



Griffin Primary School

English Policy



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**Contents**

1. Aims and Objectives.....	4
2. Whole School Curriculum Ambition	4
3. Speaking and Listening.....	5
4. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Ambition.....	5
5. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Implementation.....	5
6. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Impact.....	6
7. Phonics	6
8. Reading.....	7
9. Reading Curriculum Ambition	7
10. Reading Curriculum Implementation.....	7
11. Reading Curriculum Impact.....	10
12. Writing	11
13. Writing Curriculum Ambition.....	11
14. Writing Intent.....	11
15. Writing Curriculum Implementation	12
16. Writing Curriculum Impact	14
17. Spelling	14
18. Grammar and Punctuation	14
19. Handwriting	14
20. Inclusion	15
21. Roles and responsibilities; and the Role of the subject leaders.....	15



1. Aims and Objectives

The National Curriculum for English states that 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 in particular, 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.

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- 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
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- 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
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

2. Whole School Curriculum Ambition

At Griffin Primary School, our ambition is to provide a curriculum for all of our students designed in response to what we already know about our children. Our over-arching goal is routed in promoting a positive attitude towards learning so that children enjoy coming to school, developing our children into life-long learners. Our curriculum is designed to provide all of our children with the core knowledge that helps them to make links between their prior and new knowledge, allowing them to develop a deeper understanding and be inspired to continue their learning outside of the classroom.

We aim to provide our children with stability through a consistent curriculum provision, allowing staff to become experts and build in assessment tools. The curriculum is sequenced effectively to enable prior knowledge to be built upon both throughout and across year groups. At the heart of our curriculum there lies a respect for all of the subjects we teach and how this provides our children with an insight into the world around us.



At Griffin we teach children how to develop their behaviours and habits to become effective learners through asking questions in order to develop their curiosity. Griffin's curriculum has been developed so that our children are not afraid to make mistakes and accept ways forward as support rather than criticism.

By the time the children leave Griffin, our ambition is to ensure that they have the necessary skills in Mathematics, English and communication so that they will become positive citizens in their community and the wider world.

Elements of English

3. Speaking and Listening

Spoken Language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing.

The national curriculum for speaking and listening states that:

- Pupils must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others.
- Teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions.
- Pupils should be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.
- Pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama.

4. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Ambition

Our ambition is to stimulate confidence and competence in spoken English.

- Pupils demonstrate proficiency in speaking and listening across the curriculum.
- Pupils know the conventions of spoken language when conversing with different people in different situations.
- Pupils will demonstrate how to respond appropriately.
- Pupils express their speaking and listening skills in a number of ways e.g. debate and drama.

5. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Implementation

Pupils need to be provided with many and varied contexts for talk, but they also need direct teaching in the skills of speaking and listening.

In order to promote high quality speaking and listening, teachers adopt roles that involve:

- modelling dialogue, e.g. turn taking, offering opinions and inviting response;



- modelling listening, e.g. the use of non-verbal communication, respecting, even if disagreeing with, the views of others;
- modelling values, e.g. encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent pupils, praising those who display sensitivity;
- modelling participation, e.g. recognising the value of being seen as a learner alongside the pupils;
- providing a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening;
- supporting the pupils by providing clear structures for tasks which require the pupils to learn through talk;
- sharing roles with the pupils, e.g. as questioner, the 'expert' on a particular topic.

Early Years

In EYFS, the foundations for speaking and listening are laid. In Nursery, speaking and listening groups form the core intervention, alongside everyday quality interactions. The nursery team work closely with the SALT service so early speech and language delays are acted upon quickly. The Chatterbox programme is implemented under the guidance of the SALT service who train and support staff members in delivering small groups. The focus is on the attention and listening skills needed to be an effective communicator. For specific speech sound problems, an early referral is made to the SALT service in liaison with the school SENCo and programmes are delivered by a consistent and trained member of the EYFS support team. So that gaps do not widen as children wait for external support, the EYFS team use Wellcomm resources to assess and intervene at the earliest point. Parents are also encouraged to support their children at home using the Boromi resources and through Chatterpacks which parents are trained to use.

