



# Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

## English (Literacy) Policy

Policy lead:	Benjamin Walker
Responsibility:	English Leader
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Governor signature:	Rebecca Emson (Chair)
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# Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

## English Policy

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## School Context:

### Harrietsham CEP Vision Statement

*We are a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.*

### **“Nurtured we flourish”**

We are a nurturing school. As such we believe in, and follow, **The Six Principles of Nurture** in all of our practice.

1. Children’s learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children’s lives.

### **Our Values**

The roots of our vision are in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

*‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches’.*  
**Matthew 13 31-32**

In order to grow and reach our potential, everything that we do in school is driven by our vision and underpinned by our core Christian values of:

### **Love, Fellowship and Forgiveness**

## **1. Subject Intent**

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we believe that a quality English curriculum should develop a child's love of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We aim to inspire children to read widely and often; for enjoyment, for information gathering and as a tool for enhancing the richness of their written work. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening and to develop their language and communication skills. We understand that children need to develop a secure knowledge base in English, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. We believe having a secure basis in English skills is crucial to accessing high quality education across all subjects and necessary to provide our children with the tools they need to fully participate within society.

## **2. Subject Implementation**

Our rigorous and well organised English curriculum closely follows the aims and the progression outlined in the National Curriculum. It provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. We recognise the importance of a rich and diverse curriculum and we always strive to incorporate cross curricular writing opportunities and provide real purposes for writing. We believe that active learning increases pupil engagement and creativity and we use our locality, as a rural village school, as well as our large, safe outdoor learning spaces to ensure positive outcomes.

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we have developed our own unique curriculum. We firmly believe that children's literacy is improved when our English teaching sequences are based around high quality, powerful texts. To that end, we choose books that are emotionally strong; books with storylines and plots that allow opportunities to explore dilemmas, challenges, morality and ethics, characters that children can identify with and books that have author diversity. These include narrative, poetry, traditional tales, texts with engaging illustrations, and interesting non-fiction texts. All the texts we choose offer in-depth and real writing experiences, meaningful study of literary styles and rhythms, opportunities for response that is creative and open-ended, all whilst keeping children engaged with the characters and the story as a whole.

## **3. Subject Impact**

As a result of our English curriculum, Harrietsham Church of England Primary School is a community of enthusiastic readers and writers who enjoy showcasing our developing literacy knowledge and skills. The children are confident to take risks in their reading and writing, and love to discuss and share their ideas.

Our children's learning is assessed through our teacher's assessment and knowing and understanding the children in our care. We also track progress across the school using standardised testing to ensure that we can individually track progression of skills and learning. We hope that as our children continue with their education and learning, that their creativity, passion for and high aspirations for English, travel with them, continuing to grow and develop as they do.

## **4. Phonics**

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we use 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' as our chosen systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme. This has been validated by the DfE.

Children begin learning phonics from EYFS and follow the Little Wandle progression, this ensures they follow the alphabetic code and continue to build on their phonics knowledge. This means our children are equipped to tackle unfamiliar words.

Phonics is taught daily in EYFS and Year 1. Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy. Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

We ensure consistency and fidelity to the scheme across our school by:

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading and phonics, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, prompt cards and 'how to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The reading and phonics leaders and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and to identify the gaps in their learning.

## 5. Early Reading

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.

These:

- Are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
- Use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids.
- Are monitored by class teachers, who rotate and work with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- **Decoding:** Teaching children to read familiar and unfamiliar words.
- **Prosody:** Teaching children to read with understanding and expression.
- **Comprehension:** Teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception, these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Year 2 and above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practice reading with decodable books.

## 6. Reading

When children reach Year 2, they will transition to whole class reading sessions. They will then continue these through to Year 6. We use Schofield & Sims as a basis for our teaching structure, texts, comprehension questions and skills. However, teachers also call upon a wide range of high-quality texts to support whole class sessions, especially when a strong link can be made with the topic. Linking reading to real experiences and other areas of the curriculum supports children with their understanding of increasingly complex texts and vocabulary.

Children are taught key vocabulary from the texts, before reading in groups, independently or as a class. They will then engage in activities throughout the week which encourage deeper level thinking about the content of the text. They end the week by answering comprehension questions or challenges to demonstrate that their understanding is secure.

We have a dedicated team of trained volunteer readers who visit the school regularly to ensure children are read with on a 1:1 basis as often as possible.

The school has a strong ethos of reading for pleasure. Our well-stocked library is welcoming and comfortable; children are excited to visit and choose from our wide selection of up-to-date books. Teachers regularly read aloud to the children in class, demonstrating their own love of reading.

## 7. Reading at Home

Children from all year groups bring home a levelled reading book. In EYFS and Year 1, they will bring home a phonics book which has been matched to their current phonics level. Children should be able to read this almost completely fluently and be able to discuss the comprehension questions.

Children in Year 2 transition onto colour banded books, which use the Collins Fluency Assessments to assess children's levels. These levels are used all the way to Year 6. Children can progress through the levels as quickly or slowly as they require, eventually becoming a 'Free Reader', allowing free choice of reading book from the school library.

