



**Marlborough** Primary School  
Achievement for All

# ENGLISH POLICY

Including: Handwriting, Phonics, Reading,  
Speaking and Listening, SPaG, Writing

teaching of Literacy at Marlborough Primary school. For a day-to-day guide on the application of these procedures and strategies, see “Literacy – The Marlborough Way”

In this document, the terms “Literacy” and “English” are both used to describe the learning that the children do in regards to spoken, read and written language.

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## **Marlborough Vision Statement**

Our mission is to make Marlborough a place which promotes:

- high expectations in learning, behaviour and attitudes towards each other
- a happy, secure and stimulating environment where a positive attitude to learning is developed and children are able to achieve their best
- the beliefs and backgrounds of all children whilst promoting British values
- parental involvement, interest and support
- a balanced, stimulating, rich curriculum
- staying safe and being healthy

## **The Marlborough Literacy Vision Statement**

*“A speaking and listening approach to progress reading and writing attainment across the curriculum.”*

## **Aims and Objectives**

Through the teaching of English, we aim to:

- enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- encourage children to listen with concentration in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- provide regular opportunities for pupils to use discussion in order to learn - they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas;
- ensure that children are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate;
- provide children with the skills to read easily, fluently and with good understanding;
- build the children's love of reading and develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information;
- develop confident, independent readers and writers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text level knowledge;
- encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- allow our pupils opportunities to appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage;
- provide exciting and creative writing opportunities for a variety of purposes so children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their own writing;
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

## **Teaching and Learning Style**

At Marlborough, we teach Literacy following the framework for English set out in the National Curriculum and the Communication and Literacy strand of the EYFS framework. We believe that we teach Literacy in order to make children fluent communicators – as speakers, listeners, authors and readers, and using digital formats and text types as well as printed ones. We value the literacy in other languages and cultures that many children bring with them, and recognise that “being literate” means attaining a level of confidence within a language. We know that some children arrive at our school with this confidence in a language other than English, and acknowledge this as a valuable resource.

Central to the teaching of Literacy at Marlborough is the important role that speaking and listening plays in the teaching of reading and writing. As such, across the school we teach using the Talk 4 Writing model, in which children learn to recite texts orally before using this as a model from which their own writing can be inspired. Literacy is taught every day in each class, although the skills learned are expected to be applied across the curriculum.

We value high quality texts, across a range of genres and text types, and provide access to modern, technology-based text types as well as an array of books and other publications throughout the school.

Marlborough Primary School aims to foster a love of literacy across the school, through passion from our staff and exciting, creative learning opportunities. As such, our pupils will recognise the value of learning to communicate through literature.

Our teaching and learning style is supported by academic research and as a school we strive to ensure that our staff are well informed about current developments in the teaching of Literacy.

## **Equal Opportunities**

At Marlborough we strive to present materials that are unbiased, represent cultures/languages other than English and to avoid stereotyped images. We recognise the contribution cultures and languages other than English have to language development and acquisitions and celebrate these. We also strive to ensure that all children have equal opportunity for access to the whole curriculum. (See also SEND and Equal Opportunities Policies)

## **Core Values**

Our teaching of Literacy is also underpinned by the core values of our school:

- Equality within diversity
- Inclusive and enabling
- Creative and curious
- Resilient life-long learners

## **Planning of Literacy**

English is taught every day, except for days when on school trips or other extenuating circumstances, and Guided Reading sessions also take place every day in KS1 and KS2.

Phonics, SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) and Handwriting are also taught throughout the week, with focus varying depending on the year group.

Planning for Literacy lessons is centred on a text-type unit and its core objectives, using the school template to allow for consistency of approach. Literacy and Guided reading plans are not expected to be over elaborate or detailed, but are used to demonstrate that teachers have made carefully considered provision for the needs of the children in their class. Formative assessment during and immediately after lessons allows our teaching staff to be flexible in their approach and focus depending on the needs of the pupils.

