



## English Policy

**"I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in."**

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

**Curriculum Statement: Promoting a love of reading and writing in all of our children.**

### Intent

At Ouston Primary School we aim to develop confident and enthusiastic readers and writers, who see these skills not only as tools to higher order tasks, but as hobbies in their own right. Fundamentally, we seek to increase reading efficiency (the smoothness and speed at which words are encoded) in order to promote better comprehension of texts and, thus, enhanced enjoyment of them by our children. An increased amount of pleasure from reading leads to children exploring different authors and their styles, which ultimately inspires them to write with flair, passion and confidence.

### Implementation

We provide our children with a diverse range of texts, across several genres, from the moment they start their journey at our school. As they develop their love of reading – and indeed their reading skills – we provide writing opportunities that stimulate, excite and empower our children to express themselves on paper. We encourage creativity in children's writing and link it closely, through carefully selected novels, to their current geography, history or science focus. The combination of a widening subject knowledge and the enjoyment of writing results in children producing high quality pieces that are demonstrative of their personalities. We also place a high emphasis on a continual progression in every child's understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation and ensure that they learn how to structure their ideas effectively. Our children's reading and writing is closely monitored to ensure that their enjoyment does not waver as a result of experiencing regular difficulty.

### Impact

Children at our school read widely and often with fluency and comprehension, enabling them to achieve well in reading and writing. They do so whilst developing their interest and awareness of a range of geographical, historical and scientific contexts. This development of detailed knowledge and skills, infused with their fluent reading and writing ability, empowers our children to produce excellent pieces of work.

### **Teaching and Learning:**

#### Early Years Foundation Stage

### Phonics:

- Through consistently developing the child’s awareness of letters and phoneme sounds, their phonics journey begins. This is continued via regular daily sessions targeted to differing ability groups – following the Floppy’s Phonics programme – that increase in range and complexity up until their Year 1 Phonics Test and beyond.

### Reading:

- EYFS classrooms promote a love of reading and stories through having daily story times, an established and celebrated reading area providing both fiction and non-fiction books and encouraging the telling of stories though children ‘reading’ stories to their peers, Helicopter stories theatre and puppet and role play activities.
- Children are provided with books that are age-appropriate and directly matched to their phonic skills and ability carefully selected, age-appropriate books to read with adults in school and at home. There are regular instances of adults hearing children read and vice versa. Children’s comprehension of texts is established through verbal discussion, picture and word/sentence match activities and labels and instructions displayed as part of the EYFS environment activities, Writing:
- Using their ability to recognise and recall letters and sounds, combined with their ability to write letters, children are encouraged to write words that increase in complexity and require the successful blending of various areas of competence.
- As children reach the latter stages of Reception, it is expected that they are able to express their thoughts and communicate effectively and regularly through the medium of writing. Regular child-initiated and adult-led pieces are analysed to determine each child’s competence in this area in order to prepare them for Key Stage 1.

### Handwriting:

- In nursery, children develop their gross motor and fine motor skills in preparation for controlling a pencil. This is achieved through the development of these muscles with activities such as using jugs to pour, using toy hammers, etc., in accordance with the 22-36 ‘Moving and Handling’ objectives that are used as a baseline upon entry.
- Children are introduced to mark-marking instruments (pencils, crayons, coloured pens, chalk and paintbrushes) and encouraged to use a variety of moves and directions to develop and secure pre-skills for writing. When children are ready, adult-led activities focus on developing the child’s fine motor control and early writing skills by encouraging children to record their own representation of letters and modelling correct letter formation.
- Children regularly practise forming letters through a range of activities with the aim of writing words and short sentences by the end of their time in Reception.

## Key Stage 1

### Phonics:

- Phonics sessions continue to broaden and deepen children’s understanding of phoneme sounds and how they can be blended to create graphemes and indeed words. Children in our Key Stage 1 classes are ability-grouped to ensure that they are developing their skills, understanding and application within the appropriate phase.

### Reading:

- Story Time takes place every day in KS1, with a variety of texts shared with the children from different genres, often different to that of the Class Novel.
- Children read with adults increasingly more frequently during their time in Key Stage 1. Their comprehension is assessed verbally and, latterly in Year 2, through written responses to questions that are also expected to be read by the child.
- Levelled reading books are sent home with the children to practise at home with family members, who are encouraged to update teachers about their progress via a reading record that goes to and from school with every child.

