



## ENGLISH POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2023

**This policy supports the principles and practice of our Teaching and Learning Policy**

### **Aims and objectives**

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to share and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at and discussing its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, reading and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent and collaborative readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with varied, challenging and lengthy texts;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write legibly and at length, with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use shared planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- to enable children to understand the structures of the English language through the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

### **Teaching and Learning of English**

At Starbeck we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English and to improve the communication skills of all of our pupils. Teachers are mindful of choosing genres that complement other areas of the curriculum being taught within the same half term so that prior and new knowledge can be drawn upon and developed. Daily lessons have a high proportion of whole-class teaching. During these lessons, children experience a whole-class shared reading or writing activity, followed by a collaborative or independent activity and a whole-class or small group session to review progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources to support their work. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, for example film clips (visual literacy), IWB texts and the use of word processing to plan, edit and improve their work. There are children of differing ability in all classes at Starbeck. We recognise this fact and provide suitable challenging learning opportunities for all, to give the opportunity for all children to master the English curriculum. We achieve this through a range of strategies. Most lessons use a shared, collaborative approach where the children have the opportunity to read and write using challenging texts and vocabulary, discuss, give and be given feedback and make improvements. Support is carefully planned and used to ensure that most children are able to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas.

## **English curriculum planning**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum guidelines as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of teaching English. We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Long term planning for English is detailed on individual year group Yearly Curriculum Overviews. This clearly shows the links between English and other areas of the curriculum as well as the focus texts for the year. Planning for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) is also outlined on this plan and links to the genre being taught to ensure the children's learning is meaningful and can be put into practice immediately. Medium-term plans detail the genre, texts, objectives and areas of SPaG that will be covered over each half term. They outline the specific aspects of English covered in each writing unit and give clear expected outcomes. They also include the planned experiences to support children's understanding of a text type and regular opportunities for children to write independently and at length. Class teachers complete weekly (short-term) plans for the teaching of each English lesson. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of how children will be supported and/or challenged, as well as relevant questioning, planned activities and opportunities for shared feedback and improvement. Assessment notes are added at the end of each lesson. The subject leader, alongside the assistant headteacher (Curriculum) and the headteacher, also makes regular lesson observations across the year groups to ensure consistency and quality throughout the school.

## **The Foundation Stage**

We teach English in the Nursery and Reception classes as an integral part of the day. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school. As these classes are part of the Foundation Stage, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged birth to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

## **Targets**

The English Subject Leader has written an Action Plan which outlines whole school priorities for English. From this, a whole school English target is identified. Through the marking and feedback policy, children will be provided with appropriate and individual targets in English on a regular. These may link to the whole school English target or to their own areas for development in their independent writing. Adult feedback on written work will be provided on a regular basis, through which children will be provided with improvement targets. As children progress through KS2, they will become more involved in group, peer and self-marking, upgrading and conferencing and be involved in setting and adjusting their own targets.

## **Reading at Starbeck**

Children will be taught both decoding and comprehension skills as set out in our long and medium-term plans. They will develop an appreciation of the written word and a love of literature. Each child will be given an individual reading book which they will take home daily. A reading record book will be provided which will form a home-school record of reading completed. Children in Year 6 will have a School Planner which will include space to record their individual and supported reading at home. Pupils will have regular opportunities to engage in independent and shared reading, including regular whole class guided reading sessions. Class teachers will provide pupils with daily read aloud sessions where pupils will be encouraged to respond to the text in a variety of different ways. Each year group will have an ongoing focus text linked to the teaching of writing which will allow all pupils to have a shared experience of a text and make links between reading and writing. We aim to develop fluency and comprehension by

using the following strategies: 1-1 reading, whole class independent reading (ERIC), story time at the end of the day, whole class guided reading, choral reading, reading buddies with older children.

## Guided Reading

The goal of guided reading is to enable learners to become independent, able readers, who understand and appreciate texts on their own without the teacher's help. Guided reading takes place in mainly whole class lessons with smaller group sessions with a teacher or teaching assistant where required to focus on specific skills. Lessons focus on developing pupils' ability to become independent readers, thinkers and learners. Texts are selected from the school's guided reading resources, alongside interactive texts, audio visual resources, whole novels, picture books, poems and playscripts. In whole class lessons, the children all use the same or similar text and are supported or challenged appropriately to discuss, share and develop their comprehension skills. Class teachers have a good knowledge of the text they choose in order to plan effective questioning which will link to the learning objective and allow pupils an opportunity to extend and consolidate their reading skills. Class teachers plan a guided reading schedule to ensure they have built in opportunities to listen to all pupils read. Gender equality will be promoted by making sure texts avoid stereotyping and by ensuring boys and girls have access to all the resources available. At Starbeck, we recognise the importance of Equality and Diversity, therefore we have ensured a range of texts celebrating our differences are available to children and class teachers. These texts are used as part of our PSHCE curriculum.

## Assessment

Class teachers use the National Curriculum and Guided Reading assessment records to assess pupil's reading levels. Teachers use guided reading sessions, one to one reading and pupil's reading record books to determine what level pupils are working at. Effective feedback is provided to the children and is aligned closely with the learning objectives. Children are clear about the next steps needed to improve their reading.

## Speaking and Listening at Starbeck

Oracy is a key focus throughout Starbeck School and is prioritised in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers will ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are key factors in developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding for reading and writing. Pupils will develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and poems, and to prepare their ideas prior to writing. They will be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves and to others and teachers will ensure they build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy misconceptions. Pupils will also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

## Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) at Starbeck

At Starbeck, we believe that a strong command of Spelling Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) is essential for our pupils' language development and academic success. We use Spelling Shed resources to deliver our SPaG curriculum, ensuring full coverage from the 2014 National Curriculum.