Text-type units are agreed in consultation with the teaching staff, and arranged to allow for flexibility and progression across the school. They are evaluated by the teachers and reviewed by the subject leader regularly. Each year group has 6 fiction units (including one author study), 4 non-fiction and 2 poetry to cover across the year.

The general structure of the teaching of each unit should normally follow the Talk 4 Writing model, which will usually extend to approximately 2-4 weeks. However, provision in the curriculum is also made for digital literacy units and poetry units which may not follow this structure.

## **Assessment of Literacy**

Teachers across the school track the children's skills in reading and writing using the formative assessment procedures and criteria agreed upon by the whole school. Children are provided with regular targets which they can work towards to improve their English skills.

The children's independent writing is assessed at least every two weeks using appropriate writing criteria. Progress is tracked half-termly and children who may require extra support are identified quickly. Each Key Stage moderates the marking of writing throughout the year to ensure consistency.

Formative assessment of reading takes place as part of each Guided Reading session, giving teachers a solid understanding of each child's progress. The children may also complete a summative assessment task of their reading skills in order to validate teacher judgements. In KS1, this may consist of, or include, a 'phonics check' in the style of the National Phonics Screening Check. In KS2, this may include a reading-age test.

## **E-Literacy Policy**

The staff at Marlborough Primary School value the impact that computing and technology can have on the teaching and learning of Literacy. We regularly use a wide range of software and devices to support classroom activities.

As an example of just some of the resources used across the school:

- Clicker6 is used to support the learning of language for new-to-English children, giving them the opportunity to listen to words and compare them to pictures on screen;
- A range of word processing hardware and software is used to provide children with the opportunity to write and publish their ideas in an electronic format;
- Animation software is used to reinforce the retelling of stories, with children creating their own short films and animations;
- Espresso is used to support learning through the interactive activities, news and stories;
- LGfL is a rich source of applications and programmes designed to support learning across the curriculum;
- iPads and laptops are used in every class to collect evidence of Literacy skills, from recording videos and taking photos to typing dictating.

## **Handwriting Policy**

At Marlborough we believe children need to be confident, disciplined and fluent in their writing. We aim to teach children to develop a fluent, consistently formed style of cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words by the end of KS2.

Teachers recognise the importance of posture, seating, starting points, pencil grip and the position of the page when encouraging children to write legibly. Seating arrangements for left-handed pupils are also taken into account. During the teaching of handwriting the teacher models correct formation of letters and joins and the child attempts it themselves. The teacher and/or teaching assistants review and guide the child's handwriting.

The teaching of handwriting occurs at least once a week in every class, but varies depending on the year group. In Foundation Stage, KS1 and Lower KS2 this is between five and three times a week, whilst in Upper KS2, children who are confident writers may only practice handwriting once a week.

We teach handwriting through the Nelson handwriting scheme, and teachers are provided with guidance to ensure this is delivered effectively.

Handwriting and general presentation of exercise books is expected to be at the best possible standard. Children can take more pride in their learning if they are confident that it looks as good as they can manage. Poor handwriting and presentation is always challenged by teachers and support staff.

Within each year group, teachers can award "pen licenses" to children who have demonstrated good handwriting and presentation skills across all subject areas. This gives children the opportunity to use a pen for some of their learning. Pen licenses are given at the teacher's discretion, can be withdrawn at any time, and are just for that year group. The standard of presentation and handwriting is raised in each year group, so children have to earn their pen licenses anew each year.

## **Monitoring Policy**

The monitoring of teaching and learning in regard to English takes place throughout the year and by a range of members of the school community. Monitoring is designed to be as supportive as possible and to ensure that the standard of practice across the school is always striving to be outstanding.

Monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team and the Leadership Team may include:

- Book looks;
- Learning walks;
- Discussions with pupils/parents/staff;
- Formal observations;
- Pupil progress meetings;
- Phase reviews.

Monitoring within phases may include:

- Book looks and reflections;
- Peer observations;
- The reflective practitioner cycle;
- Phase review evaluations;
- Moderation between classes and year groups.