Year 1 to 6

In Years 1 to 6, pupils develop language skills, effective talk, group talk and presentational speaking to enhance their spoken language. This is taught and embedded in teaching leading to effective classroom dialogue, including through the use of think, pair, share.

6. Speaking and Listening Curriculum Impact

Pupils speaking and listening skills are assessed informally by teachers at regular intervals in the school year.

Pupils to become confident with the skills they are taught in each year group building upon previous learning.

7. Phonics

At Griffin Primary School, we follow *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* phonics programme across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and through reading sessions for those children who require phonics teaching in Key Stage 2. Our principal aim is to develop children's phonological awareness, ability to decode, segment and blend words and read tricky words on sight; to become fluent readers.

Please see Phonics and Early Reading Policy for more information.



8. Reading

The National Curriculum for Reading states that there are two dimensions:

- Word reading
- Comprehension (both listening and reading)

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupil's competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

9. Reading Curriculum Ambition

Our ambition is to develop the valuable lifelong skill of reading.

- Pupils will love reading and choose to read for pleasure
- Pupils will be able to decode and develop fluency and expression
- Pupils will build a knowledge of vocabulary
- Pupils will comprehend what they read
- Pupils will learn the skill of inference
- Pupils will make links to prior learning and knowledge
- Pupils will use reading and reading widely to develop imagination and to find out more about the world around them

10. Reading Curriculum Implementation

The implementation of the Reading curriculum is through a number of elements outlined below.

Early Reading

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge.
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

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
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception, these sessions start after their first 6-weekly assessment or before if they are showing readiness. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional



blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. They also take part in wordless book sessions to embed early reading skills and develop comprehension.

In Year 2 and Key Stage 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Implementation of reading in Nursery and Reception

The reading offer in Nursery and Reception is wide and varied. Books are available in all areas of provision. In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. In Nursery and Reception, children vote daily for their choice of story, promoting reading for pleasure. Puppets enhance the reading offer and link to themes and nursery rhymes. Children are exposed to various genres including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and traditional tales. Adult led activities take place in Nursery while in Reception, children take part in three adult-led reading sessions per week. There are daily opportunities for children to read to adults and the lowest 20% read every day. Every day ends with a Storytime with a book chosen from a reading spine of quality texts.

Key focus texts in Nursery and Reception, covering both fiction and non-fiction, are mapped out over the year according to themes and linked to the I Am A Clever Writer approach to writing. Children have daily access to many other quality fiction and non-fiction texts alongside the key focus texts. All planned activities and enhancements stem from a core text which the children are immersed in, so the vocabulary and structure are embedded in long term memory.

Implementation of reading in Key Stage 1 and 2

In Key Stage 1 and 2, the reading offer continues to be wide and varied. The children enjoy daily story time which exposes them to quality texts, both fiction and non-fiction and allows them to experience a variety of authors. Key focus texts are mapped out for use in Writing lessons in each year group, based on the I Am A Clever Writer approach, which enables further access to quality texts. Children in Key Stage 1 continue their love for reading outside of school through our 'Books for Sharing' scheme. Children choose a book and take it home to share and enjoy with their family and friends. There are daily opportunities for children to read to adults and the lowest 20% read every day.

All children have access to a wide range of phonetically decodable home/school reading books from the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised scheme, and/or in Key Stage 2 from the Little Wandle Reading Fluency scheme.

Guiding Reading

At Griffin, a variety of different genres, both fiction (including poetry) and non-fiction, are chosen each term as part of whole-class guiding reading. The medium-term plan for reading maps out reading skills showing progression from Year 2 to Year 6.



Guiding reading follows a 2-day cycle in Year 2 for those pupils who are ready to move on from Phonics. These pupils will access Little Wandle Reading Fluency sessions three-times a week; with the 2-day cycle for Guiding reading as follows:

Day 1 – Vocabulary activity

Day 2 – Comprehension questions based on retrieval (looking questions).

Guiding reading follows a 5-day cycle in KS2, the focus for each day varying depending on year group.

