



English Policy

Governor Committee Responsible	Land T
Review period	ANNUAL
Policy approved by Governors/Head Teacher	Head Teacher
Meeting minute reference	
Status	ADVISABLE
Next review	November 2020
Document version number	
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To be read in conjunction with the following policies:	Phonics

Document History	
V1.0	Nov 17
V1.1	Nov 18
V1.2	Oct 19

Policy Statement

This policy reflects the aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of English at Heather Ridge. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. It gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the National Curriculum. These set out the rationale for teaching each area of the English Curriculum and specify the skills that will be developed for the majority of pupils in each year group. The Phonics policy should also be read in conjunction with this policy. At Heather Ridge Infant School we put children and their individual needs at the centre of provision across all aspects of school life. This is the fundamental underpinning of our teaching in English.

1. Aims

The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

We aim to encourage all pupils to:

- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, demonstrating to each other and participating in class and group discussions
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- develop their cognitive skills, imagination and personal expression through a range of writing tasks using clear, concise language with accurate punctuation and grammar, in a style appropriate for the purpose;
 - make progress to becoming confident spellers, using neat cursive handwriting (see appendix 1 for cursive formation); 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 for reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- to comment on their own literacy work, that of their peers and that of popular authors and poets; reach their full potential by extending their work in each of the above areas of the curriculum.
 - continually look for and make links that respect our school values, underpinning respect and collaboration for each other and our school.

2. Teaching and Learning

At Heather Ridge we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. A range of teaching approaches are used in school. In the Foundation Stage teaching is either individual or small group. In addition, the children learn through directed and self-initiated play. In KS1 teaching can be individual, small group or whole class depending on the area of study. Guided Reading sessions take place as part of the Literacy session at a time suited to each class's timetable. Phonic work is taught throughout the school; please refer to the phonics policy for further guidance on this. Classroom practitioners may adapt the framework to suit the demands of the particular teaching focus, especially when engaging in cross curricular tasks and / or extended writing.

In all classes children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use Learning Support Assistants and 1:1 staff to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

3. English curriculum planning

The English programme of study is based on 4 areas:

Spoken Language

Reading – Word reading and Comprehension

Writing – Transcription and Compositions

Writing – Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

By the end Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. The National Curriculum gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key stage under the headings above.

Planning

Each year group work as a team to plan work for their pupils in the year group that they teach. Planning is based on the EYFS Framework and the National Curriculum. Short term planning is done weekly and identifies specifically the learning objectives, the teacher's, Learning support assistant's and children's roles and activities, groupings and differentiation with texts in use.

Literacy is at the heart of curriculum planning so that subject matter from other curriculum areas is available as content or stimulus for speaking, listening, reading and writing to bring literacy to life. All curriculum areas will involve some aspects of Literacy. Literacy is taught

both as a discrete subject and cross curricular. Guided Reading and focused sentence level work are taught within the normal Literacy lesson.

Foundation Stage

Teachers in the Foundation Stage follow the Communication and Language Development strand and Literacy Development strand of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework 2014.

By the end of the Foundation Stage children should: -

- Listen attentively in a range of situations.
 - Listen to stories, anticipate key events and respond with relevant comments, questions or actions. Give attention to what other say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
 - Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
 - Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of the listeners' needs.
 - Use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events.
 - Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. Read and understand simple sentences.
 - Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. Read some common irregular words.
 - Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. Use phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. Write some irregular common words.
 - Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Spell some words correctly and other in a phonetically plausible way.
- (EYFS profile 2014)

4. Assessment and Record Keeping

Effective assessment involves careful observation, analysis and review by practitioners of each child's knowledge, skills and understanding, in order to track their progress and make informed decisions about planning for the next steps of learning.

- Assessment is on a continuous basis, taking into account the children's work throughout the year.
- Work is monitored by the class teacher, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Literacy Subject Leader to assist in planning for future work to meet the needs of the children.
- A scrutiny of the work of high, medium and low and SEND and G&T groups is carried out across the school through "Book Looks" and through wider partnership school moderations. This is discussed at Middle Leaders and Senior Leadership Team meetings.

