



# Abingdon Primary School

Respectful, Responsible and Resilient Learners

## English Policy

Updated: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 202

### **Our Vision:**

At Abingdon Primary School we aim for all children to be passionate and excited about reading and writing. We strive for our children to be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to be an excellent reader and writer. By the end of their primary school journey, our children will be independent, successful and ambitious learners in English.

We believe all children should be provided with the foundations to become confident and fluent readers and writers. Our English curriculum helps to inspire a lifelong love of reading, ensuring they also have the ability to access the wider curriculum.

We want our pupils to have an awareness of the wider world and be immersed by high-quality texts which inspire and motivate our children. We aim to provide an exciting learning environment which is rich in vocabulary and full of opportunities for children to explore their creativity and imagination through writing and reading.

### **Our intent:**

#### **We aspire for our children to leave Abingdon Primary School as:**

- Confident and fluent readers who can fully comprehend what is happening in a book.
- Children who have a genuine interest in books and read for pleasure to open up their imagination and through reading, have a strong awareness of the world around them.
- Creative writers who have the skills and knowledge needed to write engaging and purposeful pieces of work with a clear awareness of audience and tone.
- Children who have a vast bank of interesting and exciting vocabulary and a thirst to gain more.
- Children who take pride in the appearance of their work and write using neat, joined handwriting.
- Capable spellers who use known strategies to spell words accurately.
- Learners who use a wide range of punctuation effectively
- Children who can understand and give good justification as to why punctuation and grammar is needed.

## Teaching and Learning at Abingdon:

### Reading:

At Abingdon, we view reading as a fundamental part of children's education. Our aim is to ensure all children in our school are taught to read fluently and accurately whilst fully comprehending what is happening in a wide range of texts. We believe that being able to read is crucial for independent learning and success across the whole curriculum. We strive to ensure children at our school can read successfully with genuine enthusiasm, as we know that when children love to read, endless opportunities are instantly opened.

We encourage children to read a wide range of literature, including: fiction and non-fiction, poetry, news reports, comics, posters, play scripts and signs. We provide opportunities for reading across the whole curriculum and ensure that texts are diverse so that all children can feel valued and have a greater understanding of the world we live in.

### Phonics:

Starting in Early Years, we teach phonics through the scheme, Read, Write Inc. (RWI). In Reception, children start learning Set 1 sounds after their initial baseline assessment. They begin with short 20-minute sessions and are then assessed after 4 weeks. They are then grouped in accordance with their ability and begin sessions up to 40 minutes that include spelling and reading the RWI books. In year 1 and 2, children also access the RWI scheme. They are placed in ability groups across Key Stage 1. Phonics in Key Stage 1 lasts for approximately 40 minutes and includes a daily speed sound lesson, spelling and handwriting, and reading. Phonics lessons feed into writing lessons in Reception and Key Stage 1 so that the children's spelling and handwriting skills can be applied. Every child receives a book and spellings to take home that matches the sounds they are learning in their Phonics group. When children complete the RWI scheme, they move on to Reading Gems.

### Reading Gems:

We teach reading through The Reading Gems. This is an approach to teaching reading which includes in depth teaching of the skills needed to become a fluent and resilient reader which will last a life time. The teaching and application of the reading skills are key if children are to understand fully what is being read. The key skills (gems) are: retrieve, define, infer, predict, compare, summarise, explore and relate.

| Define   | Retrieve   | Summarise   | Infer  | Predict   | Relate   | Explore   | Compare                              |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2a: Give/explain the meaning of words in context | 2b: Retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction. | 2c: Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph | 2d: Make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text | 2e: Predict what might happen from details stated and implied | 2f: Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole. | 2g: Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases. | 2h: Make comparisons within the text |
| Multiple choice                                  | Ranking / ordering   | Matching  | Labelling  | Find and copy   | Short response   | Open-ended response   |                                      |
|  |  | 10-30%  |  |   | 40-60%   |   | 20-40%                               |

In reading lessons, one gem is focussed on each week. During the weekly cycle, the skills are taught and modelled explicitly, with lots of opportunities for children to practise, apply and embed these skills. It is also important that a range of different text types are used each week to ensure children have a rich and varied reading diet. Full coverage of all of the gems are given throughout the year so that children are able to build a bank of knowledge which is needed to be a successful and confident reader who can fully comprehend a text.

### **Writing:**

Writing is a key life skill which allows children to express their creativity, communicate with others and progress well in the wider curriculum. Children at Abingdon will be taught the essential skills needed to be a successful writer. These include: holding and using pencils and pens correctly, using neat, joined handwriting, using a range of sentence types, correct use of grammar and punctuation, having an awareness of the audience and using an appropriate tone, spelling words correctly and being able to edit and evaluate writing.

