group, with a balance of genres and skills planned for throughout the year. These are built upon and extended throughout the school journey.

Independent writing takes place at the end of an English unit. Children are allowed an extended period of time (one morning) to enable them to complete a piece of work. When writing independently, children independently use a variety of resources to help develop their writing such as dictionaries, word banks, sound mats, success criteria, plans and working wall examples found in the classroom environment that they have developed for the unit.

### **Impact**

Within the taught phase of writing, children's writing is monitored to identify gaps and address them on the lead up to independent writing. All independent writing pieces are

assessed using our agreed writing assessment format, which informs future planning. Writing assessments are reported to the subject leader and Headteacher.

Children who are working below national expectations are identified during assessments. The strand that needs developing is identified (e.g. handwriting, grammar, spelling) and support through small group work on target areas may be offered as appropriate.

### **Writing in EYFS**

In EYFS, the children learn stories with actions, retell using puppets, small world characters or masks. Furthermore, children in Reception practise writing their name every morning when they arrive at school. Once children are confident writing their own names, they practise handwriting linked to the letter formation taught in phonic sessions.

To support their formation of letters and increase their fine and gross motor skills, the children take part in 'Squiggle While You Wiggle' before moving on to 'Squiggle Me Into a Writer' every day as a strengthening exercise for their fingers. Within the classroom, there is also a dedicated area called 'Funky Fingers' that always has an activity to help further strengthen fingers or develop fine motor skills, which is changed regularly to motivate and inspire learning. To support children across the school in applying their phonics when writing, the simple sounds and images from the RWI scheme are displayed.

Writing activities are planned linked to the current book for the week. Adults will model writing strategies, orally composing a sentence and demonstrating how to apply phonic skills to write words. Children will produce a piece of writing with adult support as well as being encouraged to access the writing table and write independently in other areas of the classroom during continuous provision. Each child has an Independent writing book which is used to show their development in writing throughout the year.

## **READING**

We promote a love of reading in school through displays sharing staff reading information, shared class books, library use and book swap areas and events.

### **EYFS**

In Reception, children begin their reading journey with picture books which support them with basic book skills, such as identifying a title, understanding where the story begins and how to turn pages. It also provides them with the opportunity to tell a story verbally and begin to develop their vocabulary. Once the children are secure with Set 1 sounds in their phonics, they will take home a decodable book.

Children in the Foundation Stage have a daily phonics session, following *Read Write Inc.* Phonics. This is aligned to the National Curriculum and the children progress through the 'sets' of graphemes. By the end of Reception, the children are expected to have reached the end of Set 2 sounds. They will also learn 'red words' (or 'tricky words') which cannot be sounded out as they break the phonetic rules of the English language.

There is a reading area both inside and outside the classroom. There are activities in both areas to develop the children's love of books and reading. Parents/Grandparents are invited into school in the Spring term onwards to take part in a 'Book and Biscuit' session. This is to encourage families to value reading and the importance of sharing a book together.

### **Phonics and Early Reading**

Children in EYFS and Key Stage One are taught synthetic phonics explicitly everyday. The children are taught in small groups by our team of experienced and well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. Children in Reception and Year 1 are also taught age-related phonics as a whole class in the afternoon. They are regularly assessed to ensure that they progress well and are on track to reach national expectations by the end of Year One, when they will sit their phonics screening check.

Reading skills are also taught explicitly in Key Stage One. The children have a 30-minute daily reading session based upon an age-appropriate text. Children are taught how to develop their reading skills, explore new vocabulary and develop a love of reading.

Our reading scheme in EYFS and KS1 is decodable books with a variety of fiction and non-fiction themes. Children are allocated books based upon their phonetic knowledge and ability to decode and read with fluency. Our books are synchronised with our phonics groups so that the appropriate level of challenge is right for the child.

As children progress, children will have the opportunity to begin Accelerated Reader to access a wider range of texts and further develop their progress.

### **Guided Reading**

We believe that before they start guided reading, children need to be able to read fluently and confidently. Therefore, children in KS1 focus primarily on reading through phonics.

Children begin guided reading when they have completed their phonics learning. For most children this will be in Year 2, however children who need to master phonics remain in targeted phonics groups until this is achieved. Guided reading is delivered in daily 30-minute slots, where the skills of summarising, questioning, visualising, clarifying, predicting and making connections are directly taught across all genres, leading to building inference and comprehension skills. Staff ensure guided reading objectives are taken from our reading grids, based on the National Curriculum (2014), and complete discrete guided reading plans each week. Quality age-appropriate texts and extracts are used for fiction, non-fiction and poetry termly to ensure skill development is balanced. Skills are assessed individually at the point of teaching, and form part of the overall assessment picture.

### **Accelerated Reader**

From Year 2 onwards, children who have completed the phonics reading scheme move onto Accelerated Reader. Based on the results of an online comprehension test and teacher assessment, children are allocated a reading scheme level which is matched to their reading fluency level. Children read these books independently and take comprehension quizzes

based on their individual books. Children who pass the quizzes change books independently, those who don't refer to a teacher to identify any issues. Children are able to access reading quizzes at home via the school website. This allows parents to monitor their success on quizzes and their child's progress towards their targets.

Staff set individualised termly targets based on reading scores. Progress towards these targets is reviewed regularly with the children, to motivate them and identify children who need extra help or challenge.

An online comprehension test is taken termly and a graphic representation of progress is produced by the end of term 3. Children change book level based on a variety of measures including Accelerated Reader scores, accuracy in test scores, breadth of genres read and teacher notes from individual or guided reading.

### **Quality Texts**

All teachers use an overview which identifies key quality texts to be used for class teaching. This ensures progression and avoids repetition. Class personal choice books are chosen from within a given year group list to ensure they are age-appropriate and not repeated.

### **Rewards**

All children are expected to read regularly at home as well as in school. To encourage this, we reward regular readers from EYFS to Year 6. Children's home reading is checked weekly through inspection of their reading record. Children who have read four or more times a week and have shown evidence of this through an adult's signature gain a stamp on a reading collection card. They are then rewarded with a sticker and asked to stand up in a weekly celebration assembly to share their achievements with other children and parents or carers and inspire them. Children who achieve eight stamps receive a reward, which increases in value over the year.

### **Children who are working below the expected standard in reading**

All staff complete a reading provision map for all children in their class at the main assessment points. This map provides an outline of potential barriers to progress and interventions that may be used. All children are placed on the provision map. Staff then plan relevant interventions and evaluate and revise at the next assessment point.

### **Curriculum Impact (all English strands)**

Ongoing assessments take place at the end of units of work. Teachers use this information to inform future lessons to ensure that children are supported and challenged appropriately. Phonics assessments take place termly to inform planning and targeted groupings.

Reading, writing, spelling and grammar is formally assessed at the ends of term 2, 4 and 6. The results of these assessments, including teacher assessment of speaking and listening skills, are stored using 'Otrack', which is then used by the subject leader and Headteacher to

monitor progress, identify children for extra support, and look for patterns in progress that need addressing. Meetings are held with each teacher to discuss progress and provisions made to support children for the next period. Attainment is reported to the Governors, next teachers and parents in the end-of-year report.

Provision is monitored in all areas by the English Leader. This is done through a variety of methods such as book looks, learning walks, planning trawls and pupil interviews. Areas that need addressing are met through the provision of staff meetings or training as necessary.