



# Salisbury Primary School

## English Policy

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## Salisbury Primary School - English

### 1. Curriculum Statement

#### **Intent**

Here at Salisbury Primary School, we are committed to providing an engaging and progressive English curriculum. We want our pupils to become enthusiastic readers and writers who develop a life-long love of books and a passion for writing. In EYFS and Key Stage 1 the learning is focused on spoken language, accurate word reading and spelling and fluent letter formation. However, spoken language skills, (speaking and listening,) are built into all aspects of the English curriculum with the aim being that every child is able to communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions clearly and succinctly, as well as listening to and reflecting on the ideas of others.

We aim to enable our pupils both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Literacy is central to pupils' intellectual, emotional and social development and plays an essential role across the curriculum helping pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

#### **Implementation**

At Salisbury, we have implemented the Power of Reading approach to teach English. This is a programme provided by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, which puts quality children's literature at the heart of the curriculum and supports our work in teaching English creatively and effectively. The Power of Reading promotes a love of literature. It focuses on using high quality children's texts and provides creative teaching approaches to engage pupils in the literacy curriculum. This supports our teachers to nurture a whole school love of reading and writing that allows pupils to make excellent progress. Our pupils are able to increase their vocabulary, understanding and enjoyment of texts.

The teaching of English at Salisbury aims to provide a curriculum that caters for the needs of all individuals and ensures that they acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for them to become successful both in school and in their future lives and careers.

We prioritise the teaching of reading both as a key component of our English provision and one, which unlocks opportunity in all other subjects. We believe that all pupils should have the opportunity to be fluent, confident readers, develop a love of reading, have 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.

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. All pupils receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily English lesson. Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for groups. Teachers use the National Curriculum as the basis for creating medium term plans. The Power of Reading teaching sequences make use of

high quality texts and give overall structure to the medium term plans. A wide, range of teaching styles deliver, a high quality English curriculum.

## **Impact**

The Power of Reading is a well-established initiative, which supports pupils' progress in reading and writing and is particularly effective for those pupils who previously may have been reluctant to engage with literacy. Power of Reading schools report that their pupils choose to read more often, at greater length and are more confident in talking about books. At Salisbury, the Power of Reading approach has enabled our pupils to see themselves as readers, read regularly and do so for pleasure.

At Salisbury, we place a strong emphasis on reading aloud to pupils. Research tells us that pupils are able to access texts and vocabulary considered to be, two years beyond their chronological age when they listen to texts read aloud to them. Here at Salisbury, we enable our pupils to experience and enjoy a wide range of texts and stories.

Our approach to teaching English provides pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities to develop and enrich their understanding of what they read. This includes book talk, debate, reading journals, role-play and drama, use of visual images and story mapping. Pupils develop an extensive, wide, vocabulary as well as accessing varied and engaging opportunities to develop their writing skills.

## **2.Planning/Organisation**

Teachers plan closely with year group colleagues to ensure consistency of opportunity for all pupils. Clear objectives are set for each session and shared with pupils. Teachers adapt teaching/learning according to the needs of the pupils and use interventions for targeted support. Literacy is encouraged and developed across our curriculum making links where appropriate. ICT is included where it enhances, extends and compliments the teaching and learning of English. Additional adults support pupils across the school, dependent upon need. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of pupils or individuals.

## **3.Teaching and Learning**

### **Speaking/Listening**

At Salisbury, we believe that developing spoken language, including vocabulary, is essential for the academic progress of all pupils. In lessons teachers work together with pupils to develop vocabulary explicitly. This is especially important in the early years but continues to be a focus throughout all year groups up to Year 6. The Power of Reading, together with our enquiry-based approach to the wider curriculum provides pupils every opportunity to use spoken language and to acquire a rich and expansive vocabulary.

Adults create opportunities for conversational talk allowing them to model conventions and turn taking, on an everyday basis. Most curriculum subjects at Salisbury use an enquiry-based approach to learning to promote and give scope for spoken language to be developed. Pupils' develop confidence in speaking aloud to an audience through taking part each term in year group assemblies, poetry reading, engaging in debate and drama activities both in lessons and after school enrichment sessions.

