

Oakington C of E Primary School

ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Purpose of study

Our English curriculum teaches pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are seen as essential to being able to participate fully as a member of society.

Aims - spoken language, reading and writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation

The overarching aim is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. Our curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- 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 of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they are able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Spoken language

Our curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. We know that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing and we therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Through our curriculum pupils will develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils are also taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils are enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils are able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama

and theatre performances.

Reading

Our approach to reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Our teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are provided for each.

Our curriculum ensures that skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. We ensure that underpinning both is an understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why we emphasise phonics in the early teaching of reading to beginners (ie unskilled readers) when they start our school.

Our curriculum ensures that good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills are developed through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with teachers, 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 they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. We encourage pupils to read widely and often to increase pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. We also use reading to feed pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for our curious young minds.

It is our aim therefore that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

Writing

Our curriculum coverage for writing at key stages 1 and 2 is constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

We see it as essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Our curriculum ensures that pupils develop effective transcription: that is, spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. We ensure that learners are encouraged to articulate and communicate their ideas, and then organise them coherently for a reader. This requires our pupils to write with clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and develop an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. We also ensure that our pupils can develop fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

We use 2 statutory appendices provided by the government – on spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. The curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than 1 meaning.

Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use standard English. They are also taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' appropriate for their age. Teachers help pupils to develop the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language.

Spoken language

Overall, through our curriculum, the pupils are taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Content - Year 1

During year 1, teachers build on work from the early years foundation stage, making sure that pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using the phonic knowledge and skills that they have already learnt. Teachers ensure that pupils continue to learn new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and revise and consolidate those learnt earlier. The understanding that the letter(s) on the page represent the sounds in spoken words underpin pupils' reading and spelling of all words. This includes common words containing unusual GPCs.

Alongside this knowledge of GPCs, our curriculum ensures that pupils develop the skill of blending the sounds into words for reading and establish the habit of applying this skill whenever they encounter new words. This is supported by practice in reading books consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and skill and their knowledge of common exception words. At the same time we ensure that learners hear, share and discuss a wide range of high-quality books to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary.

Pupils are helped to read words without overt sounding and blending after a few encounters. Those who are slow to develop this skill have extra practice.

The expectation is that pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

The curriculum is structured such that pupils entering year 1 who have not yet met the early learning goals for literacy will continue to follow the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they develop their word reading, spelling and language skills. However, these pupils follow the year 1 programme of study in terms of the books they listen to and discuss, so that they develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar, as well as their knowledge more generally across the curriculum. If they are still struggling to decode and spell, they are taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly.

Teachers ensure that their teaching develops pupils' oral vocabulary as well as their ability to understand and use a variety of grammatical structures, giving particular support to pupils whose oral language skills are insufficiently developed.

Content – Year 2

By the beginning of year 2, the curriculum is structured so that pupils are able to read all common graphemes. They are able to read unfamiliar words containing these graphemes, accurately and without undue hesitation, by sounding them out in books that are matched closely to each pupil's level of word-reading knowledge. They are also able to read many common words containing GPCs taught so far [for example, shout, hand, stop, or dream], without needing to blend the sounds out loud first. It is the aim that pupils' reading of common exception words [for example, you, could, many, or people], are secure. Pupils increase their fluency by being able to read these words easily and automatically. Finally, pupils are given ample opportunities to retell some familiar stories that have been read to and discussed with them or that they have acted out during year 1.

During year 2, teachers continue to focus on establishing pupils' accurate and speedy word-reading skills. They make sure that pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books; this includes whole books. It is our view that the sooner that pupils can read well and do so frequently, the sooner they will be able to increase their vocabulary, comprehension and their knowledge across our wider curriculum.

In writing, the curriculum gives pupils at the beginning of year 2 good opportunities to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down. They are encouraged to spell many of the words covered in year 1 correctly. They should also be able to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words they have not yet learnt. Finally, they are able to form individual letters correctly, establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.

It is important to recognise that pupils begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year 2. Increasingly, they learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table. Our curriculum ensures that the pupils' motor skills are sufficiently advanced for them to write down ideas so that they are able to compose orally.

For pupils who do not have the phonic knowledge and skills they need for year 2, teachers use the year 1 programmes of study for word reading and spelling so that pupils' word-reading skills catch up. However, teachers still use the national curriculum year 2 programme of study for comprehension so that these pupils hear and talk about new books, poems, other writing, and vocabulary with the rest of the class.

Content – Years 3 and 4

By the beginning of year 3, we aim that pupils are able to read books written at an age-appropriate interest level, and that they are able to read them accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words. We make sure that they are able to decode most new words outside their spoken vocabulary, making a good approximation to the word's pronunciation. As their decoding skills become increasingly secure, the curriculum ensures that pupils are directed more towards developing vocabulary and the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. The curriculum and approach develops their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently. The curriculum also ensures that they develop their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects, learning 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.

