



Meadowside Primary School

English Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Introduction

At Meadowside Primary School, we recognise the central importance of English to enable children 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. We aim to give our children the opportunity to play a full and active part within society and therefore view their development of language skills as an essential part of our school curriculum.

Reading is the key to unlocking a lifetime of learning, acquiring knowledge and enabling children to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually. We want all children to develop a love of reading both in terms of the escapism that a good story can bring and the wealth of knowledge and understanding of others' cultures and societies that can be found in both non-fiction and fiction that has its basis in real life. We strive to ensure that every child develops the ability to decode words in order to understand and comprehend our rich and varied English language, whether this is a factual text or a work of fiction. We want all children to enjoy reading, be curious and have an appreciation of the beauty and power of the written word.

We have produced this statement on policy and practice in English to ensure that:

- Children's needs are effectively met across the curriculum.*
- The requirements of the National Curriculum and the Curriculum for EYFS are fully covered.*
- The practice within the school is consistent and clear.*
- School policy on English is shared with interested parties,*
- Our children recognise and value the importance of English as a medium of communication.*

In producing this policy we have drawn upon:

- Existing practice within the school and knowledge of language acquisition*
- The National Curriculum for English*
- The Statutory Framework for EYFS and Development Matters (non-statutory guidance)*
- Subject leader network meetings facilitated by the Education Outcomes and Intervention Team through Gloucestershire School Improvement*
- The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) website and their Power of Reading teaching sequences*
- The 'englicious', a website written by grammar experts at UCL encompassing resources, training and CPD*

Aims

At Meadowside Primary School, we will:

- Help children use language to construct and convey meaning through speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Help children to learn to recognise and use structures and patterns in spoken and written language, with increasing confidence.
- Help children recognise that their chosen grammar and punctuation have power, which can be used to affect their audience.
- Facilitate each individual's growing awareness of what language is and how it works.
- Help children use the key skills in English, to access all subjects across the curriculum.

The National Curriculum (2014) states that English:

"Has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high quality education will allow children to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate... All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society."

In terms of Spoken language, our key aims are to help children to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Listen, understand and respond appropriately to others
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Develop an increasing command and understanding of the place of Standard English

In Reading, our aims are to help children to:

- Read with increasing fluency and accuracy, including speedy recognition of common exception words
- Develop a sense of wonder and joy and a love of reading
- Respond thoughtfully to a range of texts and genres, including poetry, and express their views
- Read widely across both fiction and non-fiction
- Use reference materials across the curriculum confidently, for a range of purposes

Our intentions in Writing are to enable children to:

- Communicate their ideas successfully using words, phrases and sentences
- Write with growing confidence and precision
- Plan, revise and evaluate their writing
- Learn to use a variety of written forms for different purposes
- Learn and use good presentation skills (accurate punctuation, correct spelling, and fluent and legible handwriting style).

Planning for Writing

EYFS's Statutory Framework and the National Curriculum (2014) are used to inform the planning of English at Meadowside. We plan sequences that help children develop an understanding of why and how we can communicate in different ways- putting the emphasis on creating real purposes for writing wherever possible.

Across each year group, we utilise the following techniques:

- CLPE's Power of Reading teaching sequences
 - o These planned lessons delve deeper into high quality children's literature to truly immerse the children in a text and draw out the themes and language to deepen their understanding and enhance their writing. These approaches help to ensure a broad and balanced range of work is covered, at levels appropriate for all children.
- Englicious's Model Text teaching sequences
 - o These focus on using a high-quality model text for the children to emulate. We use 4 stages in this sequence
 - 1. **Read as a reader**- where we discuss the text and its affect on us as a reader, identifying powerful words, phrases or sentences
 - 2. **Read as a writer**- where we classify those words and learn more about them and how they work in a linguistic sense. We also learn new grammar or punctuation elements here, noting the power they wield in the model text
 - 3. **Write as a writer**- where we plan and write our own example, using the grammar learning that has happened in stage 2
 - 4. **Write as a reader**- where we think about our intended audience and how to ensure they will be able to access our text. Editing and publishing are the focus here
- Writing across a range of genres
 - o These include reports, recounts, persuasion, instruction, narrative and poetry. We use common logos from EYFS to Year 6 taken from the Sue Palmer writing skeletons
- Alongside these, we also value the enjoyment of writing just for the love of it and use 'Writers' Café' (where the children can choose from a range of inspirational starters) and other, personal opportunities for writing (for example, writing to our Governing body, local MP or other writing linked to our cross curricular topics)

