

Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery



English Policy

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Head Teacher's signature	<i>A signed copy is available from the school office</i>

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The Contribution of English to the School's Curriculum

At Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery, we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. Improved performance in speaking and listening, reading and writing will enable our pupils to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, to engage more successfully with other curriculum subjects and will ultimately enrich their lives beyond school. The teaching and learning of language skills are, therefore, given a high priority in our school.

We have high expectations for our pupils and we encourage them to become independent learners and who strive to be confident in all areas of English. Our overarching aim 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.

To achieve this, we aim for our pupils to:

- read fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, both for pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- 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 their understanding and ideas clearly
- be competent in their speaking and listening so that they are able to make formal presentations, demonstrate their ideas to others and participate in debates

Statutory Requirements

The statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014).

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or background.

Curriculum Delivery

From Nursery through to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through differentiation and the support of teaching assistants, all children receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order to reach their full potential. Children may receive further support or intervention if necessary outside of English lessons. Pupils that have a 'Support Plan' may receive additional English intervention that focuses on their specific individual needs if required. Additionally, more able children are identified and challenged in English appropriately.

A clear lesson objective is a feature of all English lessons. Working walls and displays may support learning in the classrooms. Evaluative marking is used. Assessment informs planning and reference is made to the National Curriculum in medium term plans. The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. We encourage children to use technology as a resource for learning whenever appropriate, for example through the daily use of our Doodle English and Doodle Spell intervention apps or through the use of Class Dojo to submit homework.

Class novels and stories are used to inspire and enthuse our children as they provide a rich and varied experience for pupils to draw on in their writing and reading throughout the curriculum.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening opportunities are woven through the whole curriculum. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for our pupils to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently; to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy and to contribute to group discussions effectively. We achieve this by:

- explicitly teaching our pupils what it means to be a good listener
- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions as well as others'
- being aware that, as adults, we model speaking and listening in our day-to-day interactions with others in our school
- helping them to articulate their ideas where needed
- providing purposes and audiences within a range of formal and informal situations, including in individual, partner, group and class contexts
- providing opportunities to speak in front of larger audiences, such as in assemblies, productions and performances, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged and celebrated by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers
- enabling pupils to work collaboratively and to explore real and imagined situations through drama activities such as role play, hot-seating and conscience alley
- developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding and ask and answer relevant questions in all areas of the curriculum

Approaches to Phonics

The teaching of phonics is embedded throughout our English provision. Wherever necessary, additional phonics provision takes place across the school through the delivery of discrete phonics lessons. In phonics lessons, our pupils learn the letters and sounds (graphemes and phonemes) of the English language; practise segmenting and blending words (oral and aural phonological skills) and learn to read and spell sight words. During these sessions, children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing phonic knowledge to their writing. Pupils are grouped in accordance to their individual needs and are taught in phase appropriate groups. For further information about our phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, please read our Early Years Policy.

Approaches to Reading

We have an effective, balanced, quality program that makes use of several kinds of reading, including:

- dedicated class novel/ story time
- independent reading
- guided/group reading
- opportunities for reading in all areas of the curriculum
- home reading

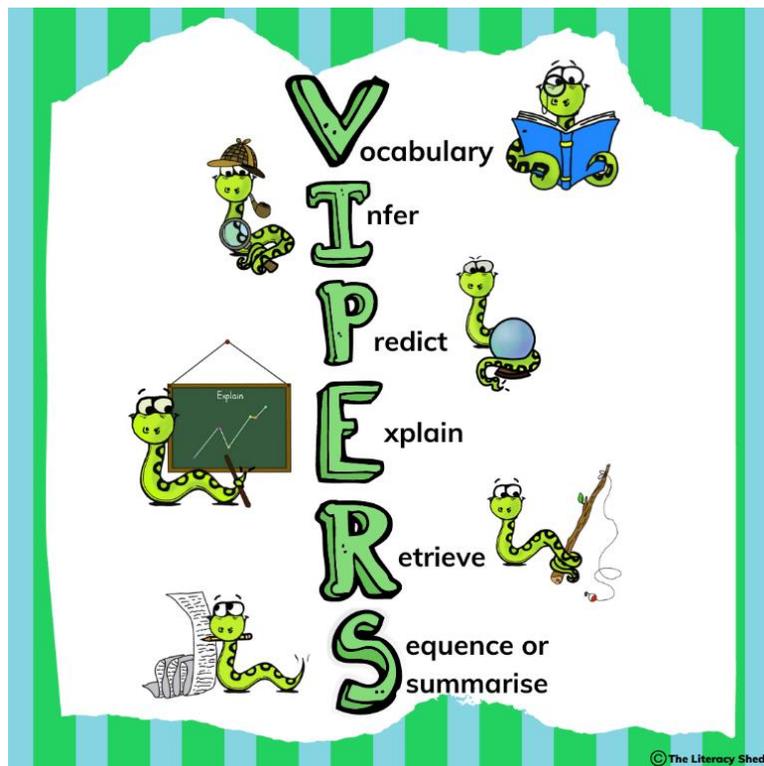
A diverse range of reading books is available in school and in individual classrooms. Electronic texts are also available from Reading Planet for shared reading. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, pupils read fiction and non-fiction books from Rocket Phonics as part of their guided and independent home reading. When pupils are ready to progress, they move onto Accelerated Reader.