The curriculum further develops pupils ability to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation. Our approach seeks to consolidate pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology. The curriculum is designed to develop them as writers, teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence. The approach makes sure that pupils build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing and the more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures from which they can draw to express their ideas. As a result by the end of year 4 pupils are increasingly able to understand how writing can be different from speech. Joined handwriting are the norm for our pupils by this age, and pupils will be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.

The curriculum makes sure that pupils' spelling of common words are correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt. Because of our focus on strategies in literacy, pupils are able to spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling, such as morphology and etymology. As a result most pupils do not need further direct teaching of word reading skills in year 4: they are able to decode unfamiliar words accurately, and need very few repeated experiences of this before the word is stored in such a way that they can read it without overt sound-blending. We ensure pupils can demonstrate understanding of figurative language, distinguish shades of meaning among related words and use age-appropriate, academic vocabulary.

As in key stage 1, pupils who are still struggling to decode are taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly with their peers. As far as possible, however, these pupils still follow the year 3 and 4 curriculum in terms of listening to new books, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and discussing these.

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form a strong part of our curriculum. In years 3 and 4, pupils become increasingly more familiar with and confident in using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations and debate.

Content – Years 5 and 6

By the beginning of year 5, the curriculum ensures that pupils are able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They will be read most words effortlessly and to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity. If the pronunciation sounds unfamiliar, they have ample opportunity to ask for help in determining both the meaning of the word and how to pronounce it correctly.

The curriculum ensures that pupils are confident to prepare readings, with appropriate intonation to show

their understanding, and are able to summarise and present a familiar story in their own words. The approach involves reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information, read silently, with good understanding and inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words.

The curriculum aims to make sure that pupils are able to write down their ideas quickly. The approach ensures that their grammar and punctuation are broadly accurate. During years 5 and 6, teachers continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, is used to support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their comprehension. As in years 3 and 4, pupils are taught to enhance the effectiveness of their writing as well as their competence.

We see it as essential that pupils whose decoding skills are poor are taught through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly with their peers in terms of their decoding and spelling. However, as far as possible, these pupils still follow the upper key stage 2 programme of study in terms of listening to books and other writing that they have not come across before, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and having a chance to talk about all of these.

The curriculum ensures that by the end of year 6, pupils' reading and writing are sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7, across all subjects and not just in English, (although there will continue to be a need for pupils to learn subject-specific vocabulary). The approach ensures that they are able to reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Teachers prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that they can consciously control sentence structure in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are. We ensure that pupils can understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. The approach involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this curriculum. In years 5 and 6, pupils' confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language are extended through public speaking, performance and debate.

Content - Years 8 and 9 (and extension for more able in Years 5 and 6)

Reading

Through our curriculum, pupils are taught to:

- develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through:
 - reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors, including high-quality works from English literature, both pre-1914 and contemporary, including prose, poetry and drama; Shakespeare (2 plays) and seminal world literature
 - choosing and reading books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment
 - rereading books encountered earlier to increase familiarity with them and provide a basis for making comparisons
- understand increasingly challenging texts through:
 - learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries
 - making inferences and referring to evidence in the text
 - knowing the purpose, audience for and context of the writing and drawing on this

- knowledge to support comprehension
- checking their understanding to make sure that what they have read makes sense
- read critically through:
 - knowing how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning
 - recognising a range of poetic conventions and understanding how these have been used
 - studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these
 - understanding how the work of dramatists is communicated effectively through performance and how alternative staging allows for different interpretations of a play
 - making critical comparisons across texts
 - studying a range of authors, including at least 2 authors in depth each year

Writing

Through our curriculum, pupils are taught to:

- write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:
 - writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including: well-structured formal expository and narrative essays; stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing; notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations and a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters
 - summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail
 - applying their growing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text structure to their writing and selecting the appropriate form
 - drawing on knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices from their reading and listening to enhance the impact of their writing
- plan, draft, edit and proofread through:
 - considering how their writing reflects the audiences and purposes for which it was intended
 - amending the vocabulary, grammar and structure of their writing to improve its coherence and overall effectiveness
 - paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling; applying the spelling patterns and rules set out in to the key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study for English

Grammar and vocabulary

Through our curriculum, pupils are taught to:

- consolidate and build on their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through:
 - extending and applying the grammatical knowledge set out to the key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study to analyse more challenging texts
 - studying the effectiveness and impact of the grammatical features of the texts they read
 - drawing on new vocabulary and grammatical constructions from their reading and listening, and using these consciously in their writing and speech to achieve particular effects
 - knowing and understanding the differences between spoken and written language, including differences associated with formal and informal registers, and between standard English and other varieties of English
 - using standard English confidently in their own writing and speech
 - discussing reading, writing and spoken language with precise and confident use of linguistic and literary terminology*

*Teachers should refer to the [glossary](#) that accompanies the programmes of study for English for their own information on the range of terms used within the programmes of study as a whole.

Spoken English

Through our curriculum, pupils are taught to:

- speak confidently and effectively, including through:
 - using standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts, including classroom discussion
 - giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point
 - participating in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said
 - improvising, rehearsing and performing play scripts and poetry in order to generate languages and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact