

SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR ENGLISH

June 2021

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1. Intent of the English Curriculum at Sutton C of E (VC) Primary School

At Sutton C of E (VC) Primary School we believe that a quality English curriculum should develop children's lifelong love of reading, writing and discussion. We aim to inspire an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and a habit of reading widely and often for learning and for pleasure. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of purposes and contexts. We want to develop children who are confident in the art of speaking and listening to communicate and who can use discussion to further their learning.

We believe that children need to develop a secure skills and knowledge base in English, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. These firm foundations are crucial to a high quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society.

Implementation

These intentions are embedded across our literacy lessons and the wider curriculum.

We have a rigorous and well organised English curriculum that provides many purposeful and motivating opportunities for reading, writing and spoken language.

Teachers use a combination of the Phase Planning and Talk 4 Writing approaches when planning their lessons. We follow the aims of the National Curriculum for English 2014 which 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 should be 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.

In addition to daily English lessons, children acquire early reading and phonics skills through the systematic use of the Read, Write, Inc. Programme from Reception – Year 1. This is followed in Year 2 by the continuation of daily spelling and grammar lessons linked to the objectives set out in the National Curriculum for Years 2 - 6.

We use a wide variety of quality texts and resources to motivate and inspire our children. We also provide a wealth of enrichment opportunities, from participating in a whole school Book Week to a selection of national initiatives including World Book Day and National Libraries Day. This also ensures that children benefit from access to positive and diverse role models from the local and wider locality.

Impact

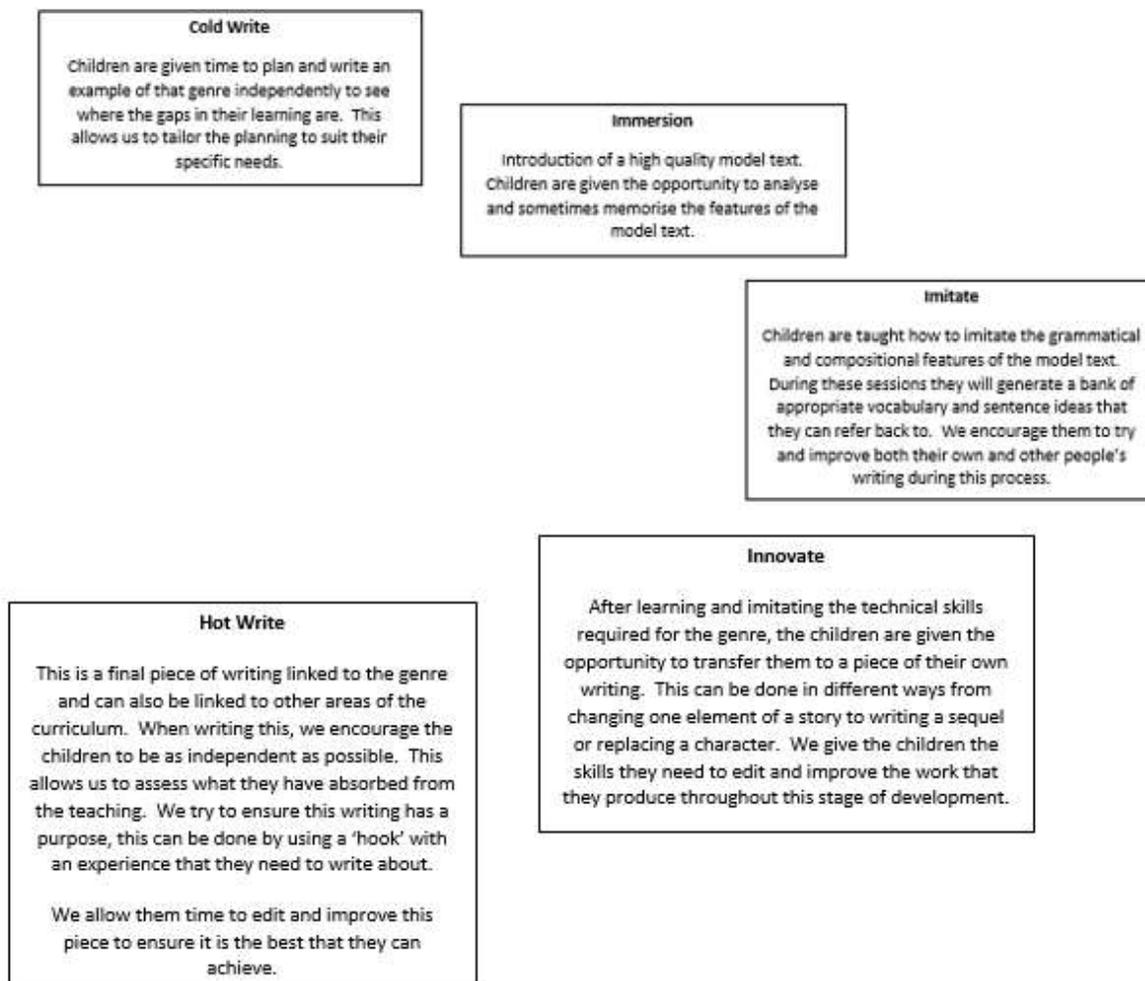
As a result of this practice and provision, we anticipate creating a community of enthusiastic readers and writers who enjoy showcasing their developing literacy knowledge and skills. They are confident to take risks in their reading and writing, and love to discuss and share their ideas.

2. The teaching of writing at Sutton

At Sutton we strive to create an environment that will promote writing.

High quality texts are carefully chosen as the basis of writing units. These match the genre of writing being taught and may also be matched to the school's topic cycle.

For each genre taught, a teaching cycle is planned incorporating three Phase Planning, Talk 4 Writing and Assessment for Learning principles. Below is an overview of the teaching sequence:



What does this look like at Sutton?

- A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset to engage all children and stimulate learning
- We provide exciting first hand experiences called 'hooks' e.g. trips/activities
- We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write for extended periods
- Each classroom will develop a Working Wall throughout a unit of work that will aid the children. There is a consistent approach across school, with each Working Wall incorporating 'Word Bank', 'Super Sentences', 'Text Maps and Plans' and 'Modelled text' sections.
- Progression in the teaching of writing skills is planned into each genre taught.
- A 'Tool Kit' of success criteria is produced after the Cold Write as a visual prompt and to support marking/identification of next steps.
- Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking to improve the work produced. Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to marking and feedback.
- Peer marking and self assessment are encouraged when children are editing and improving their work.
- Each child has a copy of the Non-negotiables for writing. These are the end of year objectives from previous year groups and are what we expect to see in their writing.
- Rigorous, accurate assessment of writing is ensured by staff regularly moderating writing samples both within teams and across Key Stages.

3. The teaching of Reading at Sutton

Our priority is two-fold, 'The Will and The Skill': the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies e.g. whole word recognition, using picture cues and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning focuses on skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read, so we aim to instill a love of books and other texts. Reading to our children every day helps to foster this.

In KS1 pupils are likely to be emergent and developing readers and pupils will focus on decoding using phonic strategies as required by the 2014 National Curriculum, but also on reading for meaning. Grouping pupils according to their stage of reading development is essential here so that pupils can access the chosen text, apply phonic knowledge and pay attention to sentence structures without loss of meaning. We also support children to respond to the text and to develop positive attitudes to reading.

In KS2 pupils are becoming more fluent and independent readers. Decoding has become a more automatic process and, in addition, they use knowledge of spelling patterns and grammatical knowledge to read unfamiliar words and with accuracy. Over time, they will read different texts for different purposes and need to experience and develop higher order reading skills in order to engage fully and respond effectively. Inferential thinking, stating preferences and opinions and justifying them, understanding different viewpoints and considering the writer's craft are among the required skills.

What does this look like at Sutton?

- Guided Reading is taught in groups and children will be taught by an adult at least once a week within their group.
- Each Guided Reading lesson has a reading skill focus based on the National Curriculum 2014's objectives.
- Sutton also uses The Literacy Shed's 'Reading Vipers' approach to support reading planning, teaching, learning and assessment. Vipers maps onto the content domains assessed in the reading SATs tests.
- Accelerated Reader is used as an assessment tool. This is a comprehensive computer-based programme that monitors the children's understanding of the text they have read. Accelerated Reader is also used to monitor independent reading practice and progress.

The Teaching of Reading in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

Read, Write, Inc

- Phonics is taught systematically following the Read, Write Inc phonics programme. This begins within the first few weeks of the child starting school in September.
- In all classes, children are grouped by ability for phonics lessons and are taught daily by either a trained Teacher or Teaching assistant.
- The assessment of progress through the RWI programme is carried out regularly and this allows us to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace. If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately.
- Please see the school's Phonics Policy on the school website for further information on the teaching of RWI.

Guided Reading

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Guided Reading happens every day and the groups work with an adult twice a week. This is often linked to the RWI Programme.
- In Key Stage 1, Guided Reading happens five days a week with the groups working with an adult twice a week. On the other days, children will be set activities linked to their ability and the reading skill they are being taught.

Books taken home

- Children take home a 'free choice' book that can be shared with their family to encourage reading for pleasure. This is changed weekly. Children can access the well stocked Book Corners at any time.
- When the children start to read they are encouraged to take home a phonetically decodable book linked to their level of reading and the sounds being taught in lessons.
- In Key Stage 1, the children are encouraged to take home a colour banded book that links to their level of reading. They are encouraged to read to an adult on a daily basis and record this in their Reading Record.
- Children in Year 2 who still require phonic support continue to follow the RWI phonics programme and receive a daily phonics lesson with a teacher or teaching assistant. It is possible that, as children move into Key Stage 2, the principles of phonic teaching may still be a relevant approach for some children who have not mastered this.
- Children in Year 2 who didn't pass the Year 1 phonics screening test will receive 1:1 or small group phonic support.

The Teaching of Reading in Key Stage 2

- All children in Key Stage 2 are taught reading skills through the phased approach used in English lessons.
- Guided Reading sessions happen 4-5 times a week and children are allocated ability groups within their class. Texts will be chosen through recommended sources such as Pie Corbett's Reading Spine Books.
- Children in KS2 who still require phonic support receive 1:1 or small group phonic support in the afternoon, following the Fresh Start Programme.
- Children who are identified as needing extra support with fluency of reading or comprehension are given 1:1 targeted support when appropriate.

Developing a 'Reading Culture' at Sutton

- We read a range of genres across the curriculum: topic books, news articles, class magazines, poems, non-fiction and stories etc.
- We storytell and re-enact stories: we invite storytellers into school.
- We set up visits from authors and illustrators;
- All class teachers are expected to read a class novel taken from Pie Corbett's Reading Spine to model expression when reading aloud.
- We have a well-stocked Library and the children are encouraged to visit at lunchtimes. We also promote Librarians within the Library to encourage reading and help other children find appropriate books.
- We take part in the Summer Reading challenge run by the library each year.
- Parents are invited to school during 'Book Week' to share stories with the class.
- We encourage Book Amnesties and Book swaps in the school to ensure there is a culture of sharing a good book with friends.
- We run competitions such as 'Reading in Strange Places' and the Reading Challenge run by the Local Authority.

- We include a 'Recommended Reads' section in our Newsletter fortnightly.
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4. The teaching of Phonics and Spelling at Sutton

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children as a communication tool. The programme of study we use from Year 2-6 allows us to meet the requirements set out by the 2014 National Curriculum.

What does this look like at Sutton?

- Please see the separate Policy for Phonics for more information on how we start the teaching of spelling in our school. This can be located on our phonics page of the school website.
- Please see the separate Spelling Policy for more information.

5. The teaching of Spoken Language at Sutton

For Spoken Language In the Early Years, attention is focused on children being able to listen attentively to the teacher, other adults and to each other. They are encouraged to communicate orally to express their needs, feelings and observations. This is developed through circle-time, role-play, story-telling, puppets, games, multi-media activities, exploratory play and creative and social experiences.

As children move through the school, speaking and listening skills are developed through more specific tasks e.g. discussion, drama, oral presentation, debates, giving explanations and communication with a variety of audiences in social and formal situations. The children are given opportunities to listen to authors, visitors and theatre groups.

It is important that as a school, we provide children with good role models and demonstrate high expectations of the spoken word. Respect should be given to all children as we develop their communication skills and sensitivity should be shown to those who have pronunciation difficulties, have a pronounced regional dialect and for those for whom English is not their first language.

6. The importance of acquisition of vocabulary at Sutton

Vocabulary is a strong indicator of reading success (National Literacy Trust, 2017). We know from research that the size of a child's vocabulary is the best predictor of success in future tests. Children with a poor vocabulary at five are four times more likely to struggle with reading in adulthood (Why Closing the Word Gap Matters: Oxford Language Report, 2018).

At Sutton, we also know that a good understanding of a wide range of vocabulary supports

success across the whole national curriculum. Therefore pupils are regularly taught new vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum.

