

Village Infants

English Policy



September 2023

English

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go” Dr Seuss

Intent

Our English curriculum is designed to grow a love of language in our pupils and immerse them in a range of language-rich texts to develop their vocabulary and reading and writing skills. Our curriculum takes a systematic approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics to ensure that children can read accurately and fluently by the time they leave our school. We follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. Please see the [phonics and early reading policy](#) for further information. We believe that reading is a gateway to learning and future academic success and our curriculum ensures our pupils can read accurately, with good understanding and become confident writers. We also ensure it develops pupils’ vocabulary and knowledge through promoting a love of reading and supporting our pupils to become life-long readers and benefit from all the advantages reading for pleasure can give.

Implementation

Speaking and Listening

At Village Infants School we believe that speaking and listening are central to teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are provided with a supportive environment for speaking and listening via a series of planned opportunities to talk and listen in every year group across a broad curriculum. Adults support pupils to engage in high-quality dialogue and direct teaching so that they can articulate what they know and understand and develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they need to support learning. Pupils are encouraged to think with a growth mindset where challenge is celebrated, they are taught how to receive feedback, and speak about their learning, taking responsibility for enhancing their learning and collaborating with others without fear of failure. For pupils who need additional support targeted interventions are provided to build attention and listening skills and develop both receptive understanding and expressive abilities to support communication and language development. In Reception all pupils are assessed on Language Screen to identify gaps in expressive and receptive vocabulary and an intensive 20 week Neli (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) programme is put in place. A speech therapist visits the school regularly to provide additional communication and speech support for identified pupils. All pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs, small groups, large groups and as a whole class. Drama techniques, re-telling stories, learning songs, poems and rhymes by heart are additional strategies used throughout the school to further support pupils’ oral language development. Random Talk Partners are used in each class to support pupils to practise their skills of listening to, talking with a partner, and giving feedback. These are mixed ability pairings that are changed regularly.

Throughout the school adults will encourage pupils to speak audibly, in full sentences with an increasing command of Standard English. Adults will ‘think out loud’ and model new language for pupils, rephrasing and extending what the children say. Pupils are taught good listening skills through modelling, reinforcing and praising good listening with specific examples. Pupils are taught the routines of back-and-forth talk and encouraged not to put their hands up, but wait for a gap. Teachers will use ‘Talk for Learning’ strategies to extend pupils thinking. They will name a child before they ask a question and pupils will be encouraged not to put their hands up. Teachers will use talk to stimulate and extend pupils thinking and advance their learning and understanding.

Pupils will be given thinking time and questions will be open ended to encourage more meaningful dialogue.

eg Can you tell me more about.....?

Explain why....?

Describe what.....?

I wonder why.....?

Can you tell me why you think or feel that way?

What else can you say about.....?

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development has a high priority across the school from EYFS to Year 2. Adult interaction and purposeful experiences build our children's language development and vocabulary. Our English curriculum aims to make our pupils 'word rich', inspiring in them a love of language and words. In EYFS key vocabulary is identified in planning and then displayed in indoor and outdoor learning environments to ensure all adults are embedding vocabulary in continuous provision and children are encouraged to use and explore language through direct teaching and purposeful play. In Reception all pupils are assessed on Language Screen to identify gaps in expressive and receptive vocabulary and an intensive 20 week Neli (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) programme is put in place. Key vocabulary is identified and taught to children for each curriculum subject and is progressive across the school. Listening to and talking about stories and non-fiction develops children's vocabulary and quality 'book talk' takes place daily. Dedicated rhyme time takes place regularly in each class to further extend pupils language development and vocabulary and each year group has a spine of carefully chosen poems, rhymes and traditional songs. The power of reading approach is used to immerse pupils in a high-quality text, where new vocabulary is encountered, celebrated, and displayed in each class. Every year group identifies a 'word of the week' to learn and use at home and at school. Adults model using all new vocabulary in context throughout the day encouraging children to do the same. As vocabulary increases teachers will support children to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning and how to develop their understanding of and ability to use, figurative language.