Naturally children will communicate, read and write in all aspects of their work across the curriculum. In addition, specific activities will be planned to help children acquire skills and understanding they need to successfully undertake such tasks. English may include such activities as:

Daily English- Language and/or Literacy- sessions; Circle time; News sharing, including in Celebration Assembly; Storytelling; Drama; Role Play; Presenting Work; School Productions; Story Time; Quiet Reading; Shared, Guided and Independent

Reading; Talk Partners; Phonics and Spelling; Handwriting; EGPS sessions; using our school library and technology to enhance learning.

Children are taught according to the purposes of the task and their individual needs. They might work in mixed ability groups; grouped according to need; friendship groups or talk partners; whole class teaching; older/younger classes working together and independent work.

How we cater for children's individual needs

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, we utilise the skills of all our staff to provide intervention sessions where necessary. This includes the use of our teaching assistants and part time teachers to provide extra support or extension work to help children reach their full potential.

We use a variety of adaptive teaching to help all children access the learning in English. These could include methods such as amended tasks, resources, support or adapted pace to help children make the next key steps in their communication development.

Where teachers identify children who need specific assistance or support to accomplish tasks, they will follow the procedure of The Graduated Pathway. Work will be differentiated according to need, including the use of extra resources or the breaking down of a task into manageable steps. This provision may be recorded on My Plans, and Provision Maps. Parents are part of making these decisions. (For further details, see our SEND Policy).

Spelling

Spelling is an important aspect of writing but one that should not dominate our marking and assessment. Spelling is to be used as a tool to ensure ideas can be read easily by our intended audience. The content of children's writing should always be valued. Children need help and encouragement in order to develop as confident, competent spellers because the ability to spell most words correctly is often closely associated with positive self-esteem and affects performance in other areas of the curriculum.

Spelling learning starts within the first few days when our youngest children start in Reception Class. At Meadowside, we use Unlocking Letters and Sounds- a systematic synthetic phonics programme which follows the progression of the 2007 Letters and Sounds framework, with the addition of some KS1 National Curriculum objectives.

Through ULS children will learn the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44 phonemes of the English language along with common exception words (CEWs) in a planned, progressive way. This is achieved through daily phonics lessons, reading practice using fully decodable books matched to the child's phonic knowledge and daily handwriting practice.

This scheme starts in Autumn 1 in Reception and concludes at the end of Autumn 2 in Year 2. For the rest of Year 2 to the end of Year 6, children learn about the common spelling patterns and rules that govern our English spelling system. They are taught to look carefully at patterns and rules that will help them choose the correct grapheme for the word they are

writing. We use a spelling scheme written by our English team, which uses the principles of Unlocking Letters & Sounds in each spelling lesson.

Spelling is a developmental process. The stages through which children pass as they develop as spellers are the following: pre-communicative, pre-phonetic, phonetic, transitional and 'correct'. Spelling is a visual-motor skill and children will therefore develop visual strategies in order to spell correctly as they progress from Key Stage 1 to 2. Phonic knowledge alone will be inadequate. Children therefore need to be encouraged to look carefully at words, breaking down the words into morphemes, using etymology to understand their roots. Children will also need to be taught how the English spelling system works and how our history has influenced our spelling. Our spelling lessons include these essential aspects.

Our spelling lessons focus on

- drawing attention and focus on the patterns and rules of English spelling
- helping children to remember these rules and recognise exceptions and anomalies
- providing a variety of strategies for remembering spellings, which may include breaking words into syllables (or morphemes at Key Stage 2), analogy, mnemonics and the use of base words and prefixes/suffixes
- looking at the etymology of words to see how they link and from where they originate
- interesting pupils in the nuances and anomalies of the English language

Strategies used within spelling/ phonics lessons and/ or within English lessons may include:

- Multi-sensory teaching- to include kinaesthetic approaches
- Look, say, cover, write, check- focussing closely on difficult/ awkward parts of the word
- Words within words- focussing on ways to remember certain parts of the word
- Looking at the etymology and morphology of words to gain an understanding of their root
- Dictation- putting the words in the context of a sentence
- Personal spelling books- helping children to recognise words that they find difficult

These strategies are shared with parents to allow them to support spelling learning at home.

