



HILL WEST  
*Primary*

FOUR OAKS

# ENGLISH POLICY

Hill West Primary School is a member of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

# HILL WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ENGLISH POLICY

Sound English skills are essential for progress across the curriculum and to prepare pupils effectively for tasks of adult life. All teachers have a responsibility to develop pupils' competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening and to ensure that pupils become competent users of language, so they can access all areas of the curriculum.

Hill West:

- Places singular importance on the teaching of early phonics and reading.
- Recognises the effect that a confident, fluent and coherent understanding of English will have on a pupil's progress, both inside and outside of the school environment.
- Understands how a strong grounding in English will impact the future learning and development of a pupil in all aspects of their life.
- Provides a balanced and broad curriculum, which encompasses writing practice, including handwriting, spelling, widening vocabulary, and writing for different styles, purposes, and audiences, as well as focusing on spoken English, reading, grammar and pronunciation.
- Ensures that all staff members are aware of planning, assessment, teaching and learning requirements for the English curriculum.
- Ensures that all pupils know how to plan, draft, edit and publish their work.
- Ensures that all pupils understand all elements of English, as per the national curriculum.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

#### Early years foundation stage (EYFS)

All pupils within the EYFS are taught to develop their English skills as an integral part of the seven areas of learning outlined in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2021). Specifically the teaching focuses on:

- ✓ **Communication and language development** which involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- ✓ **Literacy development** which involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

***English skills within the prime areas:***

#### **Communication and Language**

- ✓ **Listening, attention and understanding** - children listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions. They make comments about what they have heard and are able to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Children hold conversations when engaging in back and forth exchanges with their teachers or peers.
- ✓ **Speaking** - children participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary. They offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate. Children express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

### ***English skills within the specific areas:***

#### **Literacy**

- ✓ **Language Comprehension** - Children demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; where appropriate they anticipate key events in stories. Children use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.
- ✓ **Word reading** - Children say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs. They read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending. Children read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
- ✓ **Writing** - Children write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. They spell words by identifying sounds in them and by representing the sounds with a grapheme or graphemes. Children write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

## **The National Curriculum**

### ***Reading into Writing***

All pupils in KS1 and KS2 are taught English in line with the requirements of the English National Curriculum. At Hill West, our daily English lessons are taught through a high-quality key-text and are based upon a 'Reading into Writing' approach, whereby the key-text is explored through reading and writing. We strongly believe that reading is the focal point of good writing – it encourages curious writers who use a range of ambitious vocabulary and written techniques to create purposeful outcomes.

### ***Key-Texts***

Our key-text units of work are carefully mapped out to show progression across school with each unit centring on an engaging, vocabulary-rich texts which often link to our wider-curriculum. This allows the children to have a purpose for their writing and develops not only their written skills but strengthens their knowledge and understanding of key learning concepts in other subjects.

We have developed our own evidence informed literature spine, with a balance between fiction texts, poetry and non-fiction texts. The texts have been carefully chosen for their richness in

vocabulary, cultural capital and concepts. The texts were selected to enhance our knowledge-based curriculum, whilst also helping us to drive the global elements of our curriculum such as personal development and wellbeing, diversity, equality and inclusion. They also represent our commitment to the UNCRC as a rights embedded school. In addition, many of our key texts and class novels fit within the five plagues of reading (as recommended by Doug Lemov in his book 'Reading Reconsidered') with texts ranging between the categories of archaic, non-linear time sequences, narratively complex, figurative/symbolic and resistant. These texts are complex beyond a lexical level and demand more from the reader than other types of books, ensuring that our children are confident, well-rounded readers by the time they finish Year 6.

**Purpose**

At Hill West we have a 'purpose for writing' approach. We know that it is important that pupils are given a reason to write – and someone to write for (EEF, 2021). When planning a unit of work for a specific text, we are very clear on the RAFT of the writing (Reason, Audience, Features, Tone) as we know that children will be more successful if they understand the purpose of the writing. This helps us to ensure that, by the end of Year 6, children will not only leave our school being able to write for a variety of purposes, but able to write in a real life situation, essential for the next step in their education. There are four types of writing that children will be exposed to throughout our English curriculum: narrative - writing to entertain; and non-fiction - writing to inform, writing to persuade and writing to discuss (see Figure 1 on page 4). Children will also cover a variety of poetry forms, building up a repertoire.