## **Phonics Policy**

Early spelling at Marlborough is taught using a 'phonics first' approach. All children beyond Year 1 are able to write a phonetically decodable attempt at any unfamiliar words. They also use their knowledge of similar words and spelling patterns to increase their accuracy.

In Key Stage 1, explicit phonics lessons are taught daily following the school progression plan and using a consistent structure and approach. Teachers have a firm grasp of the key skills in phonics and a solid understanding of the principles involved. Support staff are also trained to assist the children's development in phonics. In Key Stage 2, staff build on the 'phonics first' approach from previous years and have a strong understanding of the terminology used.

Phonics is taught according to the principles of the Read, Write, Inc. approach and we have a range of resources in school to support this teaching style. This includes a full collection of Read, Write, Inc. reading books, flashcards and display posters. As a school we have also developed a complete series of flipcharts which follow the school progression plan and allow for consistent teaching across all classes using them.

Pupils take the National Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1 unless they are disapplied. Those children who do not reach the required standard in Year 1 must retake the check in Year 2.

Children who have not achieved the required standard in the Phonics Screening Check by the end of Key Stage 1 will receive some phonics interventions in Year 3 and beyond if necessary to ensure that their knowledge of letter-sound relationships is secure.

In Year 3 there is initially some continuation of the phonics learning done in KS1 for all children, in order to ensure a smooth transition.

## **Reading Policy**

At Marlborough we aim to teach and encourage children to become confident, enthusiastic and independent readers who are able to read for a variety of different purposes including enjoyment and the pursuit of knowledge and who are able to reflect on and evaluate what has been read.

The teaching of reading is of paramount importance and, besides being integrated into Literacy and Guided Reading sessions, it is greatly supported by teaching assistants and other adults who support in the school and classroom with individuals and groups of children.

We teach reading through daily Guided Reading sessions. Children take part in a carousel of reading activities during these sessions across the week. At least one of these will be reading with an adult. The core of these sessions is the discussion around the text, supported by questions that teachers have planned in advance.

Marlborough Primary School also works hard to ensure that our pupils have a love of reading. We do this through theme weeks and special events, often focussed around books, and by talking about and valuing books. This is reflected in the classroom environment and activities. All children are encouraged to borrow books from school, make recommendations to their friends, and re-read and explore their favourite stories as part of our drive to develop a passion for reading. We provide opportunities within school for sharing of books such as our 'Book Sanctuary'. We also strive to work closely with the local library and encourage children to register so that they have a source of books outside of school, and so that they can take advantage of activities provided by the library service.

### **Reading Resources:**

Our core reading scheme of books is the Rigby Star programme, but this is also supported by a wide range of 'real' books interspersed throughout all year groups and ability ranges.

We also have a collection of Read, Write, Inc. books to support the teaching of phonics.

Dual-language texts are also available to take home on a regular basis for children with English as an additional language.

### **Reading Journals:**

At Marlborough, we value the vital role that reading plays in raising our pupils' attainment and progress. This is supported by research, including that by the DfE which states that, "There is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment" (DfE, 2012). We ask that the whole school community also recognise the importance of reading.

For this reason, each child has their own, individual reading journal. All pupils are expected to read daily at home and parents are asked to acknowledge this in their reading journal. Staff in school are expected to help monitor reading daily and also to record any supported reading that takes place in school.

## **SEND in English Policy**

At Marlborough we strive to ensure that all children have equal opportunity for access to the whole curriculum. In English lessons, this means that it is beneficial for most pupils with SEND to be present in the classroom, taking part in the activities and learning that their peers are doing.

SEND pupils will require more structure and support, through adult help, the use of ICT or scaffolding which allows them to work independently. In some lessons, it may be appropriate for SEND children to be working on something different, but most of the time their learning should be broadly of the same curriculum as the rest of the class.

At Marlborough we also recognise the importance of the use of mixed ability groupings in English lessons to allow children to develop healthy mind-sets about their own learning. This also ensures that groups of children working together will always have a model of good English present.

