

English at Wymondley



Intent

At Wymondley School our approach to teaching English incorporates speaking and listening, drama, real contexts and good quality literature. In our school, there is a determination that every child will learn to read, initially with a step by step approach to teaching reading, writing and spelling systematically through phonics. Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and we strive to develop children in their journey from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'.

We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We believe in setting high standards in the presentation of writing along with setting the important foundations in spelling and grammar.

We aim to inspire children in their writing by providing opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. We value reading as a key life skill and we are dedicated to enabling our children to become lifelong readers. We believe that through supporting our children to learn to read, they will be able to read to learn for the rest of their lives. Reading is a life skill and enables academic success.

Overall, it is our intention at Wymondley School to:

- To develop in children a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment.
- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop their understanding and enjoyment of texts.
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To teach the basic tools for writing; spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation.
- To foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- To show the purpose of reading and writing.
- To promote a wide use of Information and Communication Technology as a medium for the further development of language both in English and across the curriculum.
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Implementation

Planning – Learning and Teaching Strategies

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National Curriculum and the Hertfordshire long term planning guidance. Teachers use the Hertfordshire English guidance modules to work towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. Cross-curricular writing opportunities are planned for through the termly class topic. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and an emphasis on whole texts.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting and, in the main, differentiation is by outcome and through setting different expectations. The teacher will aim to have a focus group in every English lesson. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on reading and writing issues,

which are highlighted within the focus group of pupils.

Instant feedback in lessons ensures that children have the opportunity to reflect on their work and develop the independence to respond to feedback comments, with an aim to improve their writing.

Speaking and Listening

At Wymondley School, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

What does this look like at Wymondley?

- Confidence to question language
- Reciting and reading aloud
- Re-telling, role-play and drama opportunities
- Presenting to an audience
- Listening to and participating in stories, poems and songs
- Talk for writing – opportunities to verbalise and learn text
- Collaborative work

Reading

We aim to teach the skills of reading while developing a love of reading, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. Early reading skills are consistently and rigorously taught. We focus on decoding, primarily through phonics, investigating the complex connections between sounds and letters. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning involves the child using visualisation, prediction, retrieval, summarising and inferring. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature. Teachers read regularly to their class and whole class texts by year group are taken from the Herts for Learning key texts lists as well as texts linked to the pupil's interests.

What does this look like at Wymondley School?

- A wide selection of books available at phonic phase level. Children progress through these phases with a view to become 'free readers' at the end of year 2.
- Children choose their own 'sharing' school book at 'easy' level (95% and above for fluency and comprehension) from their class selection of books.
- Guided reading is taught for a minimum of 3 sessions a week in years 1 to 6. Children are differentiated by ability and given the opportunity to participate in individual reading, comprehension tasks, phonics tasks (where appropriate) as well as having the opportunity to work with a teacher at least once a week.
- Teachers and teaching assistants assess pupil's progression in early reading regularly, using phonics and teacher assessments.
- Teachers and teaching assistants also read on an individual basis with children as necessary: how often and who is based on assessment of progress.
- Children have access to additional texts on 'Serial Mash' via 'Purple Mash' login.
- Modelled and shared reading in all areas of the curriculum.
- Storytelling and re-enacting stories through 'talk for writing'.
- Inspiring and engaging reading areas in each classroom.
- Texts are selected to value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.
- Well-resourced school library which all children have the opportunity to visit once a week.
- We celebrate World Book Day and the whole school participates in 'Take One Book' week each year.

- Children choose their own book at their level for shared reading at home.
- In EYFS and KS1 children bring home their group reading text for a celebration read to share fluency reading at home after it has been read 3 times in school.
- All staff promote a positive attitude to reading and always aim to inspire our pupils.

Writing

At Wymondley School, we strive to create a print rich environment that will promote both reading and writing. Teachers carefully plan writing ensuring that there is a purposeful outcome to each piece of writing. Writing takes place daily within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all appropriate times. An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant language and identifying word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What does this look like at Wymondley School?

- All pieces of writing have a purpose which is shared with the pupils.
- Children understand their learning journey.
- Writing is displayed throughout the school.
- Teachers have high expectations and always model best practice.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback through immediate feedback marking and children are provided time to read and respond.
- We start with the basics of sentence construction including full stops and capital letters.
- Children begin to identify word classes in early key stage one (noun, verb, adjective, adverb).
- We follow the 2014 National Curriculum as guidance as to what is taught each year.

Phonics

Following our Little Wandle Phonics scheme, children in EYFS and KS1 have daily 20-30 minute, focused phonics sessions which build slowly from learning single letter sounds, to digraphs (two letter sounds such as 'sh' and 'oa', trigraphs (three letter sounds such as 'igh') and split digraphs. This knowledge is applied in pupil's reading and writing.