#### Writing:

- Children have increased writing opportunities in Key Stage 1 and it is expected that they will write almost every day in their English lessons.
- Following our writing progression map gives children opportunities to write within many different genres, discussing, identifying and analysing the purpose of various structural and language features and gaining an appreciation of when they are appropriate/essential.
- Writing opportunities in Key Stage 1 will almost always link to the geography, history or science focus at the time, allowing children to write within a context with which they are familiar and knowledgeable. This allows for the development of subject-specific vocabulary and also provides challenging opportunities with spelling.

#### Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling:

- Children develop awareness of basic punctuation and, by the end of Year 2, are expected to use this consistently across a wide range of writing genres. They also continually build their awareness of word classes and age-appropriate grammatical terminology.
- Spelling is developed through a range of mediums, including the continuation of the Letters and Sounds Phonics Programme; the use of weekly spelling tests to develop confidence with common exception words; and the use of online spelling resources to consolidate and extend spelling knowledge at home and in school.
- There are also spelling tests in the form of dictations and opportunities to practise common exception words.

#### Handwriting:

- The increased frequency of writing promotes increased pencil control and during Year 1, the books that children write in quickly transition to those with narrower spaces between lines. Priorities are to form letters in the correct manner; ensure any reversals are addressed and corrected and to begin to consider the size of letters relative to each other (ascenders, descenders, capital letters, etc). Children in KS1 receive a stand-alone lesson each week that focusses on a newly introduced handwriting join. This is then practised daily for the rest of that week. Handwriting is then assessed using dictations and copied passages at regular intervals throughout the year.
- Key Stage 2

#### Reading:

- Children in Key Stage 2 continue to be exposed to an increasingly wider variety of reading materials in school and are given books to read at home regularly. The frequency and effectiveness of this is monitored closely via weekly guided reading sessions that provide an array of challenges by which teachers can monitor progress.

- Children have access to a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction books, which is continually enhanced and organised into ability bands. These ability bands ensure that all children are challenged appropriately throughout their time in Key Stage 2.
- Several times each week, teachers read to children from their current Class Novel, with links made to the sequence of writing lessons underway at the time.
- Children are also challenged, through fast-paced activities, to understand and appreciate the meaning of carefully selected extracts from archaic texts, resistant texts and texts with a complex plot and/or narrator. These typically differ from the existing Class Novel in order to further diversify the texts that children are exposed to.

#### Writing:

- Children in Key Stage 2 continue to experience writing across a multitude of genres. They delve deep into the purpose and effectiveness of each genre’s structure and language features and experiment with using them in their own writing.
- Children are introduced to and learn the importance of editing and re-drafting, particularly in Year 5 and 6, where this is a routine part of their work towards a ‘Masterpiece’ of writing. Children learn to work collaboratively to assist each other in identifying spelling, punctuation and grammar errors or potential areas for language or structural improvements in each other’s writing.
- Children’s writing opportunities continue to be contextualised through geography, history and science focusses, and are centred on a novel linked to such focusses. This gives children further confidence to write with an embedded knowledge of characters, atmosphere and scenarios within the novel and allows them to extend their thinking to develop empathetic and hypothetical viewpoints.

#### Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling:

- Children’s awareness of grammar and punctuation rules broadens immensely during their time in Key Stage 2. From being introduced to new features, to investigating their purposes, to manipulating their use for effect within writing, children gain a sound appreciation of grammar and punctuation and are given regular opportunities and challenges to develop their understanding further.
- Spelling is continually developed in Key Stage 2 through the use of various spelling programmes that focus on spelling patterns, visual memory aids and auditory recognition and repetition among others.
- Spelling dictations are carried out to monitor the children’s spelling ability against the Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6 statutory spelling lists.

#### Handwriting:

- The way in which children present their work continues to be enhanced through regular handwriting sessions, in which children are required to focus on the consistency and legibility of their joined handwriting. In Year 3 and 4, regular handwriting assessments are carried out to identify children whose handwriting standards may be slipping, or those who didn’t master the basic skills taught extensively in KS1.