Developing vocabulary occurs in two ways:

- Through indirect instruction; using rich reading experiences to grow vocabulary 'naturally.' Paying attention to context to work out meaning and using background knowledge.
- Through direct 'robust' instruction. Good vocabulary instruction involves...
 1. Decisions about which words to teach
 2. Decisions and expertise around how to teach these words

Teachers that plan direct instruction for tier two words, as they can have a powerful impact on verbal functioning and be applied to a range of different situations (Beck et al, 2013).

Tier 3: words either limited to specific domains (think science and maths vocabulary for example) or extremely rare words.
Tier 2: words that tend to be used in written language and that are versatile/have high utility (e.g. occurrence, tended, haunting, fortune)
Tier 1: words typically found in oral language (likely to be known, used, or encountered without design)

Beck et al 2002.

Recently we have taken part in the 'Powerful Words Project' to extend the children's understanding and use of Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary. 'Powerful Words' uses Mrs Wordsmith products to support accelerated progress in reading and writing for KS2 pupils in years 3 - 6, by extending their receptive and expressive vocabulary. The project introduces 15 minutes per day of additional vocabulary instruction in class, focusing on Tier 2 words found in Mrs Wordsmith materials. The goal of the project is to teach children 120 new words each term over the course of 5 terms. At the end of each term, students will take a short vocabulary test that Mrs Wordsmith prepared for them, so that their teacher will be able to keep track of their progress.

7. The teaching of Grammar at Sutton

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and identify word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What does this look like at Sutton?

- We follow the 2014 National Curriculum as guidance as to what is taught in each year group and from this, have devised a specific structure for our school detailing expectations year by year. See Appendix 2: Grammar Progression Overview.
- Grammar is taught within the English lesson. This is mostly done during the 'Imitation' phase of learning, however we also provide opportunities for recapping and revisiting skills learnt previously.
- We assess each child informally at the end of each lesson and each unit of work. This allows us to implement any interventions necessary, whether these be in a guided group or on an individual basis.

8. Handwriting and Presentation

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the Early Years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters. Please see the Handwriting Policy for further details.

What does this look like at Sutton?

- In Foundation Stage and Year 1 letter formation is taught according to the RWI scheme. Each letter has a handwriting phrase to help the children remember the formation.
- We take the view that handwriting should be taught little and often – at least twice a week for 15 minutes. From Year 3 onwards, this is linked to the spelling patterns being taught.
- We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly;
- Extra handwriting practice groups occur in classes throughout the school where the class team feels that additional handwriting support is needed.
- We have high expectations for handwriting and ensure that staff and pupils adhere to the policy.
- From Year 2 onwards, a Pen Licence can be awarded if a child's handwriting is to the best of their ability. Please see the Pen Licence Policy for further information.
- We have presentation expectations stuck into each of the books for every child to refer to. Please see Appendix 3 for more details of this.

9. Assessment

Formative assessment in Reading

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are assessed in their early literacy development against the Early Learning Goals
- All children have a Reading Learning Log where notes are recorded to inform assessment.
- Children are assessed on the book they have read to check their understanding.
- During Guided Reading sessions with an adult, notes are recorded on the conversations that happen. These are used as a collection of evidence to inform the next steps in targeted teaching.

Summative Assessment in Reading

- Year 1 take the Statutory Year 1 Phonics Screening Check in June.
- Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take the end of Key Stage national tests which examine a range of reading comprehension skills.
- Teacher Assessments are recorded on Pupil Asset half termly. This tracks if children are working to/at/exceeding end of year expectations.
- If a child is falling behind, we address this with individual targeted support involving the SENDCO where necessary.

Formative Assessment in Writing

- Each unit of work undertaken has a Cold Write at the beginning and then a Hot write at the end. This shows the progress the child has made throughout that unit and allows the class teacher to formulate a specific assessment of what that child needs to develop.
- For every piece of written work, children are given differentiated and layered success criteria, which they can use to help them reflect on the structure and language features of their own writing. These are comprised of four statements that are linked to the curriculum criteria for writing and grammar. We call these Paddling, Snorkeling, Diving and Diving Deeper so children know how to up-level their work.
- The teacher marks each child's work, looking for where the child has achieved the objective from the lesson. Positive comments are made in pink, moving on comments are made in green. Children improve their writing using green pen. See Marking and Feedback Policy for further information.
- Writing targets are formed through teacher assessment of writing these can be taken from the Non-negotiables or from the end of year objectives depending upon where the children are with their learning.
- Guided Groups in English lessons are led by the class teacher to target a specific need of a group of children. These groups are fluid and linked to formative writing assessment.

