

Featherstone Primary School

English Policy



Agreed by Governors: Curriculum, Standards and SEND

Implementation date: 06.02.25

Review date: Every two years

Whole School Philosophy

At Featherstone Primary School, we aim to develop the abilities of all children to communicate effectively in speech and in writing. We wish to develop children into enthusiastic and responsive readers so that they can read for pleasure as well as academic achievement. Through our curriculum, we aim to use a wide range of multi-cultural literature and reference materials, to develop the self-esteem of all children and an understanding and respect for all cultures alongside their own.

Aims

At Featherstone Primary School, we aim to develop in all children:

- a positive attitude towards all aspects of English;
- the ability to communicate and respond effectively in both written and verbal forms;
- a keen awareness of audience in all areas of Literacy, across the range of Literacy skills;
- confidence and independence;
- persistence and stamina.

Objectives

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To ensure children can read age-appropriate texts fluently.
- To develop in children an interest in and a love of books and literature.
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play.
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop their confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience.
- To teach essential skills in spelling handwriting and punctuation.
- To foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Teaching and Learning

At Featherstone Primary School, we follow the principles set out in the National Curriculum and EYFS Statutory Framework. Language and Literacy skills are taught on a daily basis from Reception – Year 6 during English lessons. These skills are then applied in cross-curricular learning opportunities in other subjects.

English across Key Stage One

Phonics

At Featherstone Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching from the very beginning of Reception and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. As a result, our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read.

We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to full-length lessons as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

Any child in Reception and Year 1 who needs additional practice has Daily Keep-up support. Daily Keep-up lessons follow the Little Wandle progression and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition so that every child secures their learning.

Some children in Key Stage 2, who are new to school and new to English, may also be offered phonics support.

Assessment in phonics

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is used daily within class to identify children who require Daily Keep-up support, as well as words and GPCs that need additional teaching and to plan repeated practice throughout the day to ensure all children secure learning

Summative assessments are carried out every six weeks by the reading leader and class teachers. These assessments are used to make sure that children are secure on the taught content to before new content is taught and to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Daily Keep-up support that they need.

Children in Year 1 also sit the statutory Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check resits it in Year 2.

Early Reading

At Featherstone Primary School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum.

At Featherstone Primary School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure.

We teach reading practice sessions three times a week. These sessions:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis. This is also monitored by the reading leader.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding: teaching children to use phonic knowledge to read words
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: using dialogic talk to help children to understand the text.

Children read each book three times to develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension as well as book behaviours.

Home reading and spelling

The decodable reading practice book that is read in class is sent home using the online Collins Hub portal so that children can share their success with the family. Reading for Pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We ask that parents sign their child's reading diary each time they read with them, however the expectation is that this happens at least once a week.

Key stage 1 children will take home a list of spellings to practise at home each week. These are linked to the sounds that the children have been learning that week. These will also include 'Tricky words' (words that do not follow the traditional phonic code and so cannot be decoded). These will be tested in school and parents will be informed of results.

Writing lessons

In addition to the Little Wandle phonics programme, children in Key Stage One have English lessons, which cover writing, GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling) and speaking and listening.

We use high quality texts to inspire our English Curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to explore and respond to texts in a range of ways including drama, roleplay, art activities and debate to engage students and provide opportunities to explore texts in a variety of different ways. A high focus is put on speaking and listening as we believe that children must be able to speak a sentence before they can write it.

Each text project will cover outcomes for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Each plan will have a writing outcome with a particular purpose and audience in mind. Over the academic year each year group will cover a balance of Narrative, Non-Fiction and Poetry genres.

Each week, children in Key Stage 1 also have a basic skills lesson. These lessons allow extra time to practise and apply basic writing skills in shorter, focussed lessons. These lessons focus on spelling, grammar, punctuation and applying these skills in dictation sentences. Children will have a better understanding of these skills when applying them in their independent writing in other lessons.

Assessment in Key Stage 1

Progress in English will be monitored through ongoing teacher assessments, periodic writing sampling for writing and guided reading records for reading.

Children's learning will be assessed against individual objectives from the English National Curriculum.

In Year 2, children will complete a reading NFER test paper and a spelling and grammar NFER test paper in the Spring and Summer terms. Year 1 will complete a reading NFER test paper in the Summer term. These are marked internally and the results are shared with each child. Their summer results are shared with parents on their end of year reports.

Children in Year 1 sit the statutory Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check resits it in Year 2.

At the end of Year 2, children's learning in reading and writing will be teacher assessed using the Teacher Assessment Framework. This is internal data to help to track progress and attainment across Key Stage 1. At Featherstone Primary school, we have chosen not to administer the Key Stage 1 Optional SATs tests in Year 2.