### **Phonics and Early Reading**

Our nursery children develop a love of books through listening to stories, learning some simple stories by heart, and looking at books themselves. We provide a variety of books through the 1000 stories initiative for children to share each week with their family. The teaching of phonics in Nursery helps to prepare children as they move into Reception.

In Reception and Year 1, the teaching of phonics becomes more formal with daily phonics lessons for all pupils. We use a rigorous systematic synthetic phonics scheme for this; the DfE approved 'Bug Club' programme, which introduces new phonemes following the Letters and Sounds order of teaching. The phonics programme focuses on developing skills in matching sounds to letters and groups of letters and securing word recognition skills essential for children to decode (read) and encode (spell) words accurately.

The phonics programme develops early reading skills through six phonic phases:

- Phase 1 phonics promotes speaking/listening skills, phonological awareness through sounds in the environment and stories that focus on various sounds.
- Phases 2 to 5 focus on high quality phonic teaching to help pupils develop fluent word reading, through segmenting and blending and spelling skills through the development of phonemic awareness and GPC (grapheme phoneme correspondence). In addition to learning the phonemes for each phase, pupils also learn to read and spell the 'Tricky Words' associated with each phonic phase. Phonics teaching, (phase 1 to phase 6,) takes place daily and the sessions follow the teaching sequence of 'revisit, review, teach, practise and apply'.
- In Phase 6, the main aim is for pupils to become more fluent readers and accurate spellers. Phase 6 sessions include direct teaching of spelling strategies, proofreading and high-frequency words. In addition, pupils are still encouraged to apply phonic skills in reading and writing lessons as well as in other areas of the curriculum.

Those pupils who maybe making less than expected progress are identified early and given extra practice, either in a small group or one-to-one. This is consistent with the school's mainstream phonics programme and focuses on activities, which help to secure phonic knowledge that the pupils have not yet grasped.

In the summer term, Y1 pupils take the Phonics Screening Check, which expects them to read a combination of 40 decodable phonemes, nonsense words and real words. This progress check identifies those pupils not at the expected level in reading – these pupils

receive further phonics teaching and will retake the Phonics Screening Check, the following summer in Y2.

## **Teaching Reading and Writing through 'The Power of Reading'**

### **Reading**

Reading is an integral part of our English lessons and the starting point for units of work. Pupils will read, discuss and respond to texts in various ways e.g. through drama, illustration, comprehension tasks, writing in the role of a character, analysis of the features of a text. As well as developing reading skills, this learning also plays a crucial part in the development of their own writing. We carefully select texts ensuring they contain exceptionally rich, high quality language, as well as thought provoking illustrations. The texts may include shorter texts such as a short story, picture book or poetry book, to longer texts such as complete novels. We ensure our pupils, are all provided with opportunities to study a range of genres across the year.

All reading books including our phonetically, decodable books are colour banded to ensure an appropriate level and progression of challenge for all pupils both in school and at home. Our provision of books is constantly evolving and as a result, pupils have books that not only challenge, but also interest them and encourage a love of reading. Through the range of texts used in reading lessons and available for pupils to select from, we aim to motivate, enrich and broaden their reading experiences.

Every classroom has a reading area where pupils and teachers make sure that there is access to interesting and meaningful reading materials including a well-stocked fiction and non-fiction area, favourite author titles, picture books, poetry books and current children's newspapers and magazines including digital resources.

All year groups have a daily timetabled reading lesson where pupils read with the teacher, carry out a reading task relating to the book they are working on, or have an opportunity to read for enjoyment in the class reading area.

In Reception, Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2, the teaching of reading skills takes place in small group, guided reading sessions. The teacher reads with every group at least once a week. Teachers and teaching assistants model the reading process as expert readers and the texts selected match the ability of the group, whilst still providing an element of challenge for progression. Group reading time is a forum for pupils to practice decoding and to develop fluency and comprehension skills.