#### Organisation, Planning and Resources:

- In EYFS, children complete at least 2 adult led English/Literacy tasks each week. The focussed texts are used for a 2 week planning cycle (where applicable in Nursery) with the first week concentrating on reading and understanding the text while week 2 focusses on writing activities relating to the now familiar text. Children also have daily phonic sessions to develop blending and segmenting skills.

- Children in Years 1-6 experience an explicit English lesson every day. A high percentage of these lessons focus on writing and the development of grammar and punctuation but with a weekly lesson planned for the teaching reading skills and comprehension.
- Additional spelling and handwriting lessons are planned and delivered regularly to consolidate prior learning and develop these skills further.
- Children with SEND are provided with additional support towards their learning goals in a variety of ways, such as extra support from their teacher or a teaching assistant; a differentiated task; the provision of additional resources or, depending on the individual child, a different expectation with regard to the outcome of the planned task.
- Class Novels are used to support writing lessons and provide stimuli for writing opportunities. These almost always link to the current science, geography or history focus for the class. Since Year 1 and 2, Year 3 and 4, and Year 5 and 6 study the same science, geography or history focus at the same time, these novels often bridge two year groups but the planning of lessons will be exclusive to each year group, ensuring a direct focus on each year group’s writing objectives. The novels run on a two-year cycle so that clashes are avoided when mixed-age classes occur.
- There is a tremendously wide range of reading materials available to the children in our school. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, this centres mostly on a progressive scheme of levelled reading books, though as they reach the end of Year 1 and during their time in Year 2, they are exposed to our ‘100 Books to read before you leave Year 2’ library. This contains a range of texts from a variety of genres (including non-fiction texts) and promotes children’s independence as readers as well as their awareness of libraries as something that any adult or child can access in the wider world. There is an equivalent library available to Year 3 and 4 children and to Year 5 and 6 children. Our wide range of fiction and non-fiction books are ‘banded’ by ability to ensure the correct level of challenge for each child. The texts contained in each one are age-appropriate, varied in theme, genre and author and are continually updated to retain the intrigue and excitement for visiting the library. Guided reading books continue to be available in Key Stage 2 for teachers to use during group reading sessions or to provide extra support to children who aren’t making good progress.

### **Assessment:**

- Children in EYFS are continually assessed in all aspects of their English/literacy skills, in relation to their progress against the Development Matters document aiming to achieve the overall ‘Expected’ Early Learning Goal by the end of reception by demonstrating suitable competency in a variety of individual Early Learning Goals. These assessments take place formatively during adult-led and child-initiated tasks.
- Children in Key Stage 1 continue to be assessed formatively via their daily work in lessons and summatively via half-termly testing of independent reading comprehensions and twice-half-termly pieces of writing that are written into the children’s ‘Masterpieces’ book after significant preparation and exploration of the writing genre. Phonics assessments are also carried out throughout Year 1 to monitor children’s progress prior to the Year 1 Phonics test, but also during Year 2 to ensure that learning has been retained and any children who did not achieve the expected pass score are prepared for the statutory retake of the test. Spelling dictations also take place to monitor spelling progress in relation to Key Stage 1 statutory spelling rules.
- Children in Key Stage 2 are assessed very similarly to those in Key Stage 1. There is less emphasis on phonics testing and more focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling progress as a whole.
- Teachers in Years 1-6 use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess each child’s progress in reading and writing. The KPIs increase in complexity each term so that children’s progress can be measured in

small, achievable steps and teachers can assess children against all criteria in each term, rather than having to wait until the end of the year to collate a child’s attainment.

