

Reading and Phonics

Our English curriculum strives to give children the necessary skills to be able to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language, create avid readers and equip our children with the skills to become lifelong learners.

Reading

Reading is embedded into our curriculum and is taught through English, following our long-term plan which is based around sequences of learning delivered through a range of high-quality texts.

Each year group has a non-negotiable book list that is shared with the class through story/class novel time. This literature has been carefully chosen to incorporate links to British values, cultural and social diversity and SEMH. The list also contains a range of shared non-fiction texts.

Early Reading and Phonics

We follow the 'Read Write Inc' Phonics teaching programme. All staff (teachers and teaching assistants) are trained to deliver this programme by a RWI consultant. Regular coaching takes place to ensure practice is of a consistent high quality and the school's Reading Leader works regularly with a RWI consultant to quality assure teaching and learning and track progress.

The children have a discrete Phonics session each day, which includes reading and writing. The children are grouped according to their reading level. This impacts on progress; as the learning is matched to the pupils needs.

In RWI sessions, pupils are taught to:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills.
- Read common exception words on sight.
- Understand what they read.
- Read aloud with fluency and expression.
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar.
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words.
- Acquire good handwriting.

We provide opportunities for pupils to read books, both in school and at home, that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of Phonics and the common exception words. Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these texts for themselves.

In addition to the daily reading which takes place in the Phonics session, children in Reception, Y1 and Y2 read regularly with their teachers individually and in small groups. Priority readers are listened to more frequently. Incentives such as bookmarks and stamps are used to reward children for reading both at school and at home.

Phonics Home Reading Books

Pupils take home a version of the text that they have read in their Phonics session. This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parent/carer cannot read with them. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read.

Assessing and tracking progress in Phonics

Pupils are assessed every half term using the RWI / benchmark assessment tools. In some early groups, assessments take place more frequently in order to move children on more rapidly. The Reading Leader uses the data to ensure gaps are closing between all groups – in particular: boys, those eligible for the pupil premium and the lowest 20%. 1:1 tuition and additional reading is put in place for any pupil who needs additional support. All KS1 staff have been trained to tutor.

Morning Reading in KS2

Each KS2 class has a dedicated time for reading every morning for the first 30 minutes of the school day. This allocated time continues to focus on developing children's decoding and fluency skills but a strong emphasis on comprehension takes precedent. Teachers use the 'Bug Club Comprehension' scheme to deliver these robust reading sessions using a talk-based approach. Sessions are centered around a whole class text enabling all children to access the same text, regardless of their decoding ability. Morning Reading nurture groups take place each morning to support those children who need additional help with reading.

Comprehension Skills

To support with developing children's comprehension skills, we have a family of reading superhero characters to represent each of the National Curriculum (2014) reading domains. These child-friendly characters are integrated across the curriculum to support children in recognising the skills they need to apply to answer comprehension style questions.

The teaching of Reading is an integral part of our English lessons with learning sequences based around a range of high-quality texts. Children are taught to use and apply their comprehension and higher-order reading skills across the curriculum.

Library and Home Reading Books

Children have the opportunity to visit the library on a weekly basis in small groups with a member of staff. They are taught how to choose a book matched to their reading ability and time is allocated to reading this text on return to their classroom. Children take a library and a home reading book home each week to enjoy. Children also have access to an extensive range of eBooks, matched to their individual reading level, to enjoy reading at home through their personal log in to Pearson Bug Club.

Progression and Assessment in Reading

Each half term, teachers complete a reading assessment overview. This assessment information is used when reviewing children's reading progress on Arbor. Benchmarking is used as a moderation tool to assess the reading ability of a small sample of children in each class. Each class has a priority readers list which is updated regularly.

Writing

Writing

Through our English curriculum, we aim to provide children with the confidence and competence to produce high quality writing that they are proud of. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children write clearly and accurately whilst selecting and adapting their language and style to suit a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. Our children are encouraged to become immersed in writing from a very early age and within Early Years there are many opportunities both indoors and outdoors for children to mark make and begin their writing experience.