### **Assessment of SEND pupils in English:**

Assessment of SEND pupils will take place regularly using the same strategies as for the rest of the class. However, the criteria that these pupils are assessed against may be different, depending on their particular targets and objectives.

The criteria for SEND pupils will be formed individually with support from the SEN co-ordinator and any other adults working with the pupil.

## **Speaking and Listening Policy**

Speaking and listening is an integral part of Literacy teaching at Marlborough Primary School. All adults around the school ensure that they are modelling grammatically correct sentences when talking to children and the value of speaking and listening is enshrined in our teaching of Literacy and writing through Talk 4 Writing.

Each Key Stage has its own speaking and listening code which is displayed in each classroom and referenced during speaking and listening tasks.

To develop our pupils as speakers and listeners we:

- provide opportunities to express their ideas to a range of audiences;
- provide opportunities to take part in groups discussions and drama activities;
- encourage them to listen and respond appropriately to others;
- help them to understand the need to adapt their speech differently to different situations;
- give them opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own speech;
- encourage them to use vocabulary and grammar of standard English whenever appropriate.

## **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Policy**

Spelling at Marlborough is taught using a 'phonics first' approach. All children beyond Year 1 should be able to write a phonetically decodable attempt at any unfamiliar words. They should also be using their knowledge of similar words and spelling patterns to increase their accuracy. We also teach high frequency words according to the English Appendix 1 of the national curriculum.

In KS2 teachers follow the national curriculum to continue to build upon learning in KS1. Specific spelling patterns are learned in different ways through games and investigations, and children are also often provided with opportunities to practice during Guided Reading sessions as well.

Home Learning tasks across the school may also include spellings to be learned and practiced at home.

Grammar is taught according to the principles of the national curriculum:

*"The grammar of our first language is learnt naturally and implicitly through interactions with other speakers and from reading. Explicit knowledge of grammar is, however, very important, as it gives us more conscious control and choice in our language. Building this knowledge is best achieved through a focus on grammar within the teaching of reading, writing and speaking."*

(Primary National Curriculum – English Appendix 2: Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation)

Marlborough Primary School teaches grammar and punctuation as part of Literacy and Guided Reading lessons across the school. In Upper Key Stage 2, explicit grammar lessons are also taught throughout the week to develop the children's understanding further.

## **Writing Policy**

At Marlborough we teach Literacy using an approach based on Pie Corbett's Talk 4 Writing. The key focus of this approach is the value given to learning to recite a text orally, before any writing takes place. This teaching strategy is arranged across three phases:

- **Phase 1 - Imitation**

In Phase 1 of Talk 4 Writing, the children learn to recite a text from memory. This is a vital step because it allows children the chance to explore the text and its vocabulary thoroughly without pressure to write immediately. It provides opportunities for discussing vocabulary, punctuation and sentence structure in a way that is accessible for all pupils. This phase may culminate with the children writing or recording a replica of the text that they have learned.

- **Phase 2 - Improvement**

Phase 2 comprises of analysing the text that pupils have learned in Phase 1. The children study the text, discuss its features and, supported by the teacher, decide on improvements that could be made to the text. At the end of this phase, the children will write their own improved versions of the text. For less confident children this may be very similar to the original, and for the confident their version may deviate more. Improvements could be quite simple or more complex depending on the year group and on the teaching point of that unit. In Key Stage 1, children may be replacing vocabulary with their own ideas or extending sentences with conjunctions, whilst in Key Stage 2, pupils may write from a different character's perspective or in a different person and tense.

- **Phase 3 - Invention**

In the final phase of Talk 4 Writing, students use the vocabulary, skills and knowledge that they have developed in the previous two phases to write their own text. Children are able to transfer the things that they have learned from the studied text as a framework from which to construct their own writing. This may link to the original text or it could be a new text of the same genre.

Almost all English units and text types will be taught following this teaching structure, although teachers are also given the freedom to choose to teach selected units in a different form if appropriate. For example, teachers may choose to teach a digital literacy unit or incorporate the Literacy unit into a theme week. Each year group also has an author study unit, which may be taught following a different structure.