In Upper Key Stage 2, the teaching of reading is through whole class, guided reading sessions. Pupils work with their teacher, reading and discussing a range of texts. These sessions are also used give pupils focussed support with developing the skills and techniques needed for effective comprehension, enjoyment of books, and answering comprehension questions in test situations. Pupils who require more support with reading, those who might have gaps in their phonic knowledge and pupils working below age appropriate

expectations, continue to read in a small group each day. During these sessions, reading activities link to the ability and needs of the pupils.

In all year groups, adults read aloud to the whole class each day. This ensures that pupils experience some challenging texts beyond the current reading ability of the majority of pupils and enjoy the experience of listening to a text read to them.

Pupils are encouraged to read at home each evening if possible. Parents are able to respond to how their child's reading is developing through a home-school reading diary.

We ensure workshops held throughout the year for parents, enable them to effectively support their children at home with learning and reading. Pupils have access to an extensive range of reading books to take home along with a reading record that acts as a form of communication between home and school. Pupils will progress systematically through colour book banded reading books which match their reading in school.

## **Writing**

At Salisbury, we ensure pupils are able to access an effective writing curriculum that gives them all opportunities to develop their proficiency in the two interrelated areas of writing: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing.)

### **Transcription - Spelling**

Fluent transcription skills are the key focus of teaching for pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1. During phonics lessons, pupils learn that graphemes can represent the separate phonemes they have identified in the word they want to spell. Pupils are also taught how to spell 'common exception words', sometimes referred to as 'tricky words' so called because their grapheme-phoneme correspondence are unusual or they have not yet been taught.

Teachers regularly use dictated sentences as a way of ensuring that pupils apply and practise spelling and handwriting. In Reception, teachers dictate sentences for children to write that contain only the taught letter-to-sound correspondence. In Year 1 pupils write sentences dictated by the teacher using GPCs and common exception words that they have been taught. Pupils experience many opportunities to practice fluent transcription skills as a foundation for their progress in writing.

In Key Stage 2 we use the programme called 'Spelling Shed' to teach spellings as set out in the National Curriculum.

### **Transcription - Handwriting**

The national curriculum specifies that teaching should lead to pupils being able to form letters of the correct size and orientation. This requires effort and attention, as well as suitable motor skills. The formal teaching of handwriting begins in Reception and children at the end of the EYFS should be able to 'hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip, in almost all cases.

The national curriculum requires children to learn un-joined handwriting before they 'start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters'. Delaying our teaching of joined handwriting gives teachers and children time to focus on other aspects of the writing process and forming letters correctly.

We work towards making handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for the use of different letterforms to help communicate meaning clearly. Teachers use neat cursive writing for all handwriting tasks, marking and comments in pupils' books.

## **Composition**

At Salisbury, during writing lessons, when focusing on composition, teachers model the writing process. The teacher models how text is an important vehicle for recording ideas, thoughts and feelings by putting pupils' ideas into writing, modelling spelling and punctuation, or showing how a writer chooses appropriate words and sentence structure to convey an idea. We embed the teaching of phonics, grammar and spelling into the study of the texts so that pupils are able to understand use, in a meaningful way. Some aspects of SPaG, are taught discretely though, particularly as pupils move into KS2. In writing lessons, we use a wide range of, well-chosen Power of Reading texts, which provide a rich language model and structure, from which pupils learn how writing works and the effect it can have on a reader.

## **Writing in Early Years Foundation Stage**

Writing forms a central part of the communication and language and literacy areas of development. We believe the foundations for writing need to build upon oral work and children being encouraged to express their ideas at every opportunity throughout each of the Early Learning Goals. We enable this through staff modelling the use of language and creating opportunities for children to develop their talk in every lesson.

Daily, weekly and medium term planning clearly demonstrates this focus and includes techniques for developing early writing skills. Writing objectives are specific to begin giving children, the skills they will need as writers, in addition to cross-curricular opportunities. A wide range of writing materials are always available to children in the classroom and a specific role-play area which compliments the termly topic is used to provide a real purpose for children's early writing. We recognise both the importance of the teacher acting as scribe on occasions, in order to create stories and the importance of children writing freely as emergent writers.

