



Marden Vale  
CE Academy

# English Policy

This policy was written in January 2024 and has been agreed by the Governing Body.

## **RATIONALE**

At Marden Vale CE Academy we believe that through the teaching of English we are equipping children with key life skills. We all use language to develop our views and opinions of the world around us. We believe it is crucial for children to learn to communicate fluently in spoken and written form. The development of reading and listening skills enables our pupils to acquire new knowledge and develop emotionally, culturally and intellectually.

## **AIMS**

At Marden Vale CE Academy we aim to:

- establish an entitlement to high-quality teaching of English for all pupils
- establish high expectations for teachers and pupils
- develop continuity, progression and coherence across the school
- ensure that pupils read fluently and with good understanding
- help pupils develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- encourage pupils to appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- ensure children develop a wide vocabulary in written and spoken form
- ensure children learn to write clearly and accurately, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- develop children's understanding of the grammar that underpins our use of language
- ensure children understand and use spelling conventions
- support children to develop neat and well-presented work of which they feel proud
- ensure children can use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas

## **WHAT IS 'ENGLISH'?**

The National Curriculum in England breaks down English into these key areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation
- Phonics

## **KEY EXPERIENCES**

We aim to provide children with the following key experiences during their time at Marden Vale CE Academy:

- The opportunity to share in quality speaking and listening experiences on a regular basis
- The opportunity to learn stories orally and take part in story-making regularly each year
- Access to a wide range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction reading materials within the school and the opportunity to take home books of their own choice from the school library
- The opportunity to be read to by adults in school right up to Year 6 (particularly fiction and poetry)
- Frequent opportunities to read for pleasure in school
- The opportunity to use the school library
- The opportunity to receive high quality teaching of phonics, spelling and grammar
- The opportunity to engage in extended writing regularly
- The opportunity to take part in classroom drama activities to extend learning and build confidence
- The opportunity to take part in a performance or spoken activity for a wider audience, including assemblies and school productions

## **SPOKEN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Well-developed communication skills are key to children's development across the curriculum and are vital for future life chances. It is essential that children learn to communicate in a variety of situations and at Marden Vale we give the development of communication skills very high priority. Adults will provide good role models of spoken language and listening skills. Children will be taught how to listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers. They will learn how to ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge. Children will have structured opportunities to build their vocabulary and

learn to speak audibly and fluently. They will also learn how to articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.

## **READING**

**Reading lies at the heart of the curriculum at Marden Vale. We are dedicated to enabling our children to become lifelong readers and we believe reading to be the key to academic and future success.**

### Intent

At Marden Vale we believe that all pupils should have the opportunity to be fluent, confident readers who are able to successfully comprehend and understand a wide range of texts. We want pupils to develop a love of reading, a good knowledge of a range of authors, and be able to understand more about the world in which they live through the knowledge they gain from texts. By the end of their time at primary school, all children should be able to read fluently, with confidence and with pleasure. We do not put ceilings on what pupils can achieve in reading and we do not hold pre-conceptions about any pupils' ability to make progress. We understand the importance of parents and carers in supporting their children to develop both word reading and comprehension skills, and so we want to encourage a home-school partnership which enables parents and carers to understand how to enhance the skills being taught in school through good quality texts.

### Implementation

#### **Books and stories**

We have an excellent library and inviting book areas in all classrooms with a wide range of fiction and non fiction books. Topic books and favourite picture books are displayed. Story time is an important and protected time of the day. Texts that tempt are chosen with rich language to stretch and broaden children's experiences.

#### **Classroom organisation:**

We teach phonics and reading skills as whole class lessons, in small groups and 1;1 as appropriate so that all children have access to the age-related skills and knowledge contained in the National Curriculum. Within lessons, teachers and teaching assistants target support for those that need it to enable them to achieve at an age-related level wherever possible. More fluent readers are also given opportunities to demonstrate a greater depth of understanding through extended answers, targeted questioning requiring more reasoned answers and making greater links across and between texts.

#### **Phonics: Early Years and Key Stage 1:**

Pupils are taught in groups closely matched to their ability, focusing on individual sounds, groups of sounds and common exception words within different 'phases'. We are a 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' school. Children who need extra support are given additional help from teachers and teaching assistants as part of planned interventions that take place in addition to the lesson.

During the Summer Term in Year 1, pupils undertake a Phonics Screening Test which assesses their ability to apply what they have learnt. Pupils who do not pass their Phonics Screening Test continue to have intervention to support the acquisition of these key skills.