- Data is submitted by all teachers on Pupil Asset on a half termly basis to track the progress of children as they move up through the school. This data is then analysed by SLT and MLs.
- We use the Benchmark system to assess levels in reading. Reading bands are followed to measure clear progression. (Appendix 2)
- Children in Year 2 undertake tests in Literacy for reading at the end of Key Stage 1 which are used to complement Teacher Assessment.
- Children in Year 1 undertake the Phonics Screening Test in June of each year
- In KS 1 children have personal writing targets on the classroom wall to inform their next step in writing

5. Home Learning

Children are encouraged to read 5 times a week at home and parents/carers are asked to sign in the reading diaries to confirm this. Reading books are changed daily if required. Year 2 have spellings weekly to learn at home - these are following the year two spelling patterns and include common exception words. They work on these same spellings in Phonics groups once a week. Children in Year 1 receive spellings from Autumn 2 term on a weekly basis. Every class visits the Library on a weekly basis to encourage the children to broaden their reading and to have the opportunity to share books at home that are different to their reading books. Children in KS 1 will have the opportunity to do Home Learning linked to Literacy in the form of learning poetry, writing stories or book reviews, projects to promote speaking and listening and handwriting or letter formation activities.

6. Special Educational Needs

Some pupils experience learning difficulties, which affect their progress in Literacy. Class teachers are responsible for trying to pinpoint any difficulties, so that through early intervention these pupils can be helped. Where pupils are shown to be experiencing difficulties and under-achieving over a period of time, class teachers monitor problems closely and consult with the SENCO. Parents are consulted and, if possible, support given with advice on reading at home and learning key words etc. Children with special educational needs should have full access to the Literacy curriculum. For children with EHCP (Education and Health Care Plans), staff need to consider provision and classroom support for Literacy activities

7. Gifted and Talented

Children showing particular strengths and talents in any aspects of Literacy will be identified by the class teacher. Having determined the children's needs, by monitoring and assessing their work, we plan for differentiation, varying our expectations and outcomes with the abilities of the children, thus ensuring good progress is made and meeting the needs of the children. Activities are structured to ensure success for all children, allowing more able children to undertake work of a more challenging nature where appropriate.

8. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

At Heather Ridge, we are committed to equality of opportunity. All pupils will have equal opportunity to reach their full potential across the English Curriculum regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. Equality of opportunity is essential in this curriculum area as it provides pupils with access to other curriculum areas in the primary years and in the future.

9. Resources

Resources are located either in classroom or in shared areas. Resources are updated yearly according to the needs of the pupils and SIP. We have a fiction and non-fiction library. The resources are available to all staff and pupils to use in cross-curricular work. They consist of classroom books (both fiction and non-fiction) dictionaries, phonics resources, word games, puppets and role play. Pupils are given the opportunity to practise library skills through weekly visits, which are timetabled.

10. English and ICT

The use of information and communication technology, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text level. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive stories. It also promotes cross-curricular work.

ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared and the writing process can also be modelled effectively on the smartboard. Groups can work at a computer and input text and word banks speed up recording. Activelearn (and other interactive games such as Buried Treasure on Phonics Play) are used to encourage extra reading at home as well as an additional tool in teaching phonics.

11. Role of Subject Leader

The English Subject Leader is responsible for the development and monitoring of the Literacy curriculum to ensure a coherent literacy strategy for our school. The subject leader will support teachers with their planning in Literacy and be responsible for developing the school's English policy. The SL will assist teachers by leading staff meetings, planning and leading INSET activities, providing consultancy and advice, and by supporting them in the classroom. The SL is responsible for implementing changes required by the National curriculum. The Head teacher /Deputy Head/ Subject Leader will review planning, Literacy work, reading records and assessments. The SL will also gather the views of children through 'Pupil Voice' in regular discussions throughout the academic year.

The Literacy Subject Leader will:

- Review and revise the school policy and classroom practice
- Advise planning where required
- Consult with individual staff/Team Leaders
- Consult with children where required
- Lead INSET training in Literacy
- Attend Literacy network meetings
- Keep up to date with any changes

12. Role of the Governing Body

To ensure the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the National Curriculum and to review the policy annually.

Reading

Reading enables children to understand the world around them through written texts. The acquisition of non-fictional information allows learners to increase their knowledge and stimulating their curiosity. Fictional material encourages learners to develop their imagination and their storytelling skills.

