Eversley Primary School English Policy

Our Writing Legacy

Reviewed: November 2024 **Next Review:** November 2025

At Eversley Primary School, we recognise the importance of reading and writing ***as life skills*** *that will* ***open many doors*** *for our children. We understand the* ***significant role played by parents, teachers and support staff*** *in supporting children to read with* ***enjoyment, fluency and deep understanding****. In working together, we strive to ensure that in writing, children are able to* ***confidently generate, articulate and communicate their ideas*** *and then* ***organise them coherently for the reader****. The children will be* ***equipped with the oral communication skills they need to succeed*** *and, when listening to others, will* ***understand the importance of respecting and valuing the thoughts and views*** *others may have.*

Our aim is for all children to leave Eversley Primary School with a love of books and literature which will enrich their lives. We also aim for all children to have the confidence, desire and ability to express themselves effectively both orally and in their writing.

The National Curriculum 2014

In the National Curriculum for 5 - 11 year olds, English is developed through four key areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription & Composition
- Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all children:

- 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.

Reading

Please refer to the school's separate Reading Policy which outlines in detail how reading is taught at Eversley.

A Summary

Children in Reception and Year 1 learn phonics through the synthetic phonics Read Write Inc Programme.

Children in years 2 to 6 Whole Class Reading sessions. Whole Class Reading ensures all children are exposed to a large range of texts and genres and benefit from the teacher's expert explanations, modelling, questioning and feedback. Children will have their own copy of the text being used (or share with a partner if this is not possible).

Whole class sessions focus on the text being used and include the following:

- Teacher modelling reading in the moment
- Language, knowledge and ideas being shared and discussed
- Speculative and inquisitive discussion
- Questions, not skills or strategies, as drivers

At Eversley we have targeted intervention programmes for children identified to be working below age-related expectations. Children work 1:1 and in small groups, with interventions regularly monitored to ensure children are making accelerated progress.

Writing

At Eversley, we recognise the invaluable relationship between reading and writing. The language and structural features of texts are explored through reading in the first instance and then used as a model to develop writing.

There is clear progression in the teaching of writing:

Modelled writing

The teacher verbalises the thought processes as a writer and makes explicit the structure, language features, spelling and punctuation of the text type as appropriate.

Shared writing

This is a collaborative process, which involves the children sharing their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the class. The teacher selects the most appropriate response(s) ensuring

they give reasons for why they have made that choice as well as using teaching opportunities to refine and edit the piece of writing.

Guided writing

The teacher or teaching assistant works with a group of children during a focused writing activity with a clear objective. Guided writing aims to provide an appropriate level of challenge and will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process e.g. planning, composition, editing, that will both support and move the children forward in their writing skills.

Independent writing

Children are given the opportunity to apply their understanding of the text type in their own writing. This will take place as an independent task.

Extended writing

Opportunities for extended writing are planned for during every unit of work. This extended writing may, at times, form a cross-curricular link with another subject, for example, a recount of an historical event. Extended writing may extend the skills taught in shared writing or create an independent writing time to assess the children's progress and understanding.

Spelling

The Read Write Inc (RWI) Spelling Programme follows on from the RWI Phonics Programme with the aim of getting every child to spell effortlessly. It is a stand-alone programme for children in Year 2 to Year 6 and has been specially created to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Children in Year 2 have daily spelling lessons and children in years 3-6 have spelling lessons 3 times a week.

RWI Spelling embeds skills quickly and effectively filling the gaps in children's knowledge. To keep children engaged, aliens introduce spelling rules on an exciting online spelling planet and children complete quick-fire activities in their spelling logs.

RWI spelling consists of 15 minute interactive sessions which incorporate a variety of resources and activities to engage and to enthuse the children in their learning. It helps children to learn spellings with common patterns and uses rules in order to help them recall spellings as well as teaching exceptions to these rules. Individual workbooks allow children to practise their spellings and spelling journals give children ownership of their spellings and allow for further consolidation.

Session 1 - introduces the children to the new spelling pattern for the week using a video which takes the children to the 'Spelling Zone'.

Session 2 - engages the children in a quick recap of the previous learning and then the children complete in a word changing activity.

Session 3 - focuses the children on identifying words they need to learn and writing them in their log books in order for them to practise throughout the week.

Session 4 - encourages the children to work in pairs to peer assess each other's work, focusing on choosing a correct word from a given set in order to complete a sentence.

Session 5 - allows the children time to unpick a choice of difficult words and an opportunity to spell them correctly.

Handwriting

Please refer to the school's separate Handwriting Policy which outlines in detail how handwriting is taught at Eversley.