Figure 1: The four purposes for writing

Writing to entertain	Writing to inform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative (including retellings)</li> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Characters/settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recount</li> <li>• Fact file</li> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Non-chronological report</li> <li>• Explanation (ks2)</li> <li>• Biography (ks2)</li> <li>• Newspaper article (ks2)</li> <li>• Essay</li> </ul>
Writing to persuade (ks2)	Writing to discuss (Uks2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Speech</li> <li>• Campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced argument</li> <li>• Newspaper article</li> <li>• Review</li> </ul>

**Sequence of 'Reading into Writing' planning**

Our key-text units follow a common sequence: Immerse, Analyse, Plan and Write, which encourages the strong interrelationship between speaking and listening, reading and writing. Throughout the sequence of learning, the children look at the grammar, punctuation and spelling that is linked to the writing and learn to plan, draft, edit and publish their work.

Figure 2: The sequence of Reading into Writing planning

<b>Immerse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immersion in key text</li> <li>• Enjoy, explore and respond</li> <li>• Determine purpose, audience and form</li> <li>• Share Example text</li> </ul>
<b>Analyse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarisation with text structures</li> <li>• Familiarisation with language features</li> <li>• Knowledge of the writer</li> </ul>
<b>Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather ideas</li> <li>• Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Write</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelled and guided writing</li> <li>• Application of writers' skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Independent writing and draft, revise, edit and publish</li> </ul>

### **Reading**

At Hill West, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil will learn to read regardless of their background, needs or abilities. We want children to develop a genuine love of books and thirst for literature. We want them to read books written by a wide range of authors and we want all of our children, before they leave us, to read many of the classics. We understand that when children make good progress in Reading they also find success in other individual subject disciplines; fluent readers learn more because they can read and gain knowledge for themselves. The ability to read fluently, comprehend and interpret is a prerequisite to success in later life.

To ensure that our children become fluent readers as swiftly as possible our approach is multi-faceted.

- ✓ **Synthetic Phonics:** Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised is taught daily from the start of Reception (see Early Reading and Phonics Policy).
- ✓ **Decodable Reading Books:** Children in Key Stage 1 receive one fully decodable book each week which will consist of graphemes and tricky words that they already know. This book is read in school during group reading practice lessons and also set electronically to allow the child to practise the skills that they have learnt.
- ✓ **Shared Reading Books:** Reception and Year one children will receive an additional shared reading book to enjoy with their parents. This should be read *to* them as this will not be fully decodable.
- ✓ **Library Books:** All children visit our school library weekly and choose one book to take home. In KS1, parents are asked to read this book to their child to model fluent reading and promote a love of reading whilst developing the child's vocabulary.
- ✓ **Quality first Reading into writing teaching:** Coherently planned and sequenced lessons build on prior learning.
- ✓ **Key-texts:** Each unit of English is based upon a key-text, which is used to underpin all linked learning and build on prior learning.
- ✓ **Class Novels:** Daily reading of class novels, which are designed to expose children to a range of authors and texts of a classic and contemporary nature.

- ✓ **Reading Eggs/Eggspress:** From Year 2, children access weekly, guided one-to-one lessons that perfectly match their ability. This not only supports home reading but gives children instant access to over 2,500 books on-line.
- ✓ **Interventions:** Teachers and Teaching Assistants provide specific targeted daily interventions for the children who make the slowest progress – lowest 20%.

### ***Early Reading and Phonics***

Please see our separate Early Reading and Phonics Policy.

### ***Raising Aspirations***

We know that children who read only one book a day hear about 290,000 more words by age 5 than those who don't regularly read books with a parent or care giver (Logan, 2019). We know that children who read regularly for enjoyment everyday not only perform better in reading tests than those that don't but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. Therefore, it is our unquestionable duty to read to our children and expose them to the joys of story language while teaching them systematic, synthetic phonics so that children are fluent, independent readers by the age of 7.

### ***Reading Aloud to Children***

At Hill West, we have made a commitment to read to all of our children every day. The novels we choose are challenging, provide children with a wide cultural awareness and many fall within one of the five plagues of the developing reader. Within his book 'Reading Reconsidered', Doug Lemov points out that there are five types of texts that children should have access to in order to successfully navigate reading with confidence. These are complex beyond a lexical level and demand more from the reader than other types of books. These are Archaic Language, Non-Linear Time Sequences, Misleading/Narratively Complex, and Resistant texts. Through class novels and key-texts children will be exposed to a range of texts from each of these five plagues each year – ensuring the rigor of their reading and preparedness for secondary school.

We know that research shows that:

- ✓ Reading aloud is the single most important activity for reading success (Bredekamp, Copple & Neuman, 2000).
- ✓ Listening to others read develops key understanding and skills, such as an appreciation for how a story is written and familiarity with book conventions.
- ✓ Children can listen on a higher language level than they can read, so reading aloud makes complex ideas more accessible and exposes children to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech.
- ✓ Being read to exposes less able readers to the same rich and engaging books that fluent readers read on their own, and entices them to come better readers.