Reading for Pleasure (based on the work by Teresa Cremin) is our focus at Heather Ridge and it is designed to encourage a love of books and to develop confident readers who can talk about texts that they have read. Children will have opportunities for Book Talk in the classroom (informal chats about books and recommendations). Lots of ideas to develop Reading for Pleasure are available on the website (<https://researchrichpedagogies.org>) some of which include book blankets, book zips and reading rivers. Developing an inviting and comfortable Book Corner with a wide variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, rhyme, comics and joke books where children are keen to read and share texts is the focus in every classroom.

A set of rich reading texts (both fiction and non-fiction) are available for staff to use for discussion with the children and will be kept in a central area in the non-fiction library.

At Heather Ridge we aim to:

- Nurture children's interest and pleasure in reading as they learn to tackle text with increasing fluency, accuracy, understanding and independence.
- Develop effective readers who are capable of reading a variety of texts to the best of their ability.
- Provide access to good quality literacy from a range of different genres, styles and cultures.
- Inspire children to enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Ensure all learning is inclusive.

Outcomes

- **Successful learners** who derive pleasure from books and enjoy learning through reading
- **Confident individuals** who are unafraid to use a range of strategies to read unknown words
- **Independent readers** who are able to read with fluency and expression for a range of different purposes

Creativity

Children should experience reading in a creative way, selecting books that stimulate their imagination. We want all children to see reading as a source of pleasure as well as information.

Learner's will...	All staff will...
Learn by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared reading of regular books, texts, big books and enlarged texts• Regularly taking books home to read with their families• The opportunity to have a new reading book every day• 1:1 reading with an adult in class with reading books levelled into different reading abilities (Appendix 1)• Accessing the school library and taking books home to share with families• Experience a range of literature through delivery of the English curriculum• Regular phonics teaching (See Phonics policy)• Use of Activelearn at home to encourage reading a wide variety of texts	Promote quality learning by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation stage Profile• Teach reading for a range of purposes related to everyday experiences• Encourage independent reading by providing opportunities in all areas of the classroom• Have a dedicated reading area in the classroom that can be freely accessed independently and presented in an attractive way with a range of genre and text types available.• Plan guided reading sessions with books at appropriate reading levels• Complete the reading record after 1:1 reading sessions to inform parents/carers how they can help their children at home and encourage parents to communicate back• Planning and delivering daily phonics sessions (See Phonics Policy)• Ensure children are taught a range of strategies for reading so they become confident and independent readers.

Achieve by	Encourage personal achievement by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing their own personal preferences for different texts and genres. • Continually challenging themselves to read an increasing difficulty of text. • Persevering to use all of the different strategies taught to tackle unknown words successfully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting high standards for all children • Creating a secure environment for all children to succeed • Encourage praise and reward • Tracking children's progress in reading by making regular assessments of their reading ability and reporting these to the Assessment Leader for analysis. • Working with children on their next steps in learning and informing their parents/carers of these.

Planning

Reading is planned for and delivered in the following ways:

- **Shared reading** – as part of planned literacy sessions throughout the week in class there will be an opportunity to read stories and texts as a large group or whole class. This may take the form of a regular sized book or text, it may be a big book or enlarged text on paper or the interactive white boards. Weekly plans outline the learning purpose or it may be a shared reading experience for pleasure and enjoyment as part of a topic or the children's interest.
- **Guided Reading** – focused sessions that encourage children to bring books to life through drama, role play and speaking and listening. In addition some children are grouped by ability to read book organised into categories covering a range of genres and text types.
- **Individual Reading** – Children will be heard 1:1 with the class teacher or LSA every week working through reading books levelled into different reading abilities according to colour bands. The progression of these bands are outlined in **Appendix 1**. The class teacher or LSA records a summary of this session in the reading diary in order for the parents/carers to be able to work on their child's reading at home and record their reading times too. Those children who do not read regularly at home or who need extra practice will have opportunities for additional reading during the week.
- **Paired/ Buddy reading**- On the first Wednesday of each month between 9- 9.30, children across KS1 and Year R (Summer term) will have the opportunity to read with a child from a different class. (Sharks will pair up with Jellyfish and Turtles with Dolphins) This gives the children a chance to practise their reading skills and develops confidence in reading as well as promoting co-operation and social skills.

