



## Policy

# Hampreston First School

### Vision

At Hampreston First School, we want all of our children not only to be able to read and write but to enjoy reading and writing, regardless of their background or ability. They will receive a rich and varied diet of high-quality literature and will read for pleasure at school, at home and beyond their childhoods. Children will know and be able to express the value of reading and what it can offer them throughout their lives. We recognise that strong literacy skills underpin the entire curriculum and enable greater academic success and opportunities in life.

Our children will make continuous progress so that they are ready for middle school and beyond. By the end of Year 4, every child will be able to read independently, decoding texts using phonic skills taught from EYFS up and using strategies to explore the meaning. They will be able to justify their opinions on texts using evidence. Children will be able to access a variety of good quality texts to read independently and to share with their family at home. They will also be exposed daily to rich literature through explicit reading lessons and having books read to them purely for enjoyment. They will be encouraged to collect poignant vocabulary and use it in their own work.

Children will be able to write for a range of purposes, demonstrating a knowledge of the distinctive features of the genres they are using.

They will have a secure knowledge of grammar and punctuation so that they can apply and manipulate it within their own speaking and writing. All pupils, with the exception of those with specific literacy needs will be able to spell the common exception words at the end of each year and will apply a combination of phonic, spelling rules and patterns and visual checking to any word. Oracy in the form of debate, drama, recital and many other methods will encourage confidence to speak in front of others and to rehearse orally what may then be recorded in writing.

### Why We Believe English is Important

Being able to read and interpret words on a page is crucial in order to access communication and function independently in life, as well as to expand one's mind, building upon ideas and creating new ones. Progress in reading must be continuous, including vocabulary acquisition, in order to understand texts as they increase in complexity through a child's life. A small gap in decoding or comprehension, if not addressed early, can snowball into a chasm with the potential to prevent a child from accessing textual meaning later on. Being able to respond in writing, express one's thoughts or ideas, either creatively or factually is a life skill that every human deserves. Reading, writing and oracy enable humans to share ideas and information. They are skills that must be nurtured and built upon throughout life, to grow the brain and to contribute to human progress. It is a child's right to be able to interact through a shared knowledge and understanding the English language. (supported by Articles 30, 31 of the UN Convention for the Rights of The Child).

Illiteracy is undoubtedly a disadvantage and can have a detrimental effect on a person's life chances. We will strive to ensure that every child has the best level of skill possible.

### Characteristics of a child with a good command of English

We aim to ensure that all children in every year group achieve each of the relevant national curriculum objectives for spoken language, word reading, comprehension, writing, handwriting and presentation, composition, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. The general characteristics we want to see in each child are:

- The ability to communicate meaning verbally with confidence, age-appropriate accuracy and fluency, showing an awareness of sentence structure;
- A genuine interest in what texts have to offer, be it for entertainment or information
- The ability to independently read and discuss a variety of age appropriate texts;
- The ability to read more challenging texts as part of a group or whole class and a willingness to express their own opinions about what they have read, ask questions about what they are reading and explore the meanings of vocabulary;
- The ability to recognise and apply the features of genres, suited to purpose and audience;
- To communicate meaning in writing with age appropriate clarity and accuracy;

## English Statement

### Intent

At Hampreston C.E First School, we teach English so that:

children can speak clearly and audibly, taking account of their listeners;

children listen with concentration to enable recall of key learning;

children become effective communicators;

children become enthusiastic, confident and independent readers;

children read so deeply and widely that they are able to tackle challenging texts across the curriculum;

children enjoy writing, and can adapt it for a range of purposes;

children write in a range of genres with an awareness of their audience;

children apply a range of writing skills and techniques to their writing.

### Implementation

#### Reading

This policy will be updated regularly to reflect our response to the DfE's Reading Framework – Teaching the Foundations of Literacy July 2021.

We prioritise a **literature rich curriculum**. This includes a range of pictures, story and non-fiction books. Exemplary texts provide a vehicle for teaching creative writing. We aim to foster a genuine enjoyment of writing by inspiring children with what we read with them.

Daily story time is timetabled in every class. In Reception and Year 1 we dedicate additional time to singing, poems and rhymes to enrich language.

We believe that all children can learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities and are determined to make this happen. Research indicates that a child's fluency of reading is a key indicator in further and higher education and employment.