Our English long-term plan, which is based around sequences of learning delivered through a range of carefully chosen high-quality texts, covers a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry genres. Through following this long-term plan, we strive to intrinsically integrate the teaching of Reading and Writing with teachers planning engaging units of work in order to enthuse, inspire and motivate our children. Where meaningful connections between subjects can be made, cross-curricular links have been incorporated to enable pupils to develop creativity across the curriculum. Writing is carefully planned so that children can follow the process through incorporating modelling, scaffolding, independence, re-drafting and producing a final draft. We recognise the importance of grammar, punctuation and spelling in the acquisition of children's writing skills and it is integrated as a key focus on the English LTP; creating meaningful links with each teaching unit. Our English lessons allow children to continuously practise and apply newly acquired skills in handwriting, composition, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

Progression

Writing skills are progressively sequenced, drawing and building upon prior knowledge from Early Years through to Year 6. Children incrementally develop their writing of different genres year on year, building on and deepening their writing skills. Teachers plan units of work ensuring a model of progression is maintained throughout school and use their subject knowledge of the end of year expectations for their year group, alongside our progression maps for fiction, non-fiction and poetry, to ensure pitch is high. Model texts (WAGOLLS) used as part of the writing learning journey are always aspirational; exposing children to the high level of writing, vocabulary and linguistic features that is expected from our children.

Assessment

Tracking children's progression in Writing is vital in order to measure the acquisition of their writing skills, identify next steps and to feed into the planning and teaching cycle. A wide range of formative assessment strategies are continually used in our writing lessons to monitor and track children's progress including: immediate teacher feedback, live marking, self, peer, group and whole class assessment and written feedback. This formative assessment constantly feeds into the planning and teaching cycle; ensuring learning is matched to pupil's individual abilities and needs. Through independent writing, children have the opportunity to demonstrate connected knowledge held in their long-term memory.

Teachers regularly monitor and track children's writing progress towards achieving the curriculum statements for writing on Arbor; which is frequently updated in order to identify gaps in learning and inform the planning and teaching of writing. To support teacher judgement, ensure accurate assessment and identify next steps in writing, termly writing diagnostic meetings are held across the federation. During these joint year group meetings, a wide range of children's writing is moderated and gaps in learning and key next steps are identified for individual children as well as each year group. Following these meetings, planning is tailored to address these identified gaps and next steps.

Spelling

Children in Years 2-6 are taught Spelling through the 'Read Write Inc.' Spelling scheme. It is a robust, fast-paced, systematic spelling programme which reflects the objectives and requirements from the National Curriculum (2014) for each year group. Although the scheme underpins the teaching of phoneme-grapheme correspondence, it also develops children's knowledge of word families, how suffixes impact upon root words and provides mnemonics to remember the trickiest spellings.

Spelling is taught daily in Year 2 and four times a week in Key Stage Two. The teaching revolves around instruction (with the help of online alien characters), partner and group practise, and competitive group challenges that help children commit new words to memory. As part of their phonics and spelling sessions, children also learn to read and spell the common exception words relevant for their phase.

Assessment

Assessment plays an integral role in our Spelling sessions. All of the activities include formative assessment to monitor and track children's progress including: self, peer, group and whole-class assessment. This formative assessment constantly feeds into the planning and teaching cycle; ensuring learning is matched to pupil's individual abilities and needs. As part of the sessions, children have their own Spelling log books which they use to record any spellings they are finding difficult learning. The log books also provide valuable opportunities for ongoing self-assessment. Children complete a practise test each half term and time is dedicated to teaching any gaps or overcoming any barriers to learning that have been identified. On a half termly basis, children are tested on their reading and spelling of the common exception words for their phase.

Handwriting

Children are taught handwriting following the 'PenPals for Handwriting' scheme which reflects the objectives and requirements from the National Curriculum (2014) for each year group. The whole-class sessions are planned around the clear progression of five developmental stages: physical preparation for handwriting; securing correct letter formation; beginning to join; securing joins and practicing speed and fluency leading to children developing their own personal style.

Handwriting is taught four times a week in both KS1 and KS2. The whole-class sessions use digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning, along with practice books and workbooks to support independent work.

Formative assessment is imperative in our handwriting sessions with teachers providing ongoing, immediate verbal feedback to children. Children's handwriting is also regularly assessed against the end of year curriculum statements for each year group on Arbor and this judgement is moderated during our termly writing diagnostic meetings.