- **The Fiction and Non-Fiction Library** – Each class have timetabled library times where they can spend time selecting books of their own choice to read and take home to share with their families. This will also provide opportunities for children to use the school library to find out information to do with topics or things they are learning about in class and develop their independence.
- **Phonics teaching** – Please refer to the Phonics Policy for a more detailed outline of how phonics is taught at Heather Ridge.

Resources

Big books are kept in central storage units in MITCH. All classrooms have reading scheme books which are kept in each classroom or central corridors of classrooms for children staff to access. Children are encouraged to request daily book changes by placing their reading folders in the boxes provided. In addition, each classroom has a range of free choice books available in book corners which children can access at any time. Books should be part of classrooms and display where appropriate and displayed in an attractive tidy fashion. Books in the school fiction library and non-fiction Library cover a range of genre, text types and culture which children can access regularly.

Assessment, Monitoring and Recording

Each half term the reading tracking on Pupil Asset is updated. There is also a reading log to chart the progress of every child's reading on portal 365. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants are aware of children's abilities and work with the children on their next steps in learning. The levelled reading scheme books are used to inform teachers of children's ability in reading. Benchmark assessments are undertaken to further inform judgements where necessary.

Home/ School links

All children have a home school reading diary that is completed whenever an adult hears them read at school. This informs parents of ways they can support their children's reading at home and gives them an opportunity to record and inform teachers of their child's reading outside of school. Parent Information sheets to suggest next steps are also stuck in the children's reading diaries. These are to help support parents with the types of questions they can ask when reading with their child, predictions and making links between books.

There are also opportunities for parents to purchase books for their children at our Book Fairs held twice a year and there is a Reading Meeting for parents at the beginning of each year (please refer to the Literacy page on our website for the PPT).

Appendix 1

Book Band progression
Lilac
Pink
Red
Yellow
Blue
Green
Orange
Turquoise
Purple
Gold
White
Lime
Brown
Grey
Free Readers

Handwriting

At Heather Ridge we aim to teach the children to write in a style that enables the letters to be joined up easily. If they find the physical act of scribing achievable and comfortable, they will be likely to develop into confident effective writers.

National Guidance

Schools are provided with national guidance to help in the effective teaching of handwriting.

Early Learning Goal for handwriting:

Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Opportunities for handwriting

Children have extensive practice in writing letters, for example labelling their work, making cards, writing notices.

Children practice writing letters in lots of different ways, for example, in sand, with paintbrushes, chalks etc.

They continue writing practice in imaginative contexts, joining some letters if appropriate, for example “at”, “it”, “on”.

Teachers and LSAs intervene to help children hold a pencil effectively.

English Key Stage One

Handwriting: In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught:

- How to hold a pencil/pen
- To start and finish letters correctly
- Intervene to help children hold a pencil effectively
- To form letters of regular size and shape
- To put regular spaces between letters and words
- How to form lower- and upper-case letters
- How to join letters

Our Handwriting Style (see example of cursive handwriting in Appendix 2)

As a staff we have decided that the handwriting style we have adopted has to meet a number of criteria:

- All teachers and Learning Support Assistants should be familiar with the agreed cursive style to ensure consistent adult handwriting models throughout the school.
- It should lead smoothly into a joined up style as soon as children are secure in the movements of each letter;
- It should be legible and attractive, so children can feel pride and pleasure in the appearance of their finished work.
- Our agreed style forms part of this policy, and includes letter “letter families”.
- Children are introduced to a variety of writing tools and equipment as they progress through the school: pencils, felt pens, handwriting pens, biros, chalk, crayons and paper of different colours, shapes, textures and types.

School Guidelines

In order to perform the mechanics of writing confidently, children must develop good hand control. To this end, we promote the development of both gross and fine motor control through a variety of ongoing opportunities.

Left-Handed Children

These children are given guidance to ease the process of writing, by the implementation of these simple strategies:

Their paper is tilted clockwise so they can see what they have written.

Introducing Handwriting

As children are taught to recognise and hear each letter’s name and sound, and are introduced to both capital and lower case letters (cursive print in EYFS), they are taught how to form them correctly. In addition to letter formation, children are taught about spacing of words, and of ascenders and descenders.

Introducing Joined Up Writing

We introduce joined up writing as soon as possible once children are secure in the movements of each letter. For joined up handwriting practice, we distinguish between the letters that join with a diagonal line, those that join with a horizontal line and those which do not join. We also encourage the use of joined writing for practising some of the high frequency words, to help reinforce the fact that these words need to be remembered as wholes.