Accelerated Reader encourages substantial differentiated reading practise to create strong readers. Based on each child's independent reading level, Accelerated Reader guides pupils to books that are difficult enough to keep them challenged, but not so difficult as to cause frustration. The following guidelines govern the use of Accelerated Reader at Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery:

- Pupils complete a STAR Reader assessment every half term
- Each student should be reading books at their appropriate reading level, or ZPD, as determined by their latest STAR Reader assessment
- Pupils must achieve a score of 100% on three Accelerated Reader quizzes before moving onto the next level. However, teachers maintain a degree of flexibility when working with the children in their class to determine if they require further consolidation within a level or are ready for the challenge of the next level within their ZPD
- Diagnostic reports from STAR Reader assessments are used by teachers to inform planning, support and challenge

In weekly reading lessons, children are explicitly taught the skills of reading (as outlined in the 2014 National Curriculum and the Key Stage 1 and 2 test domains) through the use of class novels, engaging stimuli such as video clips and high quality images and reading VIPERS.

VIPERS is an acronym which was created by The Literacy Shed to aid the recall of the six reading domains in the National Curriculum. They are the key areas that children need to understand in order to make progress with their reading comprehension.



In Key Stage 1, the S stands for 'Sequence' and in Key Stage 2 it stands for 'Summarise'. Additionally, in Key Stage 1, 'Explain' is not one of the key content domains. Instead, it is used to challenge more able pupils to explain why they have come to a certain conclusion or to explain their preferences, thoughts and opinions about a text.

Key Stage 1 Content Domain Reference		Relevant VIPERS skill
1a	Draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts	Vocabulary
1b	Identify/ explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction, such as characters, events, titles and information	Retrieve
1c	Identify and explain the sequences of events in texts	Sequence
1d	Make inferences from the text	Infer
1e	Predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far	Predict

In Key Stage 2, 'Explain' covers the additional content domains of 2f, 2g and 2h.

Key Stage 2 Content Domain Reference		Relevant VIPERS skill
2a	<i>Give/explain the meaning of words in context</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>
2b	<i>Retrieve and record information/ identify key details from fiction and non/fiction</i>	<i>Retrieve</i>
2c	<i>Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph</i>	<i>Summarise</i>
2d	<i>Make inferences from the text/ explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text</i>	<i>Infer</i>
2e	<i>Predict what might happen from details stated or implied</i>	<i>Predict</i>
2f	<i>Identify/ explain how information/ narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole</i>	<i>Explain</i>
2g	<i>Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases</i>	<i>Explain</i>
2h	<i>Make comparisons within a text</i>	<i>Explain</i>

Throughout Key Stage 2, children's explanation skills are also developed through the use of the acronym PEE: Point Evidence Explanation.

Support staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. Home reading is encouraged and expected as it is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/ carers, each child has a reading record in which both staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with their reading.

Teachers give children the opportunity to use books from Durham Learning Resources for independent research and enrichment. Events such as World Book Day and Roald Dahl Day are celebrated within school each year and pupils and parents are invited to annual events such as our poetry recital and an outdoor 'Reading Picnic' on the school field.

Approaches to Writing

At Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery, we teach key writing skills by supporting our pupils to write for a variety of purposes and by providing daily time to write. Where possible, we use class novels and stories as a stimulus for writing tasks. To develop our children as writers, we:

- treat children as writers who have ideas that they want to communicate from the earliest stage
- provide experiences where children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude towards writing
- develop writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write in a range of genres and for different purposes and audiences
- use guided and shared writing sessions to model writing skills and to teach children how to compose, amend and revise their writing
- teach children how to organise and present their creative and factual writing in different ways
- enable pupils to develop their writing stamina by planning regular extended writing opportunities in English lessons and across the wider curriculum
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning
- teach children to edit and improve their work in green pen
- look for opportunities to enrich our pupils' progress in writing, for example by arranging visits from authors
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become competent spellers
- teach handwriting to enable children to write fluidly and legibly

Approaches to Spelling

Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spelling is a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout school. We use the 2014 National Curriculum to determine which spellings are taught in each year group.

The teaching of spelling in EYFS and Key Stage 1:

- From Nursery, children are introduced to the concept that words are broken down into sounds.
- We deliver short, focused daily phonics sessions which systematically and sequentially teach the 40+ phonemes in the English language.
- Pupils then apply their phonemic knowledge to their reading and writing.
- Children learn actions, sounds and letter names through games and activities that support segmenting and blending (oral and aural phonological skills).
- Children are encouraged to have a go at writing by 'sounding out' words and recording (encoding) the sounds they hear.
- Visual resources and images are displayed in classrooms to remind children of the letters (graphemes) they want to write.
- Sound and spelling mats are available for children to use to support their spelling

- From Year 1, children are taught and actively encouraged to proof-read their writing and to correct misspellings.