Our school has recently purchased Accelerated Reader and we are currently scanning all of our books into the computerised system. When ready, this will:

- **Guide:** Accelerated Reader guides students to books that are most likely to catch their interest. Every student has an individual reading difficulty range, helping them find a 'just right' balance between reading success and challenge. Upon finishing a book, readers take a quiz to monitor their comprehension. The quiz gives them instant feedback to help them progress. To help them succeed, students choose books anywhere within their individual reading range. They can choose from thousands of books on various topics and genres.
- **Engage:** Students can self-select titles that suit their interests, age, and ability to help each one read for pleasure. Quizzes and targets build a regular, quality reading habit, encourage daily practice with friendly prompts, and help celebrate success at school and home.
- **Practice:** Reading for pleasure opens the door to high-quality reading practice. Reading quizzes monitor comprehension, while literacy skills and vocabulary quizzes extend student learning and build literacy skills. Accelerated Reader also supports non-fiction reading, including short articles that allow students to practise key skills easily.
- **Progress:** Interactive reports reveal how much a student has been reading, at what difficulty level, and how well they have understood their books. They also promote reflection on any trending issues. Students and staff can see how many words they have read over time and track each reader's progress in increasingly challenging texts.

## 8. Writing

### Spoken Language

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. It is our intention to develop our children's ability to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and for a range of purposes and to develop their capacities to listen with attention and understanding. Opportunities to

develop these skills include: sharing achievements in assemblies, working in talk partners, taking part in drama tasks and performing poetry and plays.

Teachers model the correct use of Standard English and accurate speech to improve grammar in children's writing. All of these speaking and listening skills are taught in English, across the curriculum and during extra-curricular activities too.

## Writing Process

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we use our own writing process. This process has been created using research from a variety of sources, most notably the CLPE, EEF and the DfE Writing Framework (2025).

Our writing curriculum covers all requirements in the National Curriculum (2014) and the Kent Writing Framework.

Our process uses model texts to inspire children and provide them with high-quality content. This content is then used to model grammar skills (in line with the National Curriculum progression) and conclude with the development of children's own writing. (Appendix 1)

Our children learn to write through 3 main stages:

- **Stage 1 – Explore (Enjoy and Immerse):** During this stage, the children are read a model text. They spend time exploring the text in terms of its purpose, reader response, effect on the reader, how the effect is achieved. This stage could involve lots of drama and speaking and listening exercises. The children are supported to develop a rich understanding and enjoyment of the text.
- **Stage 2 – Engage (Capture and Organise):** During this stage, the children begin to create a text together. They gather their ideas as a class and create a plan before taking part in collaborative composition (shared writes). This stage of their writing is heavily focussed on the modelled text and is heavily scaffolded by the teaching team so that all children are supported to be successful.
- **Stage 3 – Apply (Develop) – Independent write:** During this stage of the writing process, the children write their own independent piece. They create their own plan and their own piece of writing based on what they have learnt from the process above. Children are supported and stretched according to their writing ability.

## Grammar & Composition

Grammar skills are embedded as children move through the school. Our aim is that all children leave our school with a secure knowledge of the grammar skills required to produce high-quality writing.

We use strong models in our teaching, demonstrating how a text is constructed with the children. Teachers have high expectations of the outcomes that children produce, utilising 'in the moment' feedback, referring back to model texts and retrieving skills that have previously been taught.

## 9. Handwriting

Children are taught to write in discrete handwriting sessions, starting in EYFS. Children start with fine and gross motor skills, before moving onto basic letter structures and then moving onto joined handwriting from the end of Year 2 to Year 6.

We use the 'Letterjoin' handwriting scheme. We have consistently high expectations of handwriting and presentation across all areas of learning. Our children take pride in their learning and recognise the need to write carefully and clearly so that it can be celebrated by everyone.

We use the handwriting recovery programme from 'Letterjoin' to support those that require extra support with their writing.

## **10. Spelling**

Spelling lessons continue into Key Stage 2 with the use of the Spelling Shed scheme, focussing on spelling conventions, patterns, rules and strategies, providing a clear progression as the children advance through the primary curriculum. We do not use traditional weekly spelling tests. Instead, spelling is assessed using dictation exercises and spelling activities that take place each week in class and through spelling tests that occur within GPS assessments in Key Stage 2.

## **11. Supporting Children**

If children are working below the expected standard, the following techniques are used:

- Phonics - Little Wandle daily keep-up (EYFS & Year 1).
- Phonics - Little Wandle rapid catch-up (Year 2 and above).
- Reading - Daily reading practice.
- Reading – Fluency practice.
- Writing - Colourful semantics.

Teachers will make use of other techniques to suit the needs of the individual.

## **12. Assessment**

Statutory assessments that take place within English throughout the school are:

- Early Years Communication and Language Early Learning Goal (Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking).
- Early Years Literacy Early Learning Goal (Reading - Word Reading and Comprehension and Writing).
- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.
- Year 2 Phonics Screening Check (for those who didn't pass in Year 1).
- End of KS2 (Year 6) SATS.

Other assessments that take place are:

- Standardised GPS and Reading tests in all year groups (PIRA & GAPS).
- Phonics assessments in EYFS and Year 1.
- Collins fluency assessments in Year 2 and above.

## APPENDIX 1 – Harrietsham Writing Process

