



**English Policy**

**Great Barton C of E Primary Academy**

**English Policy**

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<p>Reviewed By -</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Date-</p> <p>Comments-</p>
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## **Purpose of Study**

The National Curriculum 2014 states:

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, 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, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

### **1.1 Intent**

Children leaving our school will be strong, confident communicators, having forged a life-long love of learning; drawing upon the rich wealth of quality literature and inspirational experiences that we offer throughout their education at Great Barton.

Our children will have a strong foundation of reading and writing skills. They will discuss and challenge through their secure speaking and listening abilities, engaging with curiosity, creativity and resilience.

We will foster independent, enthusiastic learners who will successfully access all aspects of their future education, across all curriculum subjects; these skills will underpin their adult lives.

### **1.2 Implementation**

These aims are embedded across our English lessons (and the wider curriculum) which closely follows the objectives of the National Curriculum for English 2014.

We have a rigorous and well organised English curriculum that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. Teachers adapt *The Write Stuff* approach, as appropriate to their classes and teaching sequence.

### **1.3 Impact**

Pupils will make good progress from their own personal starting points. By the end of Year Six they will be able to write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style in, and for, a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. Our pupils will acquire a wide vocabulary and have a strong command of the written word. Most importantly, they will develop a love of reading and writing, and be well-equipped for the rest of their education.

### **1.4 Monitoring Impact**

#### **The Head Teacher will be responsible for:**

- Supporting the English Co-ordinator.
- Allocating the budget.
- Developing the monitoring policy to assess impact.
- Reporting to the Governors about any monitoring that has taken place.

#### **The designated English Governor will be responsible for:**

- Supporting the English Co-ordinator.
- Monitoring the impact of English across the school.
- Reporting to the English Co-ordinator, Head Teacher and Governors regarding any monitoring that has taken place.

#### **The English Co-ordinator will be responsible for:**

- Monitoring the effective planning (intent), teaching (implementation) and assessment (impact) of English throughout the school in line with the school's monitoring policy.
- Informing staff of relevant courses to encourage personal professional development and providing in house CPD where appropriate. Offering support and advice on possible teaching activities to all staff.
- Work with class teachers and/or the SENCo to support children who are not meeting age expectations or who have SEN.

#### **Class Teachers will be responsible for:**

- Planning and teaching English lessons following the progression of skills outlined in the National Curriculum.
- Assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress with reference to age expectations and update data termly (or after summative assessments) on Insight.
- Identifying children who are not making expected progress or who are working below age-expectations and, with consultation from the English Co-ordinator/SENCo, devise and deliver a catch-up or support plan.

## 1.5 Teaching of reading

We use *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* (a Department for Education validated systematic synthetic phonics programme) to plan and provide engaging phonics lessons.

In phonics, we teach children that the letters of the alphabet represent a different sound; words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (44 phonemes). They learn to make connections between the letters of written texts (graphemes, or letter symbols) and the sounds of spoken language, these can be used in a variety of combinations and are blended together to make words. The children learn to recognise all the different sounds and combinations that they might see when they are reading or writing. These include tricky words which are not easily decodable.

In Reception and Year 1, phonics is taught daily with a review session on Fridays and assessment weeks every half term which are monitored on a dedicated assessments tracker. Therefore, one lesson in every five is devoted to revision and consolidation, equating to one whole week every half-term.

Our short, daily lessons consist of these key elements:

1. Focused attention on precisely what needs to be learned without extraneous distracting activities.
2. Active engagement through the continual expectation of children in chorus and individual oral response.
3. Error feedback by the teacher modelling the correct response, encouraging the child to repeat this in a positively encouraging way.
4. Practice and consolidation through repeated practice in our lessons. This is an essential element of committing learning to memory.

Phonics starts in reception in week 2 of the autumn term to ensure the children make a strong start and we aim to have all children blending by Christmas. By the end of Reception, children will have been taught up to the end of phase 4.

Children who are identified as falling behind have same-day keep-up sessions, providing instant support.

