



IGNITE INNOVATE INSPIRE
Monkhouse Primary School
English Policy
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'When all else fails, write what your heart tells you. You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.'

Mark Twain

Curriculum Vision: Why we teach this English curriculum

At Monkhouse, we believe all children will be ambitious, courageous, resilient, respectful and kind so that they fulfil their unique potential and become active members of the wider global community.

What we teach in our English curriculum:

At Monkhouse, we place great emphasis on good speaking and listening skills in order for our children to become clear communicators and confident readers and writers. Being a fundamental life skill, reading and writing are at the forefront of our priorities and we strongly believe a high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently, opening up effective ways of communicating their thoughts and emotions with others. As a school, we believe that language is of crucial importance throughout all areas of our curriculum and prioritising the teaching of core vocabulary in each subject area, whilst igniting a passion for learning, will enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. Language is essential to most thinking and enables our pupils to think, to reason, to store and re-use their experiences. Competence in English enables children to **communicate effectively** at school, at home and in the wider world, and leads to **improved life opportunities**. The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing enable children to **organise, express and rationalise their own thoughts** and to **access and understand the knowledge and ideas of others**. These skills, together with confidence in the use of modern technology, are increasingly necessary to experience success in today's world and we believe that everyone should be given that opportunity.

Aims:

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of spoken language, reading and writing. Pupils will be provided the opportunities to incorporate the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce literacy skills.

We design our curriculum and individual lessons so children can:

- Achieve a high standard of English (Reading, writing and speaking) regardless of their background and starting point.
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.



- Acquire a wide vocabulary and an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- Understand a range of text types and genres – write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Develop their power of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.
- Use discussion in order to learn; children will be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Feel competent in the art of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
- Enjoy their English learning and understand the importance of the skills taught and the importance of these skills for future success.

How we teach English

Within our English teaching across school, we explicitly model the links between prior learning and new learning to ensure children develop knowledge that is transferable to deepen their overall understanding. Our bespoke English curriculum is tailored to the needs of our children, the experiences we want them to have within a wider curriculum and the English skills in reading and writing that we believe will support them beyond their primary years.

Early Years Foundation Stage English

Literacy is one of the specific areas of learning in the EYFS. The EYFS framework states that ‘the development of children’s spoken language underpins all areas of learning and development.’ Children at Monkhouse learn in a language rich environment, centred around children’s interests with a clear focus on developing their language skills and vocabulary through quality conversations with adults and their peers. Every day is an opportunity to develop language comprehension and this is achieved through carefully selecting appropriate books, rhymes, poems and songs, alongside taking steps to encourage an engagement with stories to develop a life-long love of reading.

The Early Years team make every moment count; they create unique learning projects to nurture every child and develop their knowledge of the world around them. Every aspect of learning is centred around books - both fiction and non-fiction - to provide children with real life learning experiences that embed the crucial early literacy skills needed and sets them up for the rest of the English educational journey. Hearing and engaging with books and stories from the moment they join our family.

We support children to develop positive attitudes and interests in spoken language, reading and storytelling, providing extensive opportunities for children to engage in role-play, ideas sharing, imaginative play and rich activities to develop oral vocabulary and confidence when exploring language structures. Children are taught to become skilled word readers, through the teaching of decoding and early reading, and to compose their ideas orally with confidence, before transcribing their ideas for other people to enjoy in a written form.

Early Reading (EYFS)

During their nursery year, educators will prepare children for their phonic journey through the introduction of Phase 1 activities. There will be planned opportunities, both guided and self-led, with a focus on skills such as clapping syllables, listening to and exploring rhyme and rhythm and



alliteration. Drawing on the Development Matters guidance, nursery children are supported to develop their enjoyment and awareness of rhyme and alliteration. Educators will support children beginning to identify initial sounds and, when ready, scaffold their learning to allow them to segment and blend simple CVC words. Adults will sustain children's early phonic interest through opportunities to access continuous provision activities across the day both in nursery and reception, where children engage daily in systematic phonics teaching.

Key Stage One and Two

We teach English in KS1 and KS2 through a curriculum that allows children to learn the grammar skills in a bespoke, progressive sequence and achieve mastery through the opportunities provided to apply and revisit their skills over and over until they become embedded. At Monkhouse, we strive for every child to achieve success and to develop competency with the fundamental basic skills necessary for future success. With an emphasis on our Mantra, '*Let's talk about it...*', we support all children to develop their spoken language and narrative, equip them with the skills of segmenting and blending to aid transcription, promote the understanding and use of new vocabulary and most importantly, make writing a part of each day to allow children the time needed to become confident to give it a go and find their way of expressing themselves and communicating effectively.

A sequence of lessons are designed to ensure all children access rich opportunities to communicate their ideas whilst developing their repertoire of presenting and structuring their writing for a wider audience. Within a writing unit, skills and knowledge are continually revisited and applied with adults explicitly modelling, guiding and supporting children across each individual lesson. This leads to all children being able to access each learning at their own level, with the appropriate support in place to guide them towards independent writing. Across each term, children will have the opportunity to explore the different genres units and write for different audiences, navigating the features specific to each text type and understanding their purpose. Children will be taught that the grammar skills they develop are transferable in different writing styles and all children, regardless of their starting point, are granted the same opportunity to access the whole English curriculum.