We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practicing speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity.

At Eversley, handwriting is developed through systematic and regular practice using the Penpals Handwriting scheme. Penpals provides clear progression for children starting in Reception where children practice their gross and fine motor skills in readiness for handwriting and finishing in Years 5 & 6 where basic handwriting issues are revised and speed and fluency improved. This whole school approach ensures a consistency of style. Pupils who are identified as needing extra support with their handwriting will be a part of an intervention group to support them with their writing development.

The Foundation Stage

At Eversley Primary School, we follow the RWI programme for the early stages of taught handwriting and aim to make the physical process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the start, so that children can see themselves as 'writers'.

We use the RWI mnemonics – memory pictures – to help children visualise the letter or join before they write it down. Therefore, children learn the letter formation alongside learning the sound.

We ensure that children practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later. In addition to this, we place emphasis on being 'writing ready' by teaching the children how to adopt an appropriate writing posture. We encourage writing to take place with:

- ✓ feet flat on the floor
- ✓ bottom at the back of the chair
- ✓ body one fist from the table
- ✓ shoulders down and relaxed
- ✓ back leaning forward slightly
- ✓ left/right hand holding the page
- ✓ left/right hand ready in a tripod grip

In order to support our children in learning to write, we ensure that the classroom environment allows for them to stay focused and attentive to their task.

In addition to practising writing, we recognise and value to importance of developing children's fine and gross motor skills to enable them to have the strength required for pencil grip accuracy and posture. To support children's gross motor development, we have a variety of active opportunities for body strengthening in the outdoor learning environment.

Year 1

In the first half term of Year 1, children continue to use the RWI programme to support handwriting. From after October half term, using the PenPals resources outlined earlier, the children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins and horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed.

Year 2

By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters.

Year 3

The emphasis is on building upon the joins established in Year 2 and using spellings as a basis for handwriting practice.

Year 4

The emphasis is on ensuring consistency in size and proportion and using joined writing for all writing except where other special forms are required.

Years 5 and 6

By years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes. The children will practise and refine the skills they have been taught in previous years.

Common Approaches

• To be consistent in the way in which we form individual letters by following the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance
•To follow the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance for 'joining letter sets' which builds on letter formation in the Foundation stage with no joining letter sets to the teaching of joins throughout each year group
• To be consistent in the way in which we join letters i.e. it must be remembered that some letters never join: All capital letters and g, j, x, y and z
• Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given highest priority and that this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining.

We aim for all children to be using a pen when going into Year 4 (and earlier for those who are ready). Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of our agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important.

Speaking and Listening

The ability to speak and listen is fundamental to pupils' language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum, as talk underpins learning and thinking. It is vital that its significance is recognised by pupils, parents and teachers. At Eversley, the children are provided with many and varied contexts for talk, but they are also provided with direct teaching in the skills of speaking and listening. Throughout the teaching sequence, there are opportunities for 'Talk for Writing'.

In order to promote high quality speaking and listening, teachers adopt particular roles at different times. It is not expected that this happens in each lesson but teachers incorporate these when appropriate. For example:

• modelling dialogue, e.g. turn taking, offering opinions and inviting response
• modelling listening, e.g. the use of non-verbal communication, respecting, even if disagreeing with, the views of others

• modelling participation, e.g. recognising the value of being seen as a learner alongside the pupils
• providing a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening
• supporting the pupils by providing clear structures for tasks which require the pupils to learn through talk
• sharing roles with the pupils, e.g. as questioner, as the 'expert' on a particular topic

Pupils have a variety of opportunities to use talk for learning. Again, these will not occur in every lesson. For example:

• playing an active role in directing their own learning, e.g. making decisions about how to approach a task, selecting appropriate resources
• engaging in speaking and listening in a variety of groupings and settings, e.g. reading out loud as an individual and a larger group during shared reading, working collaboratively on an investigation during group work, reporting findings as a newscaster during a plenary session, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to the school
• using language creatively and imaginatively, e.g. through role-play, hot seating, storytelling.

Assessment of Writing

Formative Assessment

Teachers assess the children's writing in their daily English sessions and in writing across the curriculum. Writing 'I Can' statements are used to ensure pupils are being assessed in line with the National Curriculum and are a place of reference for teachers when marking work and giving feedback to the children.

Summative Assessment

Children in Years 1 to 6 complete half-termly 'Big Write' pieces. These are independent pieces of work which, alongside other independent pieces, are assessed by the class teachers and used to inform termly writing judgements. Teachers are then able to identify strengths and areas for development which then informs future planning of writing sessions for the class and next steps for individuals and groups.