- The writing KPIs link directly to a sequence of writing genres that each teacher follows, where two pieces of extended independent writing (‘Masterpieces’) are assessed. This ensures a diverse range of writing genres are taught and that the related genre-specific KPI statements account for a representative proportion of the child’s overall progress.
- The reading KPIs encourage a wealth of challenge and are used predominantly as guided reading lesson objectives. Following them ensures a variety of skills are taught and that children gain an appreciation of the various elements and layers of texts from different genres.
- All teachers report their assessments of children’s reading and writing to the English coordinator via the school’s central tracking system at the end of each term.
- In terms of daily lessons, children learn during Key Stage 1 how to responsibly self-mark during closed tasks (such as grammar, spelling and punctuation tasks) and become familiar with the school’s marking policy. Green highlighters are used by children to indicate correct responses, or by teachers to highlight an impressive word, phrase or sentence in the child’s work. Conversely, pink highlighters are used by children to indicate incorrect responses or by teachers to draw children’s attention to a section of their writing that either doesn’t make sense or could be improved linguistically or structurally.
- In Key Stage 2, the first drafts of children’s longer pieces of writing will be preceded by a discussion of success criteria; these are features that the teacher wishes to see in this piece of writing. Each child will retain a copy of this list in their book and, at the end of the writing piece, self-assess their progress by making a small mark next to each criterion. Orange indicates the feature is not present or not shown enough to demonstrate competency; yellow indicates that the feature is present but should have been used slightly more or slightly better; green indicates that the feature was used appropriately and accurately; blue indicates that the feature was used beyond the expectations of the teacher throughout the writing task. Their work will also be assessed by a peer and then by their teacher. The colour-coded teacher guidance provides a clear focus for children’s editing/up-levelling ahead of writing their re-draft. This is phased out towards the end of Year 5 as the children prepare for Year 6, where their ‘Masterpieces’ form the majority of their End of Key Stage 2 Assessment (SATs) level; therefore, it is essential that the children’s independence is developed in order that they can identify their own areas for development from their first drafts.

### **Equal Opportunities/Inclusion:**

- We are committed to ensuring that every child has an equal right to achievement in our school. In the case of English, we strive to provide additional support to children with their reading and writing.
- In instances where children use English as an additional language or live in a home where more than one language is spoken, there are often grammatical errors rooted within a child’s understanding of the language. Therefore, we spend extra time with that child in order to develop their comprehension of English more rapidly.
- In instances where a child has ASD or ADHD, the needs of the child are often unique so it is the decision of the class teacher, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, about how best to ensure the child’s progression in English.
- Likewise, in instances where a child has general or specific learning difficulties, the class teacher will determine how best to manage the child’s progress, in consultation with the SEND coordinator and English coordinator. Agreed targets will be set and monitored against the child’s education support plan.

### **Role of the Subject Leader:**

In my role as English coordinator, I (Mr Storrar):

- Monitor progress in all aspects of English across the school. This includes analysis of writing assessments submitted by teachers to the central tracking system (Mrs Dadswell does this for reading and reports her findings to me).
- Liaise with staff about the effectiveness of programmes, resources, novels, schemes of work that are place around the school to ensure that everything is as efficient as possible.
- Work with governors to discuss the effectiveness of the English provision at our school, updating them about changes or amendments to our provision.
- Deliver and lead CPD sessions to staff, focussing on a range of areas of English teaching, such as the planning of effective lesson sequences, the effective use of assessment, consistency of assessment (moderation), tools for developing handwriting, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation.
- Share the outcomes of analysed data to make staff and governors aware of patterns, trends and areas for development over the next term/academic year.
- Scrutinise books from each class to monitor and ensure the correct provision and assessment of work is being carried out consistently and effectively.
- Monitor the effectiveness and popularity of the lending library and speak with children about books that they enjoy, taking suggestions about future books that could be added to the library by popular authors.
- Write action plans based on the current priorities for English across the school.

### **Working with Parents/Carers:**

- As with any subject at our school, parent views and opinions are welcomed and their support is highly valued. The most consistently helpful way in which parents can help is by ensuring that regular reading takes place at home. This should ideally vary in its format to retain the child’s intrigue and interest. For example, some days they may hear a story read to them, others, they may read to their parent/sibling, others, they may conduct some research into a non-fiction area that interests them and read out their findings to the family.
- Additionally, it is welcomed that parents help their children to learn words within the spelling pattern that they are currently practising at school. This could be through working with their children with their online spelling homework and/or providing supplementary words that follow the rule in hand.
- Of course, parents can also help by practising writing skills with children if they are confident enough to do so. This can range from the homework tasks set by teachers to practise of general writing features.
- Parents, carers and grandparents are also welcomed into our school to support with reading. We have excellent relationships with the community and often have volunteers to hear children read, assist with the running of the lending library and support with the banding of new books in our Key Stage reading programmes.

**Policy Review Date: June 2025**