We aim to deliver an inspiring and engaging English curriculum through high quality teaching and exciting lessons. Writing is an integral part of our reading curriculum. All children from Reception to Year 4 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum. We create a positive reading and writing culture in school, where both are promoted and enjoyed.

[Early Reading and phonics \(see separate policy\)](#)

We follow the *Little Wandle revised Letters and Sounds* system of teaching Reading and Phonics, using the suggested order of teaching. Children's learning is reinforced with books chosen specifically for the practice of the GPCs (grapheme/phoneme correspondence) in which each individual child is fully secure. Therefore, children are able to read with total independence and confidence. Children in Key Stage 1 also have their reading supplemented with additional reading materials to practise high frequency words and to enjoy reading for pleasure and comprehension. Our approach is systematic, consistent and rigorous in order that all children become readers as quickly as possible. We use the same phonics resources across the school providing continuity and a vehicle for guaranteed progression. Discrete, daily phonics teaching takes place in EYFS and Year 1, with regular revisiting throughout the day. In Year 2, the autumn term is used for revision and consolidation, alongside the No Nonsense Spelling Programme for continued learning of spelling patterns and rules.

Early writing begins with early mark making. When the children begin their Phase 2 phonics, they are taught the correct letter formations using the Little Wandle graphemes. This begins with writing (whether with a writing tool or in the air) cvc words, moving onto short sentences using the sounds they have been taught. EYFS children are encouraged to write independently during continuous provision.

To ensure progression, consistency and coverage, teachers use a Writing and SPAG whole school progression map. Medium term plans for reading and *Head Start* SPAG long term plans are used from Years 1-4 to ensure full coverage.

## Handwriting

The school, wherever possible, uses the font style Sassoon Primary Infant for writing read by the children.

Handwriting is taught in a separate lesson to the letter formation activity during the teaching of graphemes in Phase 2 Phonics lessons. We use the Little Wandle formation phrases to teach correct letter formation for each grapheme. (See Phase 2 grapheme information sheets Autumn 1 and Autumn 2.) The Little Wandle letter formation is print. Cursive or pre-cursive should not be taught in Reception. This is in line with the DfE policies and the Reading Framework (2021), which explain why teaching cursive can be deleterious.

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting
- pre-cursive patterns.

Parents are signposted to the parent area of the Little Wandle website for accurate demonstrations of letter formation and the accompanying mnemonic.

Further handwriting practice is given in continuous provision and in weekly handwriting sessions in Years 1 and 2. In Year 3, children who are writing securely at age related expectation, with good letter size and formation are encouraged to start joining. Letter joins are taught in formation families. The teacher models joining formation using the interactive whiteboard and sometimes with the use of a writing repeater programme so children have access to a continual visual reminder. Although the curriculum does not expect children in lower Key Stage 2 to join their letters, we encourage them to do so when they are ready because of the benefits for speed, fluency and spelling memorisation. We teach how to join letters correctly using the following order:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. *ai*
2. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. *ri*
3. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. *ul*
4. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. *wh*

Children who struggle to meet the national curriculum objectives in handwriting are given extra support through 1-1 or group interventions. By the end of Year 3, all children use a blue handwriting pen.

## Writing

To support the teaching of new and adventurous vocabulary, teachers collect and display word banks on classroom working walls. In Key Stage 2, each child has a vocabulary book which they use to collect vocabulary that has captured their interest and also for 'having a go' at spelling a word before asking an adult to confirm whether it is correct.

There is an expectation that handwriting, grammar and spelling will be modelled and used correctly by all teachers. To ensure progression in grammar skills, all teachers from Years 1-4 use the National Curriculum progression of grammar skills appendix. Any areas of weakness that are identified as a result of independent writing are taught as part of the next modelled text, in focused SPaG sessions or during grammar starters.

To ensure our writing standards are in line with DfE expectations, we hold moderation meetings among our own staff and analyse the end of Key Stage 2 exemplars thoroughly in order that teachers throughout the school see where we are aiming for our children to be after they leave us in Year 4. We arrange external moderation with pyramid schools whenever possible.

Around the school, there are displays of writing to encourage pride in work, give a purpose and audience and to show that work is valued. Children are expected to maintain the same standard of presentation across all subjects.