Figure 3: Hill West Class Novels

<b>Year 1</b>	<i>Flat Stanley</i> by Jeff Brown	<i>The Twits</i> by Roald Dahl	<i>The Hodgeheg</i> by Dick King-Smith	<i>A Bear Called Paddington</i> by Michael Bond	<i>Illustrated Grimm's Fairy Tales</i>	<i>The Owl who was afraid of the dark</i> by Jill Tomlinson
<b>Year 2</b>	<i>The Magic Far Away Tree</i> by Enid Blyton	<i>The Worst Witch</i> by Jill Murphy	<i>Fantastic Mr Fox</i> by Roald Dahl	<i>Matilda</i> by Roald Dahl	<i>Stuart Little</i> by E.B. White	<i>Milton the Mighty</i> by Emma Read
<b>Year 3</b>	<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> , by C S Lewis	<i>The Iron Man</i> by Ted Hughes	<i>The Creakers</i> by Tom Fletcher	<i>Fortunately the milk</i> by Neil Gaiman	<i>The World According to Humphrey</i> by Betty Birney	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i> by JK Rowling
<b>Year 4</b>	<i>The Firework Makers daughter</i> by Phillip Pullman	<i>The Explorer</i> by Katherine Rundell	<i>Cloud Busting</i> by Malorie Blackman	<i>The Wind in the Willows</i> by Kenneth Graham	<i>How to Train your Dragon</i> by Cressida Cowell	<i>The Suitcase Kid</i> by Jacqueline Wilson
<b>Year 5</b>	<i>The Girl of Ink and Stars</i> by Kiran Millwood Hargrave	<i>The Boy at the Back of the Class</i> by Onjali Rauf	<i>Shakespeare Stories</i> by Leon Garfield	<i>Clockwork</i> by Phillip Pullman	<i>Coraline</i> by Neil Gaiman	<i>Holes</i> by Louis Sachar
<b>Year 6</b>	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll	<i>War Horse</i> by Michael Morpurgo	<i>Wonder</i> by R.J. Palacio	<i>Skellig</i> by David Almond	<i>Pig Heart Boy</i> by Malorie Blackman	<i>Street Child</i> by Berlie Doherty

### Teaching Vocabulary

Our school appreciates that vocabulary instruction is essential, with studies showing that children with language difficulties at age 5 are four times more likely to have reading difficulties in adulthood (Law et al, 2017). By teaching a mere 300 to 400 words a year we can foster an annual growth of around 3,000 to 4,000 words (Quigley, 2018). Vocabulary teaching at Hill West is organised, cumulative and rich. Our staff are aware of the three-tier vocabulary model. In tier 2, children are taught sophisticated words frequently encountered in written rather than everyday oral language - these words are the focus of our direct instruction. Rich knowledge of second tier words has a powerful impact on our pupil's verbal development. Tier 3 words are taught through linked learning opportunities focusing on the technical aspects of a subject. Children in Year 1 – Year 6 complete a weekly deconstruction vocabulary lesson where they investigate the etymology and morphology of a new tier 2 word, as well as learning its definition and exploring how to use it in the correct context (Figure 4). In addition, each week the children in Reception are taught five new tier 2 words and the children in Year 1 – Year 6 are taught ten new tier 2 words. These words come from their key-text/wider curriculum planning for the week and are shared with families in advance through our 'Next Week at Hill West' communication. At the end of the week, the new vocabulary is added to the class vocabulary box, which follows them through school. Furthermore, every child in Key stage 2 has an individual vocabulary diary which they record any unfamiliar vocabulary in, which supports their writing.

Figure 4: Deconstructing vocabulary

### Year 5 and 6 deconstructing vocabulary

<u>Antonyms:</u>	<u>Prefix:</u>	<u>Root word:</u>	<u>Suffix:</u>
<u>Synonyms:</u>	<u>Word:</u>	<u>Etymology:</u>	
<u>Definition:</u>			
<u>Sentences:</u>			

### **Writing**

Children write every day, across different subjects, in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes, having regular opportunities to write at length. Teaching staff use a variety of strategies including modelled, shared and guided writing to support pupils to become competent writers, able to plan, revise and edit their writing. These approaches allow teachers to draw together the relationship between phonics, morphology (word structure), orthography (spelling structure), grammatical conventions and letter formation.

Children throughout school will edit their writing using a *coloured pencil*.