At Starbeck, we aim to:

- Develop pupils' understanding and proficiency in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Enable pupils to apply their SPaG skills across areas of the curriculum.
- Foster a love of language and effective communication.
- Ensure continuity and progression in SPaG teaching and learning across all year groups.

It is taught as part of writing sessions (in a context for writing e.g. a story or an information text) or is taught discretely when children are learning a new skill or gaining new knowledge. The children also spend time generating and testing their own theories about how and why words are spelled; and work in an interactive environment which

promotes vocabulary development and enrichment. This, in turn, has a positive effect on their reading comprehension and their writing skills. Lessons are based around talk and discussion activities which promote children's observation and use of words. As well as being very actively involved in their learning, pupils are given tools and techniques to learn how to learn about spelling, rather than remembering lists. As they develop through school, pupils' understanding of the way words work progresses from a sounds or phonics based approach, through an appreciation of patterns in language, to a deeper understanding of the ways in which the meanings of words and their component parts add structure to the words themselves. Where words do need to be learned by rote (such as the National Curriculum year group word lists), a familiarity with language helps children to focus on the structure of irregular words. In addition, the ability to talk about and discuss the ways in which expected patterns helps children to learn and remember the more irregular words.

## Phonics

At Starbeck Primary Academy, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach early reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

## Writing at Starbeck

In EYFS, our youngest children use writing in both structured play situations and in more formal adult directed lessons to record their ideas. Throughout KS1 and KS2 children learn the craft of writing by engaging in shared and guided writing sessions. All staff have been trained in the writing approaches advocated by Jane Considine's 'Write Stuff'. This applies the following principles:

### A happy place

Children need a learning culture based on trust and challenge. A positive learning place is one where the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is evident and they respond sensitively to the needs of their pupils.

### Know your stuff

Teachers need to be experts. Expert teaching needs a high level of subject knowledge. Teachers with good subject knowledge are able to make links outside the specific lesson context.

### Make it clear

Pupils need to be explicitly taught about the writing process itself. Teacher modelling is key.

### Pupils at heart

Teachers can respond more sensitively, challenge appropriately and adjust teaching accordingly when they are watching closely for subtle changes in individuals' responses to tasks.

### Links and layers

Children need certain aspects of learning to be provided 'on a plate', while other aspects can be explained more openly. More explicit teaching, that is closely directed, is more productive.

### Talk as a tool

Talking through ideas enables pupils to shape and reshape their thinking as they go along.

Review, reflect, respond

Making time to review the quality of work, respond to it specifically, and provide enough reflection space for pupils to consider the smaller steps required.

Teachers initiate pupil interest and engagement through a variety of different media, e.g. quality texts, drama, artefacts, music, film, pictures, newspaper articles, experiences. There is then the opportunity for children to practise a given skill. Sentences are modelled by the teacher and written by the pupil over a series of lessons to complete the genre outcome. 'Experience sessions' are planned in along the way to enhance the children's understanding of the genre, e.g., film, drama, reading comprehensions. This means that during a unit of work children are provided with different opportunities to develop their writing skills both collaboratively and independently and build up to producing a sustained independent piece of writing. Daily our children are taught the rules of spelling and grammar and are expected to apply these concepts into their writing.

## **Handwriting and Presentation at Starbeck**

### Handwriting

We use 'Letter-Join' as the basis of our handwriting policy that covers all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. Children are encouraged to write cursively from an early age and to practice the correct formations including the 'lead-ins'. By Year Two we expect most children to be writing with a legible cursive style where the letters are of a regular size. Throughout KS2 children should be using a blue handwriting pen. Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

#### FOUNDATION:

We aim for two to three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes that will include the following:

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.

#### YEARS 1 TO 3:

Teaching will continue with two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Cursive handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice.
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice.

#### YEARS 4 TO 6:

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during one or two weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement. Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and speedy handwriting.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.

### Presentation

- Adults will hand-write the child's full first name and surname on the front of each book, using the school script.
- The front of books must not be defaced/doodled on.
- All work will be dated; written work using the long written date and maths work using the short numerical date.
- The title will be written under the date.
- Both date and title will be underlined using a ruler.
- Children will be taught how to use a ruler correctly.
- Any mistakes will be crossed out using a neat, horizontal line.
- Children will not use erasers, except where provided by the teacher when drawing diagrams where crossing out would be misleading.
- Adults will use the pens as specified in the marking and feedback policy. Children will use sharp HB pencils and/or, when appropriate, a blue handwriting pen.
- All work in mathematics books will be in pencil.
- Children will edit written work neatly and legibly.
- All adults in school are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including report writing (when not word-processed), marking and comments. Consistency throughout the school is crucial. Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

### **Cross Curricular Writing Opportunities**

Language is the medium through which we access all learning and at Starbeck we expect English skills to be used in all areas of the curriculum including mathematics. Much of the writing produced by the children will have cross-curricular links because it will be linked to thematic work, and the same expectations will apply. Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross curricular links where appropriate and plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans to the children's needs. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. They use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work, using the STAT online tracking system. Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher also uses these long-term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the Standard Assessment Tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

### **Interventions**

All children will receive individual and personalised support to reach their full potential in all aspects of English. Progress of all children will be monitored by the class teacher and SLT through the school assessment system, day to day observations and Pupil Progress Meetings.

### **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in planning and carrying

out the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader gives the headteacher an annual action plan which outlines targets for the year and indicates areas for further improvement. The leader has specially allocated regular management time in order to enable them to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. Monitoring opportunities are specifically planned and shared with all staff.

Signed:

Date: 7/9/23

Next review due: September 2024