## Spelling

At Hampreston, our Little Wandle Systematic Synthetic Programme is followed by '*No Nonsense Spelling*' (NNS) scheme, where specific spelling rules and patterns are planned and taught, also building in opportunities for revision of previous years' learning. Common exception words are learnt using multi-sensory strategies suggested in the NNS programme. Children in Years 2, 3 and 4 learn sets of spellings related to the weekly rule or pattern and subsequent dictation exercises are used later on to ensure these have been retained.

## Curriculum planning

Medium term and weekly planning includes each of the seven elements of the National Curriculum for English: spoken language, word reading, comprehension, spelling, handwriting and presentation, composition and vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. Planning differentiates for different groups of children or individuals according to their level of attainment or specific educational needs and a challenge is always open to all.

High quality texts are chosen and used as a basis for most units of work. Before text examples are 'unpicked' there is always the chance to soak up the writing, enjoy it and respond to it at face value. Children are then encouraged to explore the features of the genre and techniques used by the author, identifying what exactly makes it effective. Grammar and punctuation is usually taught discretely at the beginning of the week and children are expected to implement it in their writing for the unit and beyond. Writing tasks are designed to provide children with opportunities to put into practice what they have learnt about the text type or grammar and punctuation skills.

Enjoyment and confidence in writing is fostered through the use of drama, story and the use of ICT. A book dedicated to 'Free Writing' provides children in Key Stage 2 with opportunities to be creative and practise writing without judgement.

## Impact

We can see that our pupils enjoy reading regularly for information and for enjoyment. Reading is well supported by parents, who share our vision and aims. Phonics and reading information workshops are well attended. Parents and extended family members volunteer to come in and read to or with children and everyone takes part enthusiastically in book events. Our school book fairs are always extremely well supported and create a buzz of excitement among the children.

We collect opinions from our pupil surveys and respond to them wherever possible.

Pupils in each class look forward to class novel time and they discuss books with excitement and interest. Reading displays around the school provide evidence of the value that children, parents and staff place upon books. Learning walks have given snapshots of children enjoying writing and wanting it to be read or heard. In their learning journals, learning intentions are clear and the features of different genres and styles have been used. Pupils can confidently

write for different purposes and audiences. Reading records show that most children read regularly at home (at least 4 times weekly). Parents of children who read less frequently at home are encouraged through conversations with the class teacher. Children with parents who have literacy difficulties are identified and given extra 1-1 reading time at school. Weekly monitoring by the class teacher and half termly sampling by the Reading Lead ensures that these positive habits are continuous. Engagement in the online reading scheme 'Bug Club' is tracked and home reading records are used as an effective means of communication about reading by the majority.

Progress is shown through formative and summative assessment procedures. Pupils are tested for their reading and comprehension ages at the beginning and end of a school year and progress is tracked. Low scores at the beginning of a year are acted upon through intervention groups. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are also tested on their comprehension using a formal test, termly, again which has shown clear progress in reading attainment in every year.

Writing in every subject is at a consistently high standard due to the use of the learning journal where subject links can be made and writing skills transferred and applied in any subject area. Marking and verbal feedback shows that children respond well to suggestions for improvement (in purple pen).

Half-termly, teachers moderate pupils work in school and in cluster meetings with other schools to ensure accurate assessments are made. The quality of writing in learning journals is evaluated by learning walks, drop ins, pupil conferencing and work scrutinies. These inform future areas for improvement and the impact of new initiatives. The English subject leader provides an action plan for the subject and addresses areas for development and improvement which is then shared with all staff

### **Rationale for KS2 reading curriculum.**

In alignment with DfE guidance published in July 2021, reading skills are taught explicitly. Whole class reading (WCR) lessons take place 3 times weekly for 30 minutes per session. This consists of around 15 minutes of the children reading and 15 minutes of discussion and tasks. Various techniques are employed to ensure that children are actually being taught the mechanics of reading, including phonic decoding, strategies for fluency such as noticing the punctuation and elongating the sounds at the end of words so that they flow into the next without pauses. Teachers use echo reading (I say it, you copy it – repeat until it sounds fluent); I read and you follow with your eyes / fingers, being ready to fill in the missing word when I pause; choral reading (I start and then you join in with me all together for a given short passage). All children are included in the lessons and less secure readers are supported through paired reading or an adult helping them track the text.