#### **Whole school Reading Scheme**

We have a whole school reading scheme that ensures progression in both word reading skills and comprehension. In EYFS and KS1 books are grouped by phase ensuring all texts are fully decodable. In KS2 we use colour book banding, structured to ensure that children have access to a wide range of texts, and allows for pupils to develop their skills within a level before moving to the next level. All pupils are encouraged and rewarded to read at home daily in order to practice the skills they have learnt at school and to develop fluency

### Impact

At Marden Vale you will see;

- Pupils with a love of books and stories and have a thirst for reading across a range of genres.
- Pupils of all abilities succeeding in all reading lessons
- Pupils with a good knowledge of a range of authors, be able to make links between texts and recommend books to their peers.
- Pupils able to read books to enhance their knowledge and understanding on any subject.
- Parents and carers with a good understanding of how they can support reading at home.

- No significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. disadvantaged vs non-disadvantaged)

We want every child in our school to become a confident and enthusiastic reader. Every child has access to BoomReader (a digital reading record). This is where parents are asked to record comments about their child's home reading and teachers / teaching assistants will monitor reading engagement at home. Children are rewarded for reading at home through a structured set of rewards and whole school celebrations. All children are expected to read regularly at home with an adult, right up to Year 6. A few minutes' reading at least 5 times per week with an adult at home makes a significant difference to a child's reading progress.

There are two main elements in learning to read:

- word reading (sometimes called 'decoding')
- Comprehension (this means understanding what we read and what we hear).

At Marden Vale CE Academy we use a structured reading scheme alongside 'real' books. We have a wide range of high-quality reading books that includes a variety of appealing fiction and non-fiction books, created by some of the most popular children's authors and illustrators.

Our reading scheme is carefully organised so that books are matched to phonics phases in order to match the reading book to the child's phonic ability. Therefore, first reading books are fully decodable, building confidence and developing decoding skills. Children then progress to colour banded reading books.

At Marden Vale we recognise that every child is an individual and will progress through the different stages of the reading scheme at their own pace. It is valuable for children's confidence and development as readers to read a wide variety of texts and books at their level before moving on to the next stage. Teachers will use ongoing assessments and professional judgement to decide when a child moves onto the next stage. Our aim is for each child to become a confident and successful reader who enjoys and values reading.

We have a well-stocked school library that has picture books, simpler and more challenging fiction books and a wide variety of non-fiction books for children to borrow. Each classroom has a selection of books appropriate to the age of the children or access to shared reading room in Key Stage 2.

Here at Marden Vale we collectively hold the strong opinion that:

*'Reading for pleasure is a social justice issue. This needs our professional attention- not just the icing on the cake of what we teach in schools. It is fundamental to all children – particularly to the challenged 20%'*

**Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success.**  
(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2002)

Studies show children who read for pleasure:

- Increased attainment in English and Maths
- Improved general knowledge and vocabulary
- Encourages imagination, empathy and mindfulness of others

#### Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)

Children are given many opportunities throughout the day to share and enjoy books. Daily phonics teaching (see **Phonics** section below) uses a mixture of whole-class and small-group work, alongside regular 1:1 reading with the teacher or teaching assistant. After their settling-in period, children will start to bring home individual reading books to share with parents. To start with, these will be wordless books that are designed to get children talking about the pictures and developing basic skills such as turning the pages in the right direction, knowing how to hold the book, etc. Children will then progress through the reading stages matched to their phonics ability, guided by the teacher's ongoing assessment of their reading ability. Children will also bring home a sounds book to practice specific sounds that are being taught in class.

#### Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

In Key Stage 1 children will continue to be taught phonics daily (see **Phonics** section below) and to share and enjoy stories, poems and non-fiction texts. Comprehension and vocabulary development is essential throughout Key Stage 1 and children are questioned and encouraged to discuss their reading.

Children will participate in group reading with their teacher, reading a text closely matched to their reading

level and discussing and analysing the text. They will also participate in Whole Class Reading, reading or listening to a text and completing a short verbal or written activity based on new vocabulary, retrieval, prediction or inference.

### Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6)

By the end of Year 2, children should be able to read accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words. The emphasis in Key Stage 2 is on developing their vocabulary and the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. Children will develop their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction. They will learn to read silently for more extended periods. They will also develop their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects. They will be taught to justify their views about what they have read, with support at the start of year 3 and increasingly independently by the end of year 4.

Whole class reading sessions follow Literacy Shed's VIPERS where children are exposed to a range of texts. Comprehension skills are further developed through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech.

## **PHONICS**

Phonics is the relationship between sounds and letters. We teach phonics using a systematic synthetic phonics system called 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds'. Our phonics teaching is daily. All phonics lessons include a mix of activities to develop the three main skills of **decoding** (sounding out and blending to read), **encoding** (spelling: segmenting words into their sounds and choosing the best letters to represent those sounds) and **handwriting** to support correct letter formation.