The 5-day cycle for Year 3 and 4 is as follows:

Day 1 – Vocabulary activity

Day 2 – Comprehension - Looking (retrieval) questions

Day 3 – Comprehension – Clue (inference) questions

Day 4 – Comprehension - Thinking (making links) questions

Day 5 – Modelling and independent application of reading skill

The 5-day cycle for Year 5 is as follows:

Day 1 – Activate prior knowledge

Day 2 – Vocabulary activity

Day 3 – Comprehension - Looking, clue and thinking questions

Day 4 – Model reading skill (and apply from Spring Term)

Day 5 – Apply reading skill (unfamiliar text from Spring Term)

The 5-day cycle for Year 6 is as follows:

Day 1 – Vocabulary starter and activate prior knowledge

Day 2 – Vocabulary starter and vocabulary activity

Day 3 – Vocabulary starter and comprehension – Looking, clue and thinking questions

Day 4 – Vocabulary starter; model and apply reading skill

Day 5 – Vocabulary starter and unfamiliar text

Reading for pleasure

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.'
(OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy and culture through a universal offer and a weekly, termly/monthly and annual offer of events.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Griffin Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book box that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books. Additional texts can be chosen from the school library shelves.



- Reading for Pleasure forms part of our weekly timetables. This is a chance for children to choose books for themselves while recommending books to their peers. This supports love of reading and reading stamina.
- Weekly Reading for Pleasure tasks shared with all staff for pupils to take part in.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional Phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult regularly.
- Daily 1:1 reading support session for those children who need it, including the lowest 20% and children with SEN.

Home Reading – Early Reading

Practice books are taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.

- Little Wandle books assigned to each child. The book is matched to the phonic sounds that have been taught/are being taught in class for extra practise at home. In most cases, this is the exact book they have been reading in school.
- Blending sheet of phonics sounds sent home each week to consolidate and practise at home.
- Weekly pronunciation and blending videos recorded and shared with parents.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children, as part of our 'Books for Bedtime' scheme.
- Half-termly quality texts are given as gifts to families to encourage reading at home.

We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources to engage our families and share information about Phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Home reading beyond early reading

For Year 2 and KS2 pupils who are still taking part on phonics, decodable texts are sent home which match their phonic ability. We use the Little Wandle decodable materials for our home reading scheme.

For those pupils in KS2 who are beyond Phonics, pupils read Little Wandle Reading Fluency texts. When they are reading at or beyond the expected fluency level for their year group, they can alternate these with year group appropriate novels.

11. Reading Curriculum Impact

Children are continually assessed in reading at school and termly assessment judgements are made using the following:



- Responses in Guiding Reading support teacher assessment.
- Year 2 complete the non-statutory SATS assessments at the end of the Summer Term
- Year 6 complete the statutory end of key stage tests each year
- Year 2 children complete a fluency assessment which indicates if they are ready to move away from the Little Wandle decodable texts; and then termly fluency assessments based on Little Wandle Fluency programme
- Year 3 to 5 children complete a termly fluency assessment based on Little Wandle Fluency programme
- NFER termly assessments completed for Year 3, 4 and 5; Year 2 in Autumn and Spring Term; and Year 1 in Summer Term.
- Lexia for the lowest 20% and SEND pupils
- Reading Plus for Year 3 to Year 6 pupils

Assessment is discussed during RAG meetings and moderations take place between Venn schools each year.

12. Writing

The National Curriculum for writing states that there are two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing.

13. Writing Curriculum Ambition

Our ambition is to develop the valuable lifelong skill of writing.

- Pupils compose well- structured writing with appropriate detail for a range of purposes.
- Pupils write to engage the reader.
- Pupils enjoy responding to a range of engaging stimulus through their own writing.
- Pupils demonstrate their knowledge of grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils become proficient in handwriting and spelling.
- Pupils draw upon learning in other subjects to inform their writing.
- Pupils can apply their writing skills to other areas of the curriculum.

14. Writing Intent

At Griffin Primary School, it is our intent to foster a love of writing within our pupils. We want every child to master the key skills of punctuation, sentence structure, transcription and spelling so that they are able to communicate effectively through a range of text types. By doing this, we hope to encourage children to be independent writers who write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. Additionally, through direct



teaching of words, we want to develop a curiosity surrounding vocabulary and language where pupils develop a sophisticated bank of vocabulary that they are able to draw upon both within writing and conversation. We intend to provide a high-quality education in English and teach children to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others.

15. Writing Curriculum Implementation

Our Writing curriculum has been designed to cover all of the skills, knowledge and understanding as set out in the National Curriculum.

At Griffin Primary School, we follow the 'I Am a Clever Writer' (IAACW) approach for teaching writing which is a systematic, step by step approach. It exposes children to new skills whilst constantly embedding skills already taught so this means that no skills are left and forgotten. This approach allows us to inspire the children with well-chosen texts that link to our learning across the curriculum whilst also ensuring their grammar and punctuation skills are held to the highest standard.

Alongside this, our teachers create their own WAGOLLS based on the stimulus text, to model to the children 'What a Good One Looks Like'. These are produced for both fiction and non-fiction sequences of learning. Through exploring the WAGOLL each day, the children are exposed to the skills and features they will be including in their work.

Another key element of 'I am a Clever Writer' is our class Working Walls. Each unit will build over the course of one or two weeks, and the working wall will build alongside this. This will display high level vocabulary, a range of openers and any specific skills we are working on, alongside a I am a Clever Writer checklist which displays all skills learnt so far. Class working walls are always interactive and are produced through class discussion.

Additionally, over the course of the year, each class builds up a 'writers' checklist' that helps the children to understand how to write for different purposes and audiences. 'I am a Clever Writer' provides children with the tools to self-evaluate their writing and ensures that children are aware of their own steps to success, holding them to account. Through following this approach, our children can confidently talk about what they need to include in their writing in order to be successful and know exactly what makes a good piece of writing for their year group looks like. Teachers are able to pinpoint key learning for each year group, alongside knowing what is expected for those year groups earlier on in their school life, as we follow carefully planned out progression documents. Paired with this is a focus on live marking which supports children to up level their work as they are writing, considering what improvements can be made.

At the end of each sequence of lessons, which usually lasts around a week, the children take part in an extended writing activity on a text type. This is our 'Star Write' and the different aspects of spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary taught during the week should be evident in the children's extended writing, alongside any previous skills that have been taught. These strands are taught to match the curriculum for each year group, becoming increasingly complex over the course of the year as the children become more highly skilled.



Early Writing

In Nursery and Reception, a range of opportunities are provided for children to develop their gross and fine motor physical skills, which in turn, promote readiness for writing. We place high importance on the development of core stability, upper body strength, crossing the midline and bi-lateral coordination as the first step in a child's writing journey. We enable children to develop these skills through a range of activities including:

Gross motor

- running
- climbing
- spinning
- rolling
- riding a trike or scooter
- balancing
- skipping
- hopping
- jumping on one leg
- carrying large items
- waving

Fine motor

- cutting
- tearing
- scrunching
- folding
- sticking
- threading and weaving
- squeezing
- whisking
- spraying
- managing zips and buttons
- using cutlery

In Nursery, as well as the physical development of gross and fine motor skills, children are encouraged to draw lines and shapes as a motor movement and in large scale to develop their pencil control and to help them show a preference for a dominant hand. Pre-writing shapes are explicitly taught during adult led writing sessions following the Nursery IAACW ladder focussing on a different pre-writing shape each half term.

When ready, children begin to write single letter shapes and some or all of their name. To support this, throughout the provision, children have access to personalised name cards, check in labels, story votes peg labels etc. There are also opportunities to practise their grip and control through quality planned continuous provision play. When it is appropriate to the needs of each child, name writing is practised daily which begins with one letter and builds as they master each letter. Parents/carers are encouraged to support their child with name writing at home with clear guidance on how to form them based on the Little Wandle format.

As well as supporting the application of phonics to reading, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised supports the application of phonics to spelling and writing. Through Little Wandle, children learn grapheme and phoneme correspondences, the formation of graphemes, segmenting for writing, and writing simple captions and sentences as they enter their reception year.