English lessons across Key Stage 2

Writing lessons

In KS2, we use high quality texts to inspire our English Curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to explore and respond to texts in a range of ways including drama, roleplay, art activities and debate to engage students and provide opportunities to explore texts in a variety of different ways.

Chosen texts are often the stimulus for children's writing. Teachers base their planning on the chosen texts. Each year group has a range of writing genres to cover, in line with age-appropriate expectations. Teachers have ownership over when each genre is taught but all genres outlined in the long-term plan are taught each year to ensure sufficient coverage across KS2. Genres include fiction non-fiction and poetry. There are a range of sub-genres which fall within these genres which children are exposed to.

Within each unit of work lesson generally follow the following structure:

- 1. Exploration of high-quality, age-appropriate exemplar texts in order to explore the features and conventions of the genre.*
- 2. Practising of some/all of these features. For example, a feature of persuasive writing is rhetorical questions. Children may need a lesson on this learning. As part of this practising, children should be given the opportunity to write 'small' or 'practice application' pieces in order to build up to a best, final or published piece.*
- 3. Application of the features into a final write-up which is then edited according to peer/self assessment and teacher feedback.*

Appropriate time should be given to all three stages within each and every genre.

Grammar lessons in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, children are taught 2 grammar sessions per week. These are taught alongside writing as stand-alone lessons, however, the links between grammar and writing lessons should be made during the teaching of grammar. Long-term planning outlines the skills needed for each year group; these are broken down into half-terms. Children are taught grammar in a cyclical manner, meaning that new skills are introduced gradually at the start of the year and recapped regularly across the year to embed understanding.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught twice a week. Long term planning outlines a different handwriting join for children to focus on along with words that contain these joins. These are modelled to children on the board which they then copy into handwriting books. Children in Year 3 and 4 have the opportunity to earn a handwriting pen; prior to this, they write in pencil. Year 5 and 6 all write in pen.

Spelling lessons in Key Stage 2

Spelling sessions take place twice a week in Key Stage 2. These sessions teach the spelling objectives prescribed for each year group. This includes common exception words and spelling patterns for each year group. The focus for these sessions is to review, teach, practice and apply taught spelling

patterns in a fun and creative way to apply these in their writing. Each week, children are provided with a spelling list based on their weekly lessons which they are then tested on.

Reading in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, children receive five whole class reading sessions per week. These sessions provide opportunities for children to develop their independent reading skills, vocabulary skills, inference skills and comprehension skills. Children are also exposed to tier 2 vocabulary to aid their understanding of unfamiliar words. At least 3 times a week, children practise and develop their fluency skills as part of their whole class reading sessions.

Home reading and English Homework in Key Stage 2

Children in Years 3-6 will take home a reading book that will be changed once a week unless they are a 'Free Reader' where they will change their book once this is finished. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that children are regularly taking home books appropriate to their reading level and to communicate effectively with parents the children's progress through the use of the reading record books. Children or parents are expected to write a minimum of 1 comment per week based on their reading at home.

Children in years 3-4 are set English homework through the online platform, Doodle Learning. Children in years 5-6 are set English homework through the online platform, SATs Companion. These tasks are based on English learning taking place in lessons that week.

Assessment

Children's learning will be assessed against individual objectives from the English National Curriculum. Progress in English will be monitored through ongoing teacher assessments in line with the English National Curriculum. To support teacher assessments, in years 3-5, children will complete a reading NFER test paper and a spelling and grammar NFER test paper every term. These are marked internally and the results are shared with each child. Their summer results are shared with parents on their end of year reports.

Children in year 6 complete existing SATs papers during Autumn 1, Spring 1 and Spring 2. These results are shared with both children and parents.

At the end of Year 6, children's learning in reading and spelling and grammar will also be assessed using national statutory papers. These papers are externally marked and form the child's end of school assessments.

Whole school

Inclusion

All children will be given opportunities to participate on equal terms in all English activities and due consideration will be given to the principles of Inclusion.

Children with Special Educational Needs and the more able children

During English lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. Children identified as having Special Educational Needs may need greater differentiation of materials and tasks consistent with that child's Educational Plan (ITP). More able children will be challenged and motivated by greater differentiation of materials and tasks. The class teacher will also aim to identify those children who may have potential to achieve greater depth in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

As an inclusive school, we plan teaching and learning opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language or who have language difficulties. We use one to one support, small groups and differentiated work to support children with EAL.

Parents

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in their child's education by supporting them in a positive way – both generally and specifically. We ask that parents read at home with their children regularly, support them with homework tasks and the learning of spellings. Children should bring bags to school daily so that they can be provided with high quality books and resources to contribute to their learning at home.