## **Writing in Key Stage 1**

We continue to provide a wide range of planned and incidental opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the whole curriculum. We ensure that, writing activities are purposeful and linked to other areas of the curriculum thereby providing contexts for



pupils to apply their skills. We ensure pupils develop their writing skills across a wide range of genres.

Through using a variety of techniques, we place a strong emphasis on pupils' developing their oral skills as a prerequisite to writing. A wide, range of speaking and listening and drama techniques are utilised to provide pupils with opportunities to explore and extend their language and vocabulary as preparation for writing. The links with pupils' reading skills and the texts form the basis for developing writing skills, reading and writing objectives being clearly linked in teacher's planning. Pupils take part in a range of text-analysis activities and discussion before they write.

Teachers plan for modelled writing activities and guided writing groups. Writing frameworks provide structure for the pupils as they begin to write in a variety of genres as well as plentiful opportunities for independent writing. Pupils are involved in daily phonics lessons to aid the development of spelling throughout KS1, interwoven carefully into the English sessions.

## **Writing in Key Stage 2**

We continue to use the English National Curriculum and the Power of Reading approach, as the basis for planning. This guides us in the variety of genres we need to ensure pupils have access to. It also provides a model for the sequence of teaching whilst enabling us to achieve equal coverage across the key stage.

All pupils cover fiction and non-fiction units each term. Whilst focussing on developing key skills, teachers' planning also integrates links across the curriculum and uses topic themes, as well as educational visits and special events to provide real contexts for writing for real audiences. We recognise that where pupils see a purpose for writing they will be motivated and the quality of their writing will improve. Grammar and punctuation feature throughout the writing lessons but some elements are taught discretely.

## **4.Assessment**

Assessment for learning is a strong feature in all lessons to ensure we support the development and progress of individuals and groups. A range of assessments, some school-based, others statutory take place at key points, throughout the year:

- EYFS – Reception Baseline Assessments on entry
- Phonic assessment- ongoing record, Phonics Bug assessment
- Phonic Screening Check Y1 and Y2 if required – end of year
- Reading SATs – End of KS1 and KS2
- SPaG – End of KS2
- Half-termly assessments - reading and writing
- Salford reading age test – Year 2 to Year 6 (when pupils reach a RA of 10.6 the assessment is no longer used)
- Reading and writing assessment (statement trackers) for each year group – these provide ongoing pupil progress information

- NTS reading test – end of term assessment (Year 1 to year 5)

Teachers collate and analyse data/information to identify areas of development. This enables appropriate consolidation work to take place as well as inform whole school tracking of attainment and progress of each pupil. Leaders use data to inform whole school and subject development priorities, for the next school year.

### **5.Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

The school is committed to ensuring the active participation and progress of all pupils in their learning. All pupils will be given equal opportunities to achieve their best possible standard, whatever their current attainment and irrespective of gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation or the progress of which they are capable.

### **6.Role of the English Lead/Team**

The team will:

- Provide support as required as part of the staff members' continued professional development
- Ensure classroom environments are conducive to highly effective learning, through use of quality displays and accessibility and availability of resources
- Monitor progression and continuity of English throughout school through observations and regular monitoring of outcomes of work in pupils' books
- Ensure that all staff have access to year group plans and the relevant resources which accompany them
- Monitor pupils' progress through the analysis of whole school data, to inform subject development planning
- Organise, audit and purchase English resources
- Ensure all staff have access to professional development including observations of outstanding practice in the subject

### **7.Parental Involvement/Home Links**

At Salisbury, we recognise that parents and carers have a valuable role to play in supporting learning -

- An overview of the English curriculum is readily available for parents, on the website
- Reading, phonics, spelling activities are suggested for parents and carers
- Pupils receive homework tasks to complete at least once a week, from Reception to Year 6. In addition to this, they are encouraged to access reading materials at home to practise and consolidate the learning they have done in school
- Parents, are informed of their child's progress at Parents' Evenings and this information is communicated in school reports
- We provide information about standards, achievements and future targets

- Year group expectations for English, are also shared with parents so they are able to support them at home
- In Year 2 and Year 6, parents are able to attend informal meetings at which we share relevant information and ensure they have the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns they may have

*To be reviewed July 2025*