In EYFS the children learn the 44 main sounds heard in the English language. They use these sounds to read and write simple words and sentences. They also learn some of the 'tricky' words that cannot be sounded out (e.g. *the, to, you*).

In Year one the children revisit the 44 main sounds and learn different ways to spell these (e.g. the long 'o' vowel sound can be spelt as *o, oa, o-e* and *oe*). The children also continue to learn many more tricky words and develop a more adventurous vocabulary. At the end of Year one all children take the national phonics screening check to assess their ability to use their phonics knowledge.

In Year two children will also continue to revise and embed their phonics from the earlier years phonics. Spellings are linked to Little Wandle and consists mainly of learning to spell and read more complex words and use them to write extended sentences. The main aim at this age is for children to become more fluent readers and more accurate spellers.

In Key Stage 2, children will continue the No Nonsense spelling scheme. There will be revision of Key Stage 1 phonics in Year three and for children who need it through the Rapid Catch Up programme.

## **WRITING**

**Writing is a crucial part of our curriculum at Marden Vale. We want our children to develop a love of writing and to be able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and creatively through the written word.**

### Intent

At Marden Vale we believe that all pupils should be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing. We want pupils to acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to spell new words by effectively applying the spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time in primary school. We want them to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. We believe that all pupils should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their writing by developing a good, joined,

handwriting style. We believe that all good writers refine and edit their writing over time, so we want children to develop independence in being able to identify their own areas for improvement in all pieces of writing, editing their work effectively during and after the writing process. We do not put ceilings on what pupils can achieve in writing and we do not hold pre-conceptions about any pupils' ability to make progress. We understand the importance of parents and carers in supporting their children to develop both grammar, spelling and composition skills, and so we want to encourage a home-school partnership which enables parents and carers to understand how to enhance the skills being taught in school.

### Implementation

#### **Classroom organisation:**

We teach English as whole class lessons, so that all children have access to the age-related skills and knowledge contained in the National Curriculum. Within lessons, teachers and teaching assistants target support for those that need it to enable them to achieve at an age-related level wherever possible. This may involve a greater level of scaffolding and access to additional support materials or a greater level of modelling. More fluent writers are given opportunities to extend their writing in a variety of ways, including through showing greater control in their writing, a deeper understanding of the impact that their writing has on the reader and by using a higher level of vocabulary and grammar features.

#### **English Lesson Sequence:**

Each year group has a yearly overview of the writing genres- narrative, non-fiction and poetry that will be taught. These have been planned to ensure correct coverage of the key genres as well as build on skills from year to year. KS1 and KS2 use the Jane Considine 'The Write Stuff' principles; teaching sequences that slide between experience days and sentence stacking lessons. With modelling at the heart of them, the sentence stacking lessons are broken into bite – sized chunks and taught under the structural framework of incorporating creative techniques, and the use of precise punctuation techniques to enliven the children's writing.

Children start making marks on paper at an early age and from these early mark makers we aim to develop confident and fluent writers. Across the school, children are encouraged to write for different purposes and audiences and we constantly provide opportunities for them to develop their vocabulary and sentence structure skills.

The National Curriculum for Writing consists of:

- Transcription – spelling and handwriting
- Composition – articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing (this includes planning, drafting, writing, evaluating, proof-reading, editing and reading aloud their work)
- Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Children are taught these elements of writing through a mix of cross-curricular themes and discrete teaching sequences. Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as writers.

### Impact

At Marden Vale you will see;

- Pupils who enjoy writing across a range of genres
- Pupils of all abilities succeeding in all English lessons because work will be appropriately scaffolded
- Pupils with wide vocabulary that they use within their writing
- Pupils with a good knowledge of how to adapt their writing based on the context and audience
- Pupils who leave primary school being able to effectively apply spelling rules and patterns they have been taught
- Parents and carers with a good understanding of how they can support spelling, grammar and composition at home, and contribute regularly to homework
- No significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. disadvantaged vs nondisadvantaged)

#### **Spellings:**

Spellings are taught according to the rules and words contained in Appendix 1 of the English National Curriculum, and in EYFS and KS1 linked to the phonics phase they are working in. In Year 2 and Key Stage 2 we revise and build on children's phonic knowledge from Foundation Stage and Y1 as we move onto the No Nonsense comprehensive programme of teaching for spelling in Years 2 to 6. This scheme of work provides us with a clear progression through block of work across the year. In Year 2, pupils will participate in daily phonics

lessons and/or five spelling sessions per week. In KS2, pupils participate in five spelling sessions across two weeks. These lessons are short and pacy and are reinforced through weekly spelling homework and tests.