Teaching follows a very specific, systematic sequence that allows our children to build on their previous phonic knowledge and master specific phonic strategies as they move through school, growing their alphabetic code. Their daily school reading book is fully decodable, matched to their ability to practise their skills and develop confidence.

Fidelity in the teaching of early reading is evident, this minimises cognitive overload and enables teachers to focus on the true objectives of the reading lesson. Children are familiar and secure with the structure of each phonics lesson.

We ensure every child in Year 2 or above who cannot read at age-related expectations gets urgent, targeted support so that they can access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible. Rapid Catch-up lessons use the same content as the core programme delivered at a quicker pace. These ensure older children can grow their language and become fluent readers, using texts which appeal to their growing understanding.

Our pupils are taught to look beyond what is given and use inference and deduction. We strive for our pupils to become critical readers, who can evaluate and discuss their opinions about texts, differentiate between fact and opinion, and discuss bias.

Throughout their time in our school, children carry out research effectively using non-fiction books and digital sources. They are taught to discriminate between websites and have an awareness of possible misinformation online. Children are made conscious of plagiarism and are taught how to use the internet responsibly and safely (as part of our PSHE/computing schemes of work).

We actively promote reading for pleasure. Starting in EYFS, children choose a library book that they take home to share with an adult. As children become more competent readers, they are motivated by the quality books available in school. They continue to read independently, in pairs or small groups – discussing preferences and identifying themes and conventions between texts.

We encourage lots of informal book talk and share peer recommendations. Whenever possible, we invite authors into school or participate in online reading events which expose the children to different texts and engage them further.

Moving into Key Stage Two, children pull together the essential characteristics of competent readers and writers. With growing maturity, they develop further the skills of self and peer evaluation and detailed reflection of their work and that of others.

Teachers value reading for pleasure to the children. Time is made within the school day to read to their class and often share more challenging texts which promote the children's exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary expertly read by an adult.

Experience of different genres and text-types enables our older children to read effectively. By the end of year 6, children have the literacy skills to enable them to access their learning across all curriculum subjects at secondary school.

## **1.6 Teaching of writing**

We believe that good writing comes from a foundation of good reading, this underpins our learning ethos. We strive to provide a language-rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing in our school.

We aim for our children, throughout their time at Great Barton, to become accomplished writers. They will develop an understanding of the purpose of writing, its intended audience and the techniques needed to communicate well through the written word; our children learn to adapt their writing accordingly. Above all, we want our children to enjoy writing, being creative, confident communicators.

Our main approach follows *The Write Stuff* principles. Our writing lessons build pupils' confidence with sentence structure. Children develop an understanding of how to plan and complete a piece of writing using narrative maps and non-fiction shapes which provide structure and organisation, incorporating cohesion and providing opportunities to extend by 'deepening the moment'.

Experience days set the tone for the writing purpose. By immersing the children in engaging activities or experiences, they have a secure context and understanding upon which to hang their own ideas. The acquisition and development of quality vocabulary through talk and teacher modelling works to raise standards and achieve quality independent work.

The skills of planning, drafting, proof-reading, editing and publishing are taught explicitly and children have clear guidance on how to improve their independent outcome. The use of working walls act as an aide memoire to support the developing structure of the text and as a class reference point.

*The Write Stuff* approach is underpinned by the *Writing Rainbow* which consists of three zones:

- The FANTASTICs which are the 9 ideas for writing.
- The GRAMMARISTICs which are all the technical grammar elements of writing in the curriculum.
- The BOOMTASTICs which are the techniques of writing, including elements of figurative language techniques.

*The Write Stuff* in the Early Years, (Fantastic Foundations) develops pupils' language, nurturing ideas, strengthening talk and widening writing opportunities for our youngest writers.

We encourage our children to take pride in the presentation of their work and feel a sense of achievement. Examples of children's work may be displayed in classrooms, around the school or on the school website.

### **1.7 Teaching of spelling**

Accurate spelling is an integral part of effective writing.

EYFS and Year 1 develop their spelling through both their *Little Wandle* and *The Write Stuff* lessons.