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2), children will learn to speak confidently and listen with attention to what others have to say. They will begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. All groups of learners will use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3 – 6), children will learn to adapt the way they speak and write to suit a number of different situations, purposes and audiences. They will read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. All children will be provided the opportunity to explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

Speaking and Listening:



Through direct teaching and modelling, children develop the necessary language skills to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and confident communicators across a range of different situations.

Our aims are to help children to learn to:

- Pay attention to, listen to and respond appropriately to adults and peers.
- Suggest relevant questions to further develop their understanding and knowledge.
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.
- Give structured descriptions, explanations, and narratives for different purposes, including expressing feelings.
- Apply relevant strategies to build their vocabulary store, focusing on developing the vocabulary they feel confident using in a range of spoken opportunities.
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, discussions and debates.
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas.

Reading:

Reading opens opportunities for all pupils to develop emotionally, intellectually, culturally and socially, playing a key role in their development from the earliest stages of their lives. Knowledge acquisition, establishing and building personal viewpoints and a sense of shared enjoyment are readily available to a child who possesses the language skills to read fluently and confidently.

Our aims are to help children to learn to:

- Read for enjoyment and develop a love for reading.
- Decode texts using phonic knowledge.
- Use linguistic knowledge to comprehend what they are reading.
- Build and develop their vocabulary through reading a range of genres.
- Read fluently with good understanding.
- Extend their learning, making choices about what they read.
- Share and access information using ICT – collaborative and independent information finding across a range of curriculum areas.

Our redefined reading curriculum ensures children are being provided the opportunity to develop the core reading skills needed for life long reading and enjoyment. We have selected 6 core skills to explicitly teach, model and practise in addition to the vocabulary, decoding skills and fluency being developed with all children. The core skills focus are background knowledge, retrieval, inference, prediction, summarising and drawing connections and comparisons. Each core skills area follows a progressive three week teaching structure using the model, practice and apply approach. Once all six skills have been covered, this cycle is repeated during the second part of the school year.

Our Reading approaches:

- Delivery of phonics and spelling, in line with the 2014 National Curriculum expectations, using the RWInc systematic programme (See Phonics policy)
- Read aloud, think aloud - modelled reading sessions where the teacher explicitly models the reading process to the children and children have the opportunity to practise the skill using film clips, images and appropriately chosen text extracts.



- Shared reading (class novel) and guided reading. Engaging pupils in shared, guided and individual reading activities, including specific regular opportunities for wider reading and reading for pleasure.
- Fluency development - oral guided reading (expert model) and repeated reading opportunities.
- Accelerated reading – supporting children to develop confidence with texts at their own level and feel successful.
- Provide and promote a wide range of books for children to engage with and loan from school.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage with books through author visits and reading festivals.
- Allow children to experience a range of quality literature which will stimulate work in other curriculum areas and help to strengthen personal, social and moral values.
- Home reading to support fluency and enjoyment.
- Using ICT to support reading development e.g. reading and interpreting information, both in English and in other subject areas / projects.
- Prepare children for national testing at the end of KS1 and KS2.

Writing:

Our aims are to help children to learn to:

- Develop an enjoyment for writing.
- Know the relationships between sounds and letters.
- Write down ideas fluently by developing effective transcriptions (spelling and handwriting).
- Increase knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.
- Develop effective composition by forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader.
- Writing for a wide range of purposes, in a range of genres, and for a range of audiences
- Use their writing to express themselves creatively, using a range of techniques to ignite writing e.g. use of video clips, drama, music, images and 'real-life' scenarios.
- Pupils to write collaboratively, discussing the writing process and writing choices.
- Extended writing on a weekly basis and the teaching of editing and redrafting skills of increasing complexity from Y2. (Plan, revise and evaluate their writing.)
- Writing through other areas of the curriculum to consolidate their writing skills through at least one piece of extended writing in another curriculum area per fortnight. (Other extending writing opportunities may occur using iPad technology.)
- Understand the writing process as readers, analysing a variety of texts and reviewing how authors write and the impact this has on a reader.
- Participate in shared writing, where the teacher acts as:
 - An expert – modelling the process and verbalising the writing process.
 - A scribe – working collaboratively with the pupils to compose.
 - A guide – the pupils are supported by the teacher in their own compositions.
- Review their own and others' writing against co-constructed success criteria or Rubric and analyse whether the objectives have been achieved and how their writing could be improved, making these improvements through redrafting and editing.

Our approaches:

- REAL projects.
- Develop basic skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) through regular phonics, spelling sessions and timetabled SPaG sessions - fluency in English.



- Shared and guided writing, with scaffolded guides being provided to support individual children.
- Critique and evaluate their own and their peers' writing.
- Use of consistent assessment and monitoring of teaching and progress.
- Use ICT to support writing development e.g. to produce a published piece with a professional finish.
- Use of iPads and technology to support English knowledge and outcomes being recorded for specific children where writing can pose a challenge.