The teaching of spelling in Key Stage 2:

- Throughout Key Stage 2, a spelling rule or new spelling pattern is introduced weekly and relevant spellings are taught creatively in a variety of ways, for example through mnemonics, word sorting tasks, spelling games and approaches such as 'Look, Cover, Write, Check'.
- Vocabulary word banks, high frequency word displays, dictionaries and spelling mats scaffold the children's spelling as necessary.
- If misspellings are identified by adults when marking the children's written work, pupils are given the opportunity to correct and practise the spellings as part of their response to marking and feedback.
- Where additional spelling support is needed, children may be asked to work in small groups with an adult to re-inforce spelling patterns and to identify the tricky sounds in common exception words.

Approaches to Handwriting

At Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery, handwriting begins in our Nursery where all pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to support the development of their early fine motor skills. The continued development of our pupils' fine motor skills is supported as they progress through school. The needs of left handed children, or those with physical difficulties, are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention.

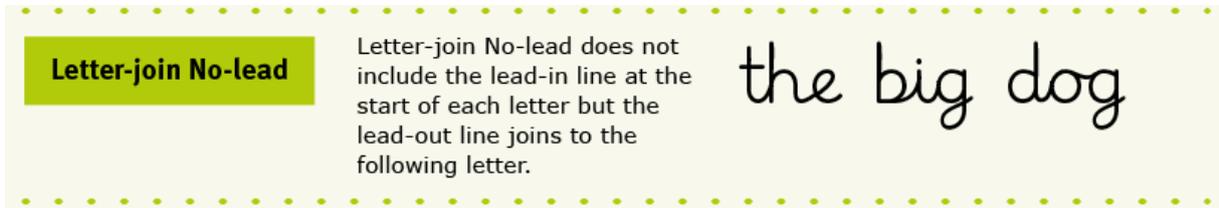
Pupils are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. We believe that discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen should take place at least once a week and more frequently in EYFS and Key Stage 1. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources. Our letter formation looks like this:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Nn Oo Pp Qq

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Jj Kk Ll Mm Ww Xx Yy Zz

The national expectation is that children will join their handwriting in Key Stage 2. Staff teach individual letter joins in a cursive style, beginning in Year 2. As the children move up through the school, they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluid handwriting. Our cursive handwriting looks like this:



A presentation contract is shared with pupils at the start of every academic year. By signing it, pupils agree to maintain high standards of presentation in their exercise books.

Assessment

Work is assessed in line with the Assessment Policy and feedback is given in line with the Marking and Feedback Policy.

Day to day in-school formative assessment allows teachers, pupils and parents/ carers to understand pupil performance on a continuing basis. A range of day-to-day in-school formative assessment strategies will be used to assess pupil progress in English, including:

- reference to specific success criteria
- targeted questioning
- marking of pupils' work, with positive feedback and development/ improvement areas highlighted
- reference to targets on tracker cards achieved in reading, writing and spelling
- observational assessments
- discussions with children
- 'hot write' feedback forms
- pupil self-assessment and self-correcting using green pen

In-school summative assessments will be used to monitor and support children's performance. They will provide teachers, pupils and parents/ carers with information about pupils' achievement, progress and wider outcomes. A range of in-school summative assessment strategies will be used to assess pupil progress in English, including:

- termly assessments using PIRA and GAPS tests
- half termly phonics checks
- half termly STAR Reader tests on Accelerated Reader
- end of year annual reports outlining progress and attainment of children in relation to National Curriculum age related expectations

Nationally standardised assessments will be used to provide information on how children are performing in comparison to children nationally. These include a baseline assessment in Reception, the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 and the SATs in both Year 2 and Year 6.

Inclusion

We are an inclusive school where all pupils are supported to make progress from their individual starting points and to achieve highly according to their individual abilities. Children with identified SEND receive tailored support in English from teachers and teaching assistants. Children who are identified as being in the lowest 20% of readers receive extra support from teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers who come into school to listen to the children read. More able children are also identified and challenged in English appropriately. In addition, the algorithm on the intervention apps Doodle English and Doodle Spell ensures that the tasks and activities set are pitched at the right level for each individual child.

Parental Involvement

Parents and carers play a vital role in the development of children's English skills. We aim to foster a strong home-school partnership regarding reading using tools such as reading records and Class Dojo for communication between school and home. We greatly value the support provided by parents with reading, handwriting, spellings and various genres of writing that may be set as homework.

The Role of Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. This will involve:

- monitoring pupil progress as well as the provision of English
- analysing data
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up to date with recent English developments
- analysing the results of nationally standardised tests to identify areas for development
- ensuring that assessment for English is carried out in line with the Assessment Policy

Conclusion

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Silver Tree Primary School and Nursery policies: Assessment Policy, Curriculum Policy, Early Years Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy and Special Educational Needs Policy.