



...where we all flourish

Cookham Dean C of E Primary School

English Policy 2025-2026

All policies incorporate our Christian Values of peace, endurance, trust, forgiveness, joy and community.

Introduction

At Cookham Dean Primary School we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. Improved performance at reading, writing and spoken language will enable our pupils to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, accurately and, ultimately, to their greater satisfaction. This will also help them to deal more successfully with other curriculum subjects, while enriching their lives beyond school.

The teaching and learning of language skills are, therefore, given a high priority in our school and over-arch all curriculum areas.

Our overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for pleasure.

We aim for our pupils to:

- 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.
- every child achieves their true potential in every subject which is underpinned by their understanding of the English language, both written and spoken.

At Cookham Dean we encourage all children to become independent, active and resilient learners and be confident in all strands of their learning.

The statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014). This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum> and on the school website in the English curriculum.

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Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10). This includes:

- Justifying ideas with reasons.
- Asking questions to check understanding.
- Developing vocabulary and build knowledge.
- Negotiating
- Evaluating and building on the ideas of others.
- Selecting the appropriate register for effective communication.
- Giving well-structured descriptions and explanations.
- Speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas.
- Organising their ideas prior to writing.

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to: express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose; listen and respond to literature; give and receive instructions.

Spoken Language is taught and developed through:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children.
- Encouraging talk-time at home with our extended writing prompts
- School Plays
- Pupil led assemblies
- School Council
- Talk partners during lessons
- Book talk sessions
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time
- World Book Week
- In class presentations
- Celebration assemblies
- Sharing learning experiences with other classes
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Debate groups, activities and competitions.

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Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13) Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

The National Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

In Early Years and Key Stage One pupils learn to read through:

- daily phonics
- regular 1:1 reading to adults in school
- guided reading sessions
- comprehension and inference activities
- through sharing stories

In Key Stage Two pupils progress and develop their reading through:

- regular guided reading sessions that incorporate comprehension tasks, analysis of texts
- discussion tasks

Across the school pupils are encouraged to:

- read widely and, where possible, texts that support the class topic, both fiction and non-fiction.
- read for pleasure using quiet reading time, library time and class readers.
- recommend and discuss books that they are reading with their peers.

Shared reading experiences are encouraged between upper and lower school.

Take One book is used as our year 2 to year 6 school reading scheme. The Take One book scheme is research based and focuses on the following

- 1) the hook – a way of exciting and engaging the pupils

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- 2) the orientation – what background information is required for the pupils to access the text including key vocabulary.
- 3) the first encounters – first read of the text
- 4) digging deeper - Securing a surface understanding and exploring the children's initial responses and questions leads to uncovering the multiple layers in the text.
- 5) review and reflect - pupils evaluate their learning and identify useful strategies for future learning.

Writing

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The National Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Writing is taught, developed, modelled and supported across the school through:

- The teaching of daily discrete grammar lessons, grammar objectives and skills are then used during writing through other curriculum subjects. This gives purpose to grammar skills and allows children to apply grammar skills that they have been taught.
- Extended writing is a feature of our English lessons where children are taught how to plan, write at length and edit their writing.
- Spelling patterns are taught systematically according to the objectives set out in the National Curriculum and Monster Phonics. Focus spellings are taught and tested on a weekly basis.
- Extra spelling lists are sent home when required by individual children.

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- Grammar errors are highlighted by the teacher but corrected by the child.
- High quality texts guide the genre of writing
- We use checklists for pupils to self assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively.
- We use modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.

Vocabulary

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Displays of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Word based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries and thesaurus
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate
- Using magpie and working walls to display rich vocabulary

Planning and Assessment

We set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey.

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SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) is planned in conjunction with the skills needed to apply to the writing genre.

All activities and lessons include scaffolding and extension. In addition to this all activities and lessons include a range of different challenges of different levels. The children then select their own level of challenge and are encouraged to push themselves in their learning.

Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every lesson and they adapt their practice accordingly.

Staff assess pupils according to the specific year group objectives and Age Related Expectations from the National Curriculum. Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are making little or no progress are discussed and plans made to support them through pupil progress meetings.

Professional Development

The English Subject Leaders attend regular training to ensure that they are kept up to date with aspects of the English curriculum.

Staff attend relevant courses during the school year.

Moderation of reading and writing takes place in school and with other local schools.

Whole school and individual performance management targets are set which link closely to the school development plan and incorporate key aspects of the teaching, assessment and attainment in English.

This policy should be read alongside other school policies including:

- Homework policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Special Needs policy
- Assessment policy

The governor with responsibility for English is primarily responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. This will be through termly discussions with the subject leader. The governor will report on this to the curriculum committee annually. The work of the subject leader will also be subject to review by the headteacher as part of our performance management arrangements.

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