Planning for Reading

Many of our writing sessions centre around a book or text. We want our children to understand the power of the written word.

Children start to learn to read within the first few days when our youngest children start in Reception Class. At Meadowside, we use Unlocking Letters and Sounds- a systematic synthetic phonics programme which follows the progression of the 2007 Letters and Sounds framework, with the addition of some KS1 National Curriculum objectives.

Through ULS children will learn the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44 phonemes of the English language along with common exception words (CEWs) in a planned, progressive way. This is achieved through daily phonics lessons, reading practice using fully decodable books matched to the child's phonic knowledge and daily handwriting practice.

All children also take part in guided reading activities each week- these come in many forms, including small group reading or whole class sessions-and may also have individual reading sessions, particularly in Key Stage 1, to ensure that children develop to become fluent readers. Children also visit our school library once a week to allow them to choose a book that interests them to share with their families at home. We encourage children to be ambitious and curious when choosing these books to spark a love of reading.

In EYFS and Year 1, children read an individual reading book, which is closely matched to their individual phonics knowledge. This book is sent home each week to be shared with parents. When the children can decode fluently (usually mid way through Year 2) they have more freedom in their choice of individual reading book. Each year group from Year 2 onwards has 3 sets of books (one for each long term) these have been arranged to provide progressive challenge in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure and content.

Alongside this, children in EYFS and KS1 take part in grouped guided reading that focuses on decoding, fluency and prosody. In KS2, this may continue but is used alongside whole class guided reading sessions where children focus on the different skills required to understand and 'comprehend' a text.

To support children in their comprehension skills, we use Wolf Hill as an intervention programme, which focuses on developing reading comprehension.

Assessment

This takes two main forms- what teachers assess on a daily basis (formative assessment) will determine what individuals need to move on to next and, three times a year, a specific judgement (summative assessment), to determine what they can do confidently when working independently.

At three points in a year, we will record significant features of children's progress, moderating samples of children's work. In order to do this, we use a variety of pieces of independent work, designed to give children the opportunity to 'show off' their best work and show us all the skills they have mastered.

Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms, and an end of year written report, advise parents on progress, achievement and areas for development. Learning With Parents homework tasks will also inform families of the English objectives being studied in school, with helpful videos to showcase what is expected.

In addition, parents are informed of the results of: End of EYFS Early Learning Goals, Year 1 Phonics test, Key Stage 2 SATs, alongside Teacher Assessments.

Please see our Assessment Policy and our Feedback and Marking Policy for further details.

Equal Opportunities

To ensure that all children have an equal access to a rich and rewarding curriculum for English, we try to ensure that a range of activities, experiences, teaching strategies, materials and technological aids are employed to meet individual needs, and to provide the cultural diversity which all children need to encounter. (For further details, see our Equal Opportunities Policy).

The Role of Parents

We see parents as important partners in the process of developing children's language skills; as role models, as support and as a vital audience. We therefore encourage parents to play an active part in their children's education by:

- Involving parents in the school's reading programme at the earliest appropriate opportunity (for example, via Reading Diaries, Curriculum Events, Unlocking Letters and Sounds Meeting for Reception parents and Helping at Home leaflets).*
- Sharing the phonics/ spellings the children have been learning in school, alongside some ways that parents can help children learn these at home*
- Welcoming offers of help from parents to assist in school.*
- Supporting children with other English tasks at home, including daily reading practise*

If parents require further information, they should ask the Headteacher or class teacher.

The Handwriting Policy sets out our approach to developing children's presentation skills when writing. We teach using Unlocking Letters & Sounds' handwriting scheme.

Review

This policy was drawn up by the English Subject Team, working in consultation with the staff and the governing body.