Reading

Developing early reading is a priority at Village Infant School. We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme. Children will be taught to segment and blend unfamiliar words quickly and accurately. Pupils will be taught the Foundations for Phonics programme in Nursery and phases 2,3 and 4 in Reception. In Year 1 Phases 3 and 4 will be revisited and Phase 5 will be taught. At each phase additional interventions are put in place to ensure pupils keep up. At the end of Year 1 pupils will take the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check. Any pupils who do not meet the threshold for this check will be given additional phonic intervention and will re-take the check the following year in Year 2. Once confident working within phase 5 pupils in Year 2 follow the Little Wandle Bridge to Spelling programme to learn the underpinning concepts of spelling. This programme follows the familiar structure of Little Wandle phonics lessons, supporting the children to make links to their phonics learning. Phonic workshops for parents take place regularly. For more detailed information about our phonic programme please see the [early reading and phonics policy](#). Pupils are also taught early reading skills in group guided reading Lessons two to three times a week, where they will read a book closely matched to their growing phonic knowledge which they can then take home to re-read. Pupils will be given reading targets to work on at home and at school as appropriate and each pupil will have a Reading Diary for home/school communication. In addition to their guided reading book which is closely matched to their phonic knowledge, pupils in KS1 are also given the opportunity to choose

independently from a range of decodable books matched to the phonic phase they are currently working within to read independently at home. When pupils become fluent readers they are then given the opportunity to choose from a range of engaging texts for independent reading practise at home.

Good quality literature will form the basis of all reading activities. The power of reading approach is used by teachers in each year group to immerse children in a high-quality text. Each classroom has a welcoming book corner with a selection of fiction and non-fiction books, poetry and magazines for the children to access. In addition to decodable books the children have dedicated time to visit the school library every week to choose a fiction, non-fiction or poetry book to share with their talk partner at school and then take home to enjoy with their family. Each year group visits the local library and we ensure that each child has their own library card and we encourage them to visit the local library with their family. A daily story time takes place in each class led by the teacher with additional adults timetabled to visit regularly. A reading spine is in place in each year group to ensure that all children hear a range of high-quality texts read aloud to them throughout their time at school. Each year group has an author focus every half term. Pupils learn biographical details about the author and enjoy choosing and sharing their books from the classroom displays. Regular parent workshops take place so we can work together to support our children's reading development and ensure parents understand the importance of listening to their children read at home and also reading to them and the benefits reading for pleasure will bring to their lives. All adults at home and school are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children, their favourite books, authors, and places to read.

Writing

Phonological awareness, phonics and spelling are taught regularly and systematically throughout early years and KS1, following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds SSP. Spelling strategies are explicitly taught in Year 2. Pupils will be taught to use their phonic knowledge to spell new words. They will be encouraged to orally rehearse sentences before writing them and to re-read their writing to check it makes sense. Teachers will use a range of techniques such as model texts, story maps, boxing up and reading as a writer to develop the writing skills of each child. In every unit of work children study a high-quality core text, which forms the basis for fiction and/or non-fiction writing. Pupils will be taught to write in different genres; stories, recounts, explanations, instructions, reports and poetry. We use the TalkforWriting approach which follows three key stages. These are 'imitation', where pupils learn to internalise a high-quality text, to identify transferrable ideas and structures, 'innovation', where pupils use these ideas and structures to co-construct new versions with their teachers and 'invention' when pupils independently apply the skills they have learnt in their writing. Writing will also be taught by shared writing, with the teacher modelling the skills and processes essential to writing eg thinking aloud as they collect ideas, drafting, re-reading and making explicit vocabulary choices. Pupils will be encouraged to draw on and use new vocabulary from their own reading and books they have listened to, in their writing. Pupils are also taught in small Guided Writing Groups. Pupils are encouraged to discuss what they have written with their teacher and think of ways to improve it. Writing targets are given to support progress and feedback given to enable improvement. Interventions are put in place for pupils who need additional support to develop their writing skills. Verbal feedback is most frequently used and takes place in the moment throughout every lesson. Written feedback will also take place when appropriate. Adults highlight successes, identify improvements and give pupils the opportunity to edit and improve their work using a green pen. Pupils can also complete challenges with a pink pen. Pupils are also encouraged to identify and highlight their own successes in relation to the learning objective to encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Each class celebrates the progress and improvement of their 'star writers' of the week.