In the Reception classrooms, the development of gross and fine motor skills continues to be of high importance and lots of opportunities are provided for children to develop their physical skills further. Specific intervention is put in place for those that still need support with holding and controlling a pencil. The children continue to develop name



writing with an increased focus on correct letter formation and pencil control daily during daily morning work and when writing during phonics lessons. Formation, word building, caption and sentence building skills are taught during adult led writing sessions following the IAACW sequence and children are encouraged to practise their writing skills independently during continuous provision through quality planned opportunities that link to the skills they are being taught.

16. Writing Curriculum Impact

At Griffin we assess the impact of English 3 times a half term. Teachers are able to assess children confidently in English by using assessment sheets that carefully combine the I Am A Clever Writer checklist, The National Curriculum and also the TAF. These teacher assessments are then used to inform termly teacher assessment which is recorded on Insight. Additionally, book scrutinies are carried out as per the monitoring timetable to assure the assessment judgements are accurate as well as writing moderations that takes place each term with SLT and with Venn schools annually. To ensure a high level is seen throughout our school we also ensure that subject co-ordinators attend network meetings where samples of work are assessed.

17. Spelling

In EYFS and Year 1, our pupils follow a high-quality, systematic programme of phonics teaching following Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. We encourage all of our pupils to apply their phonic knowledge when spelling. By the end of Year 1, it is our expectation that most of our pupils will be secure at spelling Phase 5 words. Any pupils who are not secure are closely monitored and given additional support where appropriate in Year 2. Teachers follow the phonics long term plan, to ensure coverage and pace. Common Exception Words are taught through English lessons.

In Years 2-6, spelling is taught using the spelling long term plan from Spelling Shed. Weekly spellings are displayed in the classroom with the appropriate rule.

18. Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar is taught within English sessions, following our English overviews, and are taught in a skill and embed sequence. All children must be taught the grammatical terminology for their year group (or adapted according to their ability).

19. Handwriting

As a school, we have developed our own handwriting scheme to help children develop fluent, clear and legible handwriting. Letter and number formation is displayed in every classroom. Key vocabulary in classrooms and wording for displays around school use sentence strips so that children see consistent handwriting on their journey through school.

Handwriting is taught prior to writing lessons using the space underneath the date and learning intention.



Handwriting is taught as a whole class in Year 1 and Year 2. Years 3-6 will also teach daily as a whole depending on their needs. When the majority of children are secure. Joined handwriting is expected from Year 2 (Summer term onwards). Secure joins should be evident in Year 4-Year 6; interventions take place where necessary.

20. Inclusion

The needs of all children are considered carefully when planning and teaching English at Griffin Primary School. We want children to reach their full potential. Where necessary, teachers identify which children are not making progress and take steps to improve their progress and attainment in English in liaison with the SENCO. When pupils are working significantly below their peers, we adapt work to enable all children to be successful in their learning with personalised learning targets.

21. Roles and responsibilities; and the Role of the subject leaders

The subject leaders for the areas of English are:

- Reading - Zoë Mitchell
- Phonics and Early Reading – Louise Smith
- Writing, including grammar and punctuation – Ben Atkinson
- Spelling and Handwriting – Ben Atkinson and Zoe Mitchell

It is the responsibility of the subject leaders to write the LTP and sequences of learning. The subject leaders will also monitor the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching and learning in English. Monitoring may involve looking at planning, scrutinising work, lesson observations and pupil voice. Pupil voice is valued and helps to inform the vision and aims of English across the school, pupils are interviewed to gain an insight into the subject. It is the subject leads responsibility to ensure staff maintain a high quality of presentation in pupil's Guiding Reading and English books.

The subject leaders produce an annual action plan for the development of English and also reviews impact termly; identifies next steps and any CPD needs. This working document is shared with Governors annually. The subject leader will also produce and narrate a presentation about their subject for the Governors bi-annually.

The subject leads ensure resources are available for units to be taught and will provide support if/ when needed for staff.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.