Summative Assessment in Writing

- Final grades at both the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in writing are teacher assessed. These judgements may be externally moderated by the Local Authority. We also routinely ask our Local Authority English Adviser to moderate our levels.
- Teacher Assessments are recorded on Pupil Asset half termly. This tracks if children are working to/at/exceeding end of year expectations.
- Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling GAPs skills tests are used half termly to assess progress. The results are used as a 'gap analysis' in order to inform targeted intervention.

10. Equal Opportunities

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential across the English curriculum, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background or ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

11. Inclusion

Children with English as an additional language:

It is vital that children who have English as an additional language have English modelled accurately by all staff at school. Collaborative work with peers (where English is their first language) is essential and EAL children should be provided with consistent opportunities for this verbal interaction. All teachers include a range of strategies to support children with EAL which include: teacher and peer modelling and consistent use of visual support, repetition and recasting of language features, word banks and scaffolded speaking and listening activities.

Special Educational Needs

Some children experience learning difficulties, which affect their progress in literacy. Class teachers inform the SENDCO if they are concerned that a child may have underlying learning difficulties. Some children then receive SEN support. This may include:

- Volunteer readers
- Precision Teaching for Spelling and Spelling Attack
- One-to-one or small group RWI or Fresh Start

Please see SEND Policy for further details.

High Attaining Pupils

Children who achieve highly in English will be supported and given opportunities to deepen their knowledge and skills through guided reading and writing groups and differentiation. The success criteria for the lesson also indicates how greater depth has been taught within the context of the lesson and how this can be demonstrated by the child in outcomes of work. They will also have opportunities to work with outside agencies when appropriate.

10. Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the subject leader in literacy is to coordinate the teaching of reading, writing and communication across all phases of the school. This is in order to secure high quality literacy provision for every child, including good literacy teaching and learning, effective use of resources and the highest standards of achievement for all.

Some key duties that the literacy subject leader should undertake over the course of the year include:

- Monitoring of literacy, reading, handwriting and spelling books
- Learning walks and other lesson observations where necessary
- Planning and organising literacy enrichment opportunities and competitions
- Helping identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff to ensure good teacher knowledge.
- Liaising with SLT to help implement school improvement priorities
- Liaising with the school SENDCO to best support children with literacy difficulties
- Organising, maintaining and cataloguing resources
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives in literacy teaching and CPD.

11. Parents

We recognise how crucial the home/school link is for supporting children to have the highest standards of achievement in literacy. At the 'Meet your teacher' meeting at the beginning of every academic year, the literacy standards of the year group are explained, as well as further meetings being held throughout the year to support parents to understand new literacy

initiatives. During Parent Consultations in FS and KS1 children's phonics progression is discussed to ensure they are being supported where necessary.

Homework is also part of the school's successful literacy home/school link and is organised as follows:

Reception

- RWI sound sheet, ditty or phonics book to be read at home in accordance with the RWI teaching cycle
- Picture books are chosen by the child from the class Book Corner to be taken home each week (this is to be shared with an adult)
- From the Spring term, children also take home a reading book appropriate to their level, the majority of the time this will be phonetically decodable.

KS1

- Reading books appropriate to the stage and ability of the child are to be taken home each week and children are encouraged to read and log this three times a week.
- Phonics homework that is linked to the learning carried out each week
- The Topic homework can also link to literacy skills in a range of ways.

KS2

- One book chosen by the children from the KS2 Library to be taken home each week (to be changed as and when it has been read due to the differing lengths of more advanced books)
- One spelling activity to be completed at home each week
- All children receive a weekly list of spelling words to practise at home, as informed by the National Curriculum 2014.
 - Children may also be given the opportunity to complete literacy-related competition entries at home or other literacy activities which support their reading and writing development.
 - There is also a Homework Menu that is sent home on a Half Termly Basis. These often include activities that are linked to literacy development.

12. The Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the Teaching & Learning Committee of the Governing Body concerning the progress of English provision through the Headteacher. The Link Governor will also meet with the English Subject Lead during the year

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the governors every 3 years or sooner should there be nationally agreed changes to the teaching of English.