[Please see Feedback Policy for more information.](#)

Handwriting

Pupils will be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. Pupils are given practice in a correct pencil grip and fine motor exercises to support this as appropriate. Pupils will be taught to form all lower- and upper-case letters with the correct start and exit points. The script we use contains flicks after letters to support pupils to progress to joined up writing when they are ready. When pupils have mastered correct letter formation of individual letters, they are taught to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another are best left un-joined. Letter formation is taught during phonic lessons and in discrete handwriting lessons three times a week using the following letter formation and families:

l t i u j y c o a g d q r n m p h b k e f s v w x z

[Handwriting script](#)

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils are taught grammar within the teaching of reading, writing and speaking alongside discrete lessons and pupils will be encouraged to apply and explore these grammatical concepts in the grammar of their own speech and writing and to note it when used by others. We follow the Little Wandle Bridge to Spelling programme and additional Spelling Programme alongside National Curriculum programmes of study for spelling, grammar and punctuation. Adults will use correct grammar and Standard English and take every opportunity to further develop pupil's vocabulary and grammar through modelling in a range of contexts.

In the Foundation Stage pupils are encouraged to use and explore language through play. Teachers will use statements with fewer questions and foster children's enjoyment of spoken language by providing interesting and stimulating play activities. Teachers will encourage the correct use of language by telling repetitive stories. All practitioners will use correct grammar and model Standard English using key vocabulary in a range of contexts. Pupils will be encouraged to talk in sentences and to understand how to create a sentence from an idea. They will be encouraged to explore and understand the difference between letters and words and the spaces between words. This will be done by using cut up sentences and exploring questions such as: What is a sentence? Why do we have full stops?

In Year 1 Teachers will consolidate the sentence work done in Reception and pupils will be helped to expand on what they say, introducing and reinforcing the use of more complex sentences. Pupils will be encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary when describing real or imagined events and begin to explore word classes such as adjective, noun, verb and adverb. Pupils will be taught to understand and use sentences with different forms: statement, question, command, exclamation and to punctuate their sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark. Pupils will enter Phase 5 of the phonic programme and broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for use in reading and spelling. They will be taught alternative spellings for phonemes and learn to choose the appropriate graphemes to represent phonemes and begin to build word-specific knowledge of the spellings of words. Carefully chosen dictation activities will enable pupils to practise and apply their spelling knowledge and segmenting skills.

In Year 2 pupils will be encouraged to include more information in their speech and writing by using effective vocabulary. They will be taught more complex grammatical constructions and encouraged to use them orally and in writing. They will be encouraged to use present and past

tenses correctly and consistently and subordination (using when, if that, or because) and co-ordination (using or and or, but) in speech and writing. Teachers will develop pupils understanding of the function of adjectives, nouns, conjunctions, verbs and adverbs and the use of pro-nouns to avoid repetition. In Year 2 pupils enter phase 6 and become increasingly accurate spellers. Pupils will be taught a variety of strategies for learning to spell new words and asked key questions to encourage them to explore and reflect on spelling patterns:

- What do you notice?
- Are there exceptions?
- Can you think of other examples?

Pupils will follow the Little Wandle Bridge to Spelling programme to learn the underpinning concepts of spelling. This programme follows the familiar structure of Little Wandle phonics lessons, supporting the children to make links to their phonics learning. Pupils then move on to the Little Wandle Spelling Programme which teaches children to consider the structure of words and their relationship to other words. The programme provides full coverage of National Curriculum spelling requirements.

[-Little Wandle Spelling: National Curriculum coverage, Year 2](#)

[-Little Wandle Spelling: Programme progression](#)

[-Guidance: Little Wandle Spelling](#)

[-Bridge to spelling words](#)

Impact

All our pupils will make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 our English results are consistently above LA and National average in Reading, Writing and Phonics. Children are assessed daily through assessment for learning in lessons, use of key performance indicators, intervention monitoring and termly summative assessments. When they leave Village Infants most pupils read fluently with good understanding. They can write clearly and coherently for a range of purposes and listen carefully in a range of contexts, responding appropriately and asking questions to extend their understanding and knowledge. Pupils will be able to communicate confidently allowing for back and forth in conversations and discussions. Our English curriculum promotes reading for pleasure which increases vocabulary and knowledge across all areas of the curriculum and ensures future success in the wider world.