Handwriting:

Children in Reception learn the formation of the letters following the RWI handwriting ditties, in conjunction with their daily phonics teaching. This is also used in Year 1 and 2 to reinforce letter formation during RWI sessions and in English Basic skills sessions.

The large majority of children across school will learn pre-cursive from the appropriate time in Year 2 through to Year 6. This will run alongside RWIinc ditties for Year 2 children and be supported regular practise of the writing style.

Pupils in KS2 will develop a fluent and neat cursive writing style, where they can write at length with stamina, through regular teaching and practise of handwriting and presentational skills developed in basic skills teaching episodes and through taking pride in all of their learning outcomes. Children on our school SEN register / children with EHCPs will have the use of a cursive font tailored to best meet their needs.

Curriculum Planning and Organisation:

Each class teacher is responsible for the English in their class in consultation with, and with guidance from, the English subject leader in line with school improvement priorities.

The approach to the teaching of English within the school is based on the following key principles:

- English teaching must account for at least 5 hours per week (this can be 5 x 1hr lessons or within a project based approach as long as objectives are being directly taught. One English lesson per week will be reading skills focused for teaching the core reading strands.
- Daily phonics teaching for Reception and KS1 children.
- Four basic skills sessions per week for KS2 which focus on Spelling (spelling patterns), Punctuation and Grammar.
- Guided reading sessions to support children on a small group basis to allow each child to access a reading opportunity where appropriate for the lowest 20% of readers.
- An emphasis on the teaching and understanding of grammar underpinning the teaching of writing skills.
- High expectations of handwriting, spelling and presentation in writing in English sessions and across all other curriculum areas.
- A focus on interactive teaching which is fully inclusive of all groups of pupils, with support being allocated appropriately, either through guided groups or scaffolded resources.

Assessment and Monitoring

At Monkhouse, we believe that assessment and monitoring should be embedded within our daily practice to have the greatest impact on pupil outcomes and achievements overtime. Within the daily English lesson, all staff use assessment for learning principles to provide feedback to children to shape their understanding and guide their learning towards a successful outcome. Time is allocated to allow children to reflect on their learning, with or without adult support and



opportunities provided for children to join a guided group if they feel they need to. The timing of this is decided upon by the teacher, but happens at a time to allow a child to be further supported if needed, or further challenged. Where appropriate in a lesson, children should be given advice on how to improve, or an extra challenge to move their learning forward; this should be timely verbal feedback with some modelling by the teacher where required. Throughout the lesson, teachers will use their observations and discussions to challenge children. Teachers will look at English books at the end of a lesson and, if necessary, direct a child towards a same day masterclass, or to work with adult support in the next lesson. Teachers will evaluate children's outcomes to tailor the next learning steps and to decide on the level of support required for individual children and groups. A system of symbols is used to show where a child has worked independently, with guided support, if a challenge has been given and if further support is required following the lesson. (See *marking and feedback policy appendix for symbols*)

English grammar teaching follows a small step approach within a bespoke, progressive curriculum. Where children are showing signs of challenge, same day master classes and additional interventions will be put in place to allow children to 'keep up' with their peers. The skills children are learning are tracked over time within a teaching cycle, with year group content taught in English lessons being revisited for additional practise in Basic skill sessions. This ensures that any gaps in a child's understanding are addressed to support them in moving onto the next stage of learning.

After the children have completed a unit of work (e.g. a narrative story), children engage in an inventing writing opportunity to allow them to showcase the skills that have been taught. This is assessed against a writing rubric (checklist) which supports the teacher in gaining an insight of the children's understanding and achievements in a unit. The independent inventing writing assessment is used to determine if a child has a deeper, conceptual understanding of the area of the writing genre covered and a fluency in the application of grammar and punctuation taught.

Alongside the class teacher's assessment for learning, children receive complete half-termly mini assessments for grammar and spelling. These allow the teacher to evaluate whether the children have learned and can apply the content taught and make provisions for gaps in learning to be covered for all / some children. In addition, children complete a formal reading test and grammar assessment twice a year (usually January and June) and children in Yr 6 complete the end of Key Stage National Assessments in May.

Monitoring:

The English subject leader, along with the SLT, monitors and evaluates the quality and standards of English throughout the school through the monitoring of lessons and teaching and learning evidenced in children's learning outcomes. This enables the subject leader to identify strengths and areas for development in practice and pupil outcomes across school. Regular staff CPD time is dedicated to English and the priorities in place for whole school improvement across the curriculum.

The monitoring of the teaching and learning of English will be carried out by the school's senior leadership team and will involve:

- Learning walks and lesson observations



- Evaluation of pupil outcomes (Books and digitally)
- Pupil progress meetings
- Analysis of data
- Pupil voice

Any CPD requirements will be identified as part of the monitoring process and staff will be signposted to the relevant CPD that will further enhance their practice and the experiences for all children.