The class novel is shared for 15 minutes every day and this is a 'non-negotiable'; the absolute last thing that should fall off the timetable. The novel is the teacher's choice, intentionally because we want children to see real passion and spark in the delivery of the book, and this is more likely to happen with ownership of choice. The novel is used for discussion **twice per week**. This ensures children have access to and study a text in its entirety from start to finish and build the skill of following a text through. We also use these lessons to focus on the skills of **prediction** and **summary** more than the three mid-week lessons as these are better applied to the entirety of a text. By taking the approach of enjoying a class novel alongside formal reading lessons based on shorter extracts, we are guaranteeing that children are receiving a strong diet of poetry, non-fiction and picture books as well as fiction. Song lyrics are also used for analysis, as is poetry.

The three mid-week lessons are for 'linked texts' – three texts that sit well together along a similar theme but not necessarily forced into current cross curricular topics with the inclusion of classic fiction that we feel all children should be exposed to.

There are 33 weeks of lessons for a year which leaves a number of weeks for teachers the freedom to focus on teaching an element of their class novel in depth.

The lessons are designed with challenge and coherence in mind. We use the VRICE approach to cover each of the reading domains (**Vocabulary, Retrieve, Infer, Choice, Explain**) and each week, the lessons will have included all of these domains. Progression is achieved and built on each year through the complexity of the texts; increasing difficulty might come through either more complex syntax or deeper themes. Questioning, though obviously increasing somewhat in difficulty, stays the same; for example, the same question is asked about The Tunnel in Y3 and The Journey in Y4 but the challenge is in the complexity of the text.

Cross curricular links have been mapped out where possible. For example, in science, Y3 learn forces, focusing on magnetism, so during one week of reading lessons on forces they learn about the legend of *Magnes the Shepherd* and the discovery of magnetism, they read *Egg Drop* and the story of Isaac Newton and the apple to start to give them an appreciation on gravity, giving them the chance to apply knowledge more widely. The same can be said when Y3 study light and look at the poem *My Shadow* by Robert Louis Stevenson in which a young boy goes out before the sun is up and refers to the fact his 'lazy shadow' has stayed in bed. Non-fiction is also embedded, for example, Y4 learn about Thomas Edison.

There are some links to PSHE, for example, on Money in Y4 where they learn how money is made and look at two different examples of money struggles: *Brother Can You Spare A Dime?* about a man who lost everything in the Great Depression and the moving 'It's A No Money Day' picture book by Kate Milner.

The importance of studying one author in finer detail for three days to make comparisons across their writing has been planned for. Y3 study the classic authors: Roald Dahl, Anne Fine and Dick King Smith.

Our children's cultural capital is enriched through diverse texts that may be outside of their familiar boundaries of this part of Dorset; for example, Years 3 and 4 study books that promote positive female, black role models during Black History Month. Equally important in the provision of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is the reference to Dorset and our locality, such as our beaches, rocks and fossils and Mary Anning's diary, our beach clean at Chessil beach after which we study a report on beach cleaning, or when looking at unusual habitats, children read about Dolphins in the River Mersey and in Poole Harbour.

This allows the teacher to have some choice over their class's reading diet (texts used as extracts can also be used as class readers) but ensures that our children meet the best of the best of literature and have their knowledge deepened at all points.

Our children can distinguish between the class novel and the content in the reading lessons. They adopt the teacher's passion for the book they are sharing together and this fast-paced consumption of books and text extracts mirrors the reading habits we would like to see them develop in life.

#### **Acknowledgments to Ashley Booth Reading**

### **English Curriculum Overview**

The curriculum overview can be seen in a separate document.

### **Promoting British Values Through English**

We want every child to uphold the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Our books are carefully chosen to reflect relevant issues from around the world.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Aspects**

Books that reflect diversity and those that promote positive female role models have been carefully considered; for example, an article on Katherine Johnson is used by Y3 to highlight female achievement in S.T.E.M as well as ensuring all our children can see themselves in the people they learn about in books. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching are specifically planned for and can be identified in purple font in all year groups' planning.

### **Inclusion & Equal Opportunities**

All children take part in reading and writing lessons, regardless of their prior attainment. Response tasks are suitably differentiated by class teachers in order that every child can succeed and make progress at their own rate.