Children learn sounds, actions and letters through games and activities which support sounding out, segmenting and blending.

What does this look like at Wymondley School?

- EYFS and KS1 classrooms have relevant phonic displays.
- In EYFS children are given many opportunities to explore phonics and sounds, through carefully planned group task learning and through child initiated play activities.
- Whole class and group teaching explores sounds in words.
- Children having a try at recording using mini whiteboards.
- Children applying phonic knowledge to read real and 'alien' words.

Spelling

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for pupils. Spelling plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school. At Wymondley, Spelling Shed is used to teach the National Curriculum spellings for the appropriate year group and provide the

weekly spelling homework. In class, new spelling rules or new letter sounds are introduced and relevant spellings are taught, e.g. through mnemonics, word sorting and spelling games. KS2 uses Spelling Shed Hive Games to identify pupil progress in spelling.

What does this look like at Wymondley School?

- Children practise common spelling corrections in their English books - chosen by their teacher as 'ones they should know' - as part of their response to marked work.
- 2014 National curriculum spellings and high frequency words (KS1) for each year group are used as a guide to which spellings are taught.
- Spelling Shed spelling programme is used to teach spelling patterns from year two.
- Spelling assessments take the form of a variety of ways in each class including spelling dictation, spelling hive games and missing word games.
- Handwriting is linked to weekly phonics, spelling or grammar focus.
- All children are taught to read and check their work for spelling errors.

Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years, there is a big emphasis on fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters. As handwriting becomes an automatic skill, it allows children to devote more consideration to the content of their writing.

What does this look like at Wymondley School?

- Opportunities for mark making are provided during learning both indoors and outside in EYFS.
- Gross and fine motor skills are supported through well planned activities and in both adult and child initiated learning.
- Discrete 20-minute handwriting lesson in KS1 once a week.
- KS2 handwriting lessons are targeted to those still learning to join and needing further input with their presentation skills.
- We use a semi-cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly from Year 2.
- Extra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school where the class team identifies the need for additional handwriting support.
- Teachers and teaching assistants practice is always a model of our handwriting policy.
- Children in EYFS and Year 1 focus on letter formation and do not begin to join until this is correct.
- We aim for all children to be using the semi- cursive script by the end of Year 2.
- Handwriting expectation is the same in all subject areas.
- Books are monitored through planned scrutiny sessions and poor handwriting is then identified and support is given to improve.
- From year 2, children are encouraged to decide whether to write in pen or pencil to produce pieces they can take pride in.

Inclusion

We aim for all children to participate in lessons within the classroom. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place for children with Special Educational Needs. Careful planning and assessment ensures learning opportunities are pitched correctly to meet specific needs, considering any specified targets.

Assessment

Formative assessment in Reading

- In EYFS children are assessed against their Early Learning Goals.
- Guided reading sessions focus on at least one reading objective.
- Targeted higher ordered questions are used for most able pupils.
- Teacher feedback given during guided reading.

Summative Assessment in Reading

- Year 1 children take the End of Year Phonics Test in June.
- Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take the End of Key Stage National Tests, which examine a range of reading comprehension skills.

Formative Assessment - Writing

- For every piece of written work, children are given feedback which entails the success criteria needed to help them reflect on the structure and language features of their own writing.
- Instant feedback is provided to children during lessons.
- The teacher highlights in green to point out where a child has been successful. Targetted feedback identifies where a specific difficulty has been addressed at a different time following on from the lesson.
- Regular verbal feedback is given to each teacher focused group.
- Children are questioned to keep an enquiring mind and continue to improve their work.
- Blue sentences are written at the end of the lesson by children to demonstrate their understanding of the learning objective that has been taught.
- Next steps are provided verbally and in writing for each child so they may develop and embed understanding.

Monitoring

Monitoring the standard of pupil's work is undertaken each term and moderated by teaching staff. The quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader and headteacher. The subject leader undertakes regular monitoring activities to build a full profile of the subject and how it is being taught across the school to ensure progression and meet expectations set. The link governor meets with the subject leader to review progress across all areas of the subject.

Impact

Our children enjoy reading and are exposed to a broad range of texts and authors, in class and in the school library. Children have a good range of vocabulary that they are able to apply in their writing. Children have a good knowledge of how to adapt their writing for different purposes and audiences. Children have a solid foundation in spelling and have a toolkit of different strategies to support the continual learning of their spelling after they leave us. Children are able to identify, use and apply grammatical features in their writing effectively across the curriculum.

In KS1 children regularly achieve in line with, or above, national and local averages in reading and writing both at age related expectations and at greater depth. By the end of KS2 children regularly achieve in line with, or above, national and local averages in reading and writing both at age related expectations and at greater depth.