Our pupils are also given daily spelling practice opportunities during morning work, through access to displays of weekly spellings, word banks and discussions during guided reading and writing lessons. Children are given spellings to learn each week and are given a spelling test the following week. When marking work, teachers identify words that children have spelt incorrectly from within that child's known ability and children are then given time to correct them.

### **Grammar and Punctuation:**

Teachers plan to teach the required skills through the genres of writing that they are teaching, linking it to the genre to make it more connected with the intended writing outcome. Alongside this grammar and punctuation is taught discretely to embed and develop pupil's understanding of grammatical structures and punctuation. The development of children's grammar in spoken language is just as important as their written grammar, so a lot of attention is given to this. Children are expected to learn and use the correct grammatical terminology right from the beginning (e.g. *noun, expanded noun phrase, preposition*).

Children in KS2 will secure their grammar and punctuation skills by using 'Vocabulary Ninja SPAG Starter' daily.

### **Handwriting:**

We are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive/joined-up handwriting style. We use Letter-join as the basis of our handwriting policy that covers all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing. By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Our teachers are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including report writing (when not word-processed), marking and comments. Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

### **FOUNDATION:**

For our youngest pupils we aim for two to three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes that will include the following;

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.

### **YEARS 1 TO 3:**

Tuition will continue with two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Cursive handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice.
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice.

### **YEARS 4 TO 6:**

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.
- Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and speedy handwriting writing.

### Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. Both right- and left-handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements.

## **ASSESSING AND MONITORING PROGRESS**

The English Subject Leader will monitor teachers' planning and children's writing books termly. Phonics assessments will happen every 6 weeks. Children who are struggling to make expected progress will be considered for Catch Up support or for 1:1 or small group intervention- either in lessons or additionally.

Assessment of reading, writing, spelling, grammar and spoken language takes place through ongoing classroom observations by the teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers will assess each child's progress towards the National Curriculum objectives for their age group and record this using our online assessment and tracking system. These judgements will be supported by the use of assessment sheets in children writing books. PIRA and GAPS assessments will help to inform teachers' assessments, as will work in children's books, their phonics and reading assessments

Three times per year, teachers will use Insight to identify children who are, or are at risk of, making slow progress or not achieving at an age-appropriate level.

Standardised tests for reading and spelling ages are also used annually to support tracking of children's progress.

Statutory national tests within English are as follows:

Year 1:

- national phonics screening check

Year 2:

- re-test of the national phonics screening check for any child who did not pass in Year 1
- SATs test for Reading (two test papers)
- Statutory teacher assessment of each child in Reading and Writing

Year 6:

- SATs test for Reading
- SATs test for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling paper 1 (short answer questions)
- SATs test for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling paper 2 (spelling test)
- Statutory teacher assessment of each child in Reading and Writing

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

Children with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities will have their needs assessed and action taken in line with the SEN Code of Practice and school's Special Needs Policy.

We recognise that some pupils with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities need to communicate in ways other than speech and, as such, strives to use appropriate alternative forms of communication in line with children's specific needs.



## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring that the English Subject Leader has the time and support to enable them to lead and develop English throughout the school
- ensuring that the Subject Leader formulates an action plan to develop children's English skills

### Subject Leader for English

The Subject Leader for English is responsible for:

- the day to day implementation and monitoring of the English policy
- action planning for the development of English and children's achievement
- providing advice to staff and liaising with them on planning, teaching and resourcing English provision
- working alongside staff in assessing children's needs in English and ensuring that children make progress and achieve well over time relative to their starting points and identified needs
- overseeing and maintaining specific resources for English
- contributing to the professional development of staff for English
- working with the school's leadership team to monitor, evaluate and report on provision and outcomes to the governing body

### Teaching staff

All staff are responsible for understanding and agreeing to support this policy and action plans for English so that teaching and learning are effective and there is consistency throughout the school.

### Governors

The governing body, and in particular the Curriculum and Personnel Committee, are responsible for:

- receiving and analysing reports from the school's leadership on provision, standards of teaching and pupil outcomes in English as part of their strategic monitoring and evaluation role
- constructively challenging the school and facilitating self-evaluation to help drive further improvement

### Parents

Parents are responsible for supporting their children with home learning activities related to English such as home reading, learning spellings etc. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that all school reading books and resources that are taken home are looked after and returned to school in suitable condition.

### **Policy to be read in conjunction with:**

- Special Needs policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy
- Feedback on Learning Policy