### **Handwriting**

Effective composition involves communicating ideas, which depends on the development of fluent, legible and eventually, speedy, handwriting. Handwriting is taught daily as part of the English lesson, and is modelled correctly by all staff, both in their whole class teaching and in children's books. Reception children follow the Little Wandle handwriting lessons and Year 1 – Year 6 follow the Nelson scheme of handwriting. Children write in pencil until they feel they are ready to produce work in pen. Children write in black Berol handwriting pen.

### **Grammar and Punctuation**

At Hill West, We strongly believe that Grammar and Punctuation skills should be taught in context, rather than in standalone grammar or punctuation lessons. Grammar and Punctuation skills are embedded within our Reading into Writing lessons, based around engaging, high-quality key-texts.

Our teachers know that they must show children the purpose and impact of an author's grammatical (compositional) choices for them to successfully use their grammar knowledge to improve their writing. Our priority is to expose children to well-written texts containing these constructions before they attempt to use them in their own writing. We know that learning Grammar and Punctuation in this way will ensure that it is more likely to be retained and applied in different contexts.

### ***Spelling Lessons***

At Hill West, spelling Lessons are taught discretely a minimum of three times per week, building on the principles taught through early phonics teaching (Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised). We use the No Nonsense spelling scheme which begins at the start of Year 2 and is taught through to Year 6. Each year group learn 10-12 of the National Curriculum spellings each half-term, becoming experts at reading and spelling these words. Children in Year 1 – Year 6 are assessed on their year group spellings at the end of each term. Year group spellings are expected to be spelt correctly in all work books, including writing and topic.

### ***Speaking and Listening***

Teachers encourage the development of speaking and listening through activities within each English lesson as well as purposefully planned speaking and listening opportunities in other subjects. Systems such as 'collaborative group work' structures are used to ensure active participation in group and class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts as they progress through school. Their talk is adapted to the purpose. Pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. Standard English vocabulary and grammar is actively promoted.

## **Planning**

Planning of the English curriculum is focussed on five core areas:

- ✓ Teaching pupils to read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- ✓ Developing the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, which in turn will develop an appreciation for our literary heritage.
- ✓ Ensuring pupils acquire a wide vocabulary (tier 1, 2 and 3), an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- ✓ Enabling pupils to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- ✓ Ensuring pupils feel confident within discussions; pupils should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas, in order to learn.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Headteacher is responsible for

- Appointing an appropriate subject leader.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the English policy of the school.
- Handling complaints regarding the policy.

The subject leader is responsible for:

- Encouraging staff to provide effective learning opportunities for pupils.
- Helping to expand on colleagues' areas of expertise in English.
- Organising the deployment of resources and carrying out an annual audit of all related resources.
- Liaising with teachers across all phases.
- Communicating developments in the subject to all teaching staff and the senior leadership team (SLT), as appropriate.
- Leading staff meetings and providing staff members with the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities regarding English skills.
- Ensuring common standards are met for recording and assessing pupils' performance.
- Advising on the contribution of English in other curriculum areas, including cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Collating assessment data and setting new priorities for the development of English in subsequent years.

The classroom teacher(s) is/are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy.
- Ensuring progression of pupils' English skills, with due regard to the national curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of teaching methods are used to cover the content of the national curriculum.
- Liaising with the subject leader about key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring the progress of pupils in their class and reporting this on an annual basis.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of the subject to the subject leader or a member of the SLT.
- Undertaking any training that is necessary in order to effectively teach English.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for:

- Liaising with the subject leader in order to implement and develop specialist English-based learning throughout the school.
- Organising and providing training for staff regarding the English curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Advising staff on how best to support pupils' needs.
- Advising staff on the inclusion of English objectives in pupils' individual educational plans.
- Advising staff on the use of teaching assistant (TAs) in order to meet pupils' needs.

## **Assessment and Reporting**

Pupils will be assessed and their progression recorded in line with the school's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

Pupils will be amply prepared for both official and unofficial assessments to accurately gauge a fair representation of the level they are working at. All assessments will take place according to the guidelines set out in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

Staff will ensure the progression and development of pupils through identifying individual and collective strengths and areas for improvement through formative and summative assessments, in line with the school's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

Upon progression through key stages, pupils' assessment records and individual reports will be made available to prospective teachers to familiarise and to set appropriate future targets according to current standard.

### **Equal opportunities**

All pupils will have equal access to the English curriculum. Where necessary lessons are adapted to meet an individual pupil's needs and alternative arrangements involving extra support will be provided where necessary.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the subject leader. The subject leader will monitor teaching and learning in English at Hill West, ensuring that the content of the national curriculum is covered across all phases of pupils' education. A named member of the local governing body will be briefed to oversee the teaching of English in line with the school improvement plan priorities.