For children in year 2 and above, the teaching of spelling uses the *No-Nonsense* spelling programme which follows the National Curriculum. This builds in words containing unusual grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) or 'common exception words' and the statutory word lists for years 3/4 and 5/6. We incorporate different strategies for pupils to learn spellings within short lessons, building upon high-quality phonics teaching by supporting children in understanding explicit spelling rules and patterns, including roots, prefixes, suffixes and derivations.

Our children use word banks, dictionaries, working walls and peer support to aid their spellings. They have spelling journals and use these to practise their spelling activities. We encourage active investigation of words and teachers use games, puzzles and other interactive methods, including digital resources, to support children with the learning and retention of new words.

### **1.8 Teaching of handwriting**

At Great Barton, we work to develop our pupils' handwriting and take care in progressing to a legible, cursive handwriting style. We use the *Letter-Join* font as the basis of our handwriting policy; this covers all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. This offers continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work across all subjects.

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting. They should be able to understand that different forms of handwriting may be required for different purposes.

Establishing correct letter formation from early on is crucial to develop accurate, joined handwriting in Key Stage Two. In Reception class, children use a variety of techniques to develop their fine motor skills and become familiar and confident with letter shapes. The development of these skills continues into Year 1.

As pupils progress into Year 2, they practise cursive handwriting with lead-in lines. They begin to demonstrate control of size and proportions. Whole-class teaching may use interactive resources from the Letter Join platform. Children use pencils until they reach year 4 where they can obtain their 'pen licence.' By Upper Key Stage Two children are encouraged to use a pen for writing.

By Key Stage Two, children are expected to join their writing. Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, and children with special educational needs, are supported, as part of quality first teaching, to help achieve their optimum handwriting level. They may be given a slant board, overlay, specially adapted paper, pencil grip or other resource to assist them.

### **1.9 Speaking and Listening**

Whilst reading and writing skills are extremely important, it is essential that our children leave Great Barton with the ability to be excellent verbal communicators. To speak confidently, fluently and clearly, and to adapt their speech for a range of purposes and audiences is our aim. It is equally important for our pupils to be able to actively listen to others and to evaluate, discuss, question and be respectful of opinions, which may differ from their own.

Some examples of speaking and listening in our school:

- Talking the text – lots of opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing.
- Debate – within classrooms related to topical issues and or current class focus.
- School Council also provides a forum for discussion, listening to each other and talking through issues.
- Collaborative work – organising and actively listening to one another to further the aims of the group.
- Reporting back following group/partner work.
- Presentations – planning and carrying out presentations – thinking about the key points to be communicated and the audience.
- Questioning - Children are actively encouraged to raise and answer questions, use talk partners and to express their views and opinions.

We provide our children with many opportunities to communicate with each other, whether in the classroom, school council or in a whole-school situation, such as collective worship or drama productions. We value what our children say, and we make time to listen.

### **2.0 Drama and performing arts**

At Great Barton Primary Academy, we place considerable value on drama and the performing arts. We understand the significance that watching, or participating in live drama, singing or dancing gives the children. It provides tangible experiences which have a positive impact on writing and developing confidence and engagement.

Whenever possible, we invite performing artists into school. Many of these visits include the opportunity for hands-on workshops which can provide a catalyst for reading and writing activities; we have close links with the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds.

## **2.1 Assessment**

Learning is assessed in line with our Assessment Policy.

Feedback marking is utilised to identify next steps. We encourage our children to evaluate their own work, and that of their peers; identifying areas for improvement and development.

### Statutory assessments:

Year 1 Phonics Screening

Year 6 end-of-Key Stage assessments (SATs)

### Other assessments:

Termly PiRA (Progress in Reading Assessment) for Year 1 (summer term) Years 2, 3, 4 and 5

Termly GaPS (Grammar, punctuation and spelling) for Year 1 (summer term) Years 2, 3, 4 and 5

Past SATs papers (Y6)

## **2.2 Inclusion**

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make all aspects of English accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs as appropriate, and in line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **2.3 Review**

This policy will be reviewed October 2026