### **The Write Stuff**

Across all Key Stages at Abingdon we follow 'The Write Stuff' scheme of work. It provides many opportunities for: high quality teacher modelling, moments for class discussion and sharing of vocabulary and ideas, engaging themes which excite and motivate children and carefully structured lessons where children are able to write independently with confidence.

This way of learning ensures children have a complete set of tools that can be applied to any genre of writing. It gives children the power to know how and what to write. A mixture of grammar, writing techniques and ideas are embedded in every single lesson, these are revisited weekly to ensure that our children become confident, inspiring and enthusiastic writers.

Each lesson, children focus on three different lenses taken from The Fantastics, The Grammarsastics and The Boomsatstics. Each sentence stacking lesson, the children create a piece of writing which contains three of the lenses. The sentence stacking lessons are split up into 3 learning chunks. Each learning chunk follows the 'initiate, model, enable' structure. The children gather ideas and high-level vocabulary which they will use in their writing, the teacher then models using the objective in a sentence and finally, the children have time to write their own sentences, using the bank of vocabulary they have gathered.

The Fantastics



The Grammartastics



The Boomtastics



**Independent writing**

The last week of the unit plan cycle allows children to plan, draft and edit their own independent writing. Children will use skills, and knowledge gained in the previous sentence stacking lessons to guide them in creating their own independent pieces of work. This writing must be completely independent so that teachers can make accurate judgements from it. Once a first draft has been written, teachers will mark this using The Write Stuff marking guidance. Teachers should give relevant, constructive and purposeful feedback following these 5 lenses: Spelling, punctuation, re-read, re-write, add more. It is important that children are encouraged to learn how to use this feedback and edit independently. Time to respond to this feedback and improve their work is given in an editing lesson.

**Writing opportunities in the wider curriculum:**

We believe that writing should be woven through the curriculum so children have opportunities to write for a range of purposes. We plan moments throughout the year where children can practise and apply, skills taught in English lessons, in extra curricular lessons. The aim of these lessons is for children to write passionately and confidently during their creative curriculum lessons.

### **Speaking and Listening:**

We believe that the ability to speak and listen is vital to pupils' language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum because speaking and listening reinforces learning and thinking. We provide our pupils need with many and varied contexts for speaking and listening throughout our curriculum.

By the time the children leave our school we aim for them to: communicate effectively with others, listen to the views and opinions of others, participate in discussions and debates, retell stories and poems and to respond to questions with confidence and relevance.

Circle times are an important contributor to developing children's speaking and listening skills as they allow children to practise and apply taught skills whilst discussing a range of topics in a safe environment. Circle times at Abingdon are done weekly, this gives our children many opportunities to constantly develop these skills.

At Abingdon, we use DEAL strategies across the curriculum to help children develop their speaking and listening skills. Many opportunities to develop these skills are also incorporated into The Write Stuff lessons in English.

### **The impact of our curriculum:**

#### **Reading:**

In KS2, we use Headstart assessments to test the children's reading progress termly. We use the data from these assessments to inform end of term data. Headstart assessments give a scaled score which teachers can use to identify gaps in children's learning. Progress check tests can also be use to assess the children's learning throughout the term and identify any gaps which can be targeted in interventions.

In Reception and KS1, phonics assessments are completed every 4-6 weeks, or in line with particular children's progress. The groups are then changed so that every child is placed in the group that best matches their reading ability. After Christmas, KS1 also use Headstart assessments to assess children's comprehension skills. This occurs every half term.

In KS2 we use the online reading record app 'Go Read' to promote engagement in reading at home and a general love of reading. On the Go Read app, children can collect gems for reading books throughout the year. This app provides us with a fantastic opportunity to assess the child's reading progress throughout their primary school journey, whilst easily accessing their reading record levels. It is crucial that all teaching staff at Abingdon provide opportunities for all children to access Go Read so that every child can track and evidence the books they have read throughout the year.

In Reception and KS1, we use Reading Record Books to log how much children are reading at home. This also creates a running commentary, between home and school, which helps us monitor children's reading progress, as well as their overall enjoyment.

### **Writing:**

After each independent piece of writing, we assess the children based on the National Curriculum Objectives. We use checklists to assess what children have achieved during a piece of independent writing. This checklist is then used to inform end of term data.

Teachers also use The Write Stuff performance of writing (POW) framework to assess the children's progress throughout the writing units. This framework provides a reliable and valid assessment tool which is ambitious and detailed. It is also cross referenced closely to the National Curriculum, as well as building in extra and explicit smaller steps to move pupils from one stage to the next.

At Abingdon, we moderate writing often to ensure consistency between assessments. This is done in staff meetings, with phase group partners and across local authority clusters. We believe this is an integral part of the assessment process as it is important that teachers have a solid understanding on the teacher assessment framework so they can make accurate judgements.