How We Teach Handwriting

Foundation Stage (Cursive print – see Appendix 2)

In the Foundation Stage classes, we prepare the children for the fine motor skills required for good handwriting in practical and appropriate ways. They will be developing a cursive print ready to join up. We believe that children who have experienced the multi-sensory approach to learning letter shapes are less likely to develop bad writing habits. During physical development activities, which enhance gross motor control, we consolidate the vocabulary of movement by describing the children's actions, and we explore shape and direction using the whole body. We specifically aim to develop letter shapes through sky writing, and by making patterns in the air and on children's backs.

We focus on patterns, which build on the three basic letter shapes: **l**, for example the long ladder; **c**, for example the curly caterpillar; **r**, for example the one-armed robot. We include patterns that move across the body from left to right, we talk about the movements we make in patterns and we draw patterns. We give the children opportunities to practise letter shapes by drawing in the sand and by using large brushes for painting with paint on paper, and with water on the playground.

We encourage children to improve their fine motor control through activities, which involve small-scale movements, such as pegboards, sewing and weaving, chopping and peeling, finger rhymes, counting fingers, structured sand and water play involving sieving and pouring, clay and paints. Alongside this children trace, copy and practise patterns of circles, vertical, horizontal and leaning lines, wavy lines and "growing patterns".

The children are afforded many informal opportunities to familiarise themselves with letter forms, including making letters from drawing them in the sand tray, using plastic, foam, wooden, sandpaper and other tactile letter shapes, playing with "Roll and Write" letters which demonstrate letter formation and using paint and chalk to draw letters.

As children discover their preferred hand for holding a pencil, thick and thin pencils are available for their use and they are given help with their pencil hold, if necessary, to ensure the correct and comfortable grip.

As the children are introduced to letter shapes, they learn them alongside the letter sound, making use of the kinaesthetic channel to help them internalise the letter shapes that go with the sounds. The teachers also write new key words on the board, as they are introduced at whole class times as a Shared Writing activity to raise the children's awareness of what words look like when written.

Year One

Many of the physical activities from the Foundation Stage are continued in Year One.

Pattern work develops to include flowing patterns and more intricate shapes and figures.

This refines hand control further and is a link with aesthetic and creative activities. Children are beginning to execute the size and spacing of their writing more precisely.

The children revisit the letter families (curly caterpillar letters for example) individual letter and number formations, practise handwriting patterns. Children will learn how to use joiners when they have developed a legible, cursive print.

Children's method of pencil hold is regularly checked so that a comfortable grip is maintained (with a 'pick and flick' reminder) and a pencil grip supplied if necessary.

The children are introduced to handwriting books marked with repeated triplets of lines, comprising of paired blue lines, above which is a red line. They are taught that tall letters

should extend between the lower blue and the upper red line of the trio, while short letters should lie between the pair of blue lines.

Year Two

Once again, many of the earlier techniques are employed where necessary, with children encouraged to join up their letters when writing. Increasing attention is paid to letter heights, ascenders, descenders, correct placement of capital letters, headings and general layout.

Handwriting is taught as a discrete lesson and is also monitored as appropriate during other writing activities. Each session has its own target, which focuses on specific letter formation, joins, and correct use of the coloured lines of the handwriting book. The teachers model appropriate letter formation using an enlarged page of this book during the handwriting lesson.

Star Writing Books

Once a month, KS1 and Reception children will have the opportunity to do an independent piece of writing in their Star Writing book. These books will be passed up to the next Year Group to show the children's progress in writing throughout the school.

Equal Opportunities and inclusion

At Heather Ridge, we are committed to equality of opportunity. All pupils will have equal opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. Children requiring extra support with handwriting are monitored by the class teachers and SENCo.

Resources

In KS1 handwriting books are used with blue lines for sizing and to help the children with ascenders and descenders. EYFS have a letter formation book with guidelines.

Also available:

- special pencils
- pencil grips
- sloping trays
- letter formation sheets
- sand trays
- whiteboards/ pens
- tracings
- playdoh/ modelling clay to squeeze, roll and pinch
- large plastic tweezers/ bead threading to improve fine motor skills

Appendix 2

Example of cursive handwriting: