

English Policy

Published Jan 2017. Reviewed Feb 2021. Reviewed Sept 2021.



1. INTRODUCTION

This policy document is written after consultation with the teaching staff and the Governor with responsibility for English.

It is a working document, which reflects the ethos and practice within the school in relation to the teaching of English. It has been written with due regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum and it will be monitored and evaluated according to changes within these documents as and when they arise.

The English subject leader: Matthew Britton (Overall), Jonathon Williams (KS1)

2. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

At Molescroft Primary School, we believe that teaching children to understand the power of language is an important part of our job as teachers. We believe that if we equip the children with the correct reading and writing tools, they will be able to use them effectively within a literate world. As teachers, we are responsible for providing children in Molescroft Primary School with a stimulating environment in which we offer opportunities to explore language in a cross-curricular manner.

Principles

We believe that language:

- enables successful communication where children can express their ideas and opinions effectively.
- develops competency through the inter-action of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- is not linear but recursive. Children do not learn particular features once but continually return to the same features to refine and master their competency.
- is a subject in its own right but is also the main instrument of learning throughout the curriculum.

Aims: To ensure that all pupils

- read easily, confidently and with good comprehension.
- develop a love of books and a love of reading
- acquire a wide vocabulary and an understanding of grammar for reading, writing and the spoken language.
- write clearly, accurately and confidently-adapting their style to suit form, purpose and audience.
- use the spoken form in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding, opinions and ideas.
- become confident users of language in all its forms, in all situations.

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3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body should, in cooperation with the head teacher, determine the school's general policy and approach to writing at Molescroft Primary School.

The Literacy subject leader should advise the Headteacher, staff and Governors of the current and changing practice in writing at Molescroft Primary School and keep them up to date with new initiatives put forward by the Government and LEA.

The Teaching Staff should in cooperation with the Headteacher and Literacy subject leader, plan and deliver effective language lessons which reflect the school policy.

The SENCO should, in cooperation with the Headteacher, Literacy subject leader and teaching staff provide support and additional writing resources for children with Special Educational Needs.

4. PRACTICE

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

At Molescroft Primary School, we believe that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. It is fundamental in all pupils' development across the whole curriculum.

We will ensure that:

- Children have varied opportunities to hear and speak quality language within lessons.
- Pupils develop an interest in explaining their understanding of books and other reading materials and become adept in articulating their opinions.
- Children are taught how to make their thinking clear in their own heads before articulating these thoughts either orally or in written form.
- Pupils are given opportunities to discuss and debate cross-curricular issues, showing respect for others' views.
- Pupils are able to participate in and gain knowledge in the techniques of drama-to improvise, devise and script dramas for varying audiences.

TEACHING OF READING

The Programmes of Study for reading at KS1 and KS2 consist of two dimensions:

- Word reading
- Comprehension (both listening and reading)

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At Molescroft Primary School, we believe that the teaching of these two areas involve different kinds of teaching and must be addressed accordingly.

Skilled and effective word reading involves the working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. This is why phonics is introduced in the early stages of reading when children start school.

PHONIC DEVELOPMENT

In Foundation Stage and KS1, the children are taught the following:

- To understand the grapheme-phoneme (letter/sound) correspondences (the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence.
- To apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in order, all through a word to read it.
- To apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell them.
- To understand that blending and segmenting are a reversible process.
- To recognise and use new grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPCs).
- To revise and consolidate GPCs learnt earlier.
- To recognise **common exception words** which contain unusual GPCs.

To achieve this, there needs to be high quality teaching of phonics. Children who are struggling to acquire these new phonic skills will be identified and given extra support.

The school uses Floppy's Phonics by Oxford University Press for our teaching of phonics. Children are then given a reading book which matches the phonics teaching so the child can apply their knowledge of new phonemes and graphemes in an appropriate book. These books are all published by Oxford University Press and include a range of fiction and non-fiction books.

COMPREHENSION

It is essential that all children are able to read with fluency and confidence, in any subject. We believe that good comprehension comes from a solid understanding of vocabulary and grammar and from the experience of reading and discussing a wide variety of texts.

At Molescroft Primary School we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for high-quality discussions about literature through the regular Guided Reading sessions, Story Masters lessons and texts used in Literacy lessons.
- Provide a variety of different texts across both fiction and non-fiction, which improve children's understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.
- Encourage children to develop an appreciation and love of reading which will increase pupils' vocabulary and feed their imagination. Both of these skills in turn, create much more successful writers.

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STORY MASTERS

In Years 2 to 6, children will take part in two 'Story Masters' sessions a week. These sessions are a chance to share the class novel together and explore it more deeply by answering questions (oral and written) based on the VIPERS structure: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summary. The sessions will involve some reading to the whole class; discussion about the text, plot, vocabulary whilst reading and answering of questions in Story Masters books. Questions are designed to cover all aspects of comprehension and children will engage with a range of question types each week.

GUIDED READING

We believe that Guided Reading is a highly effective way of building, developing, applying and securing skills in reading and writing for all pupils. It allows teachers to focus in an intensive and targeted way on specific pupils and their needs, whether those pupils are working below expectations or are enhancing in their development.

Children will receive at least two sessions of Guided Reading per week from either a teacher or TA. They will then be given reading homework which needs to be completed by the following session. Children are expected to use their reading journals to 'magpie' ideas from the author they are studying. This will then be shared with the group during subsequent sessions.

It is imperative that the Guided Reading homework is done each week so that each child can take an active part in the subsequent Guided Reading session. Teachers also use these sessions to assess the understanding of both word reading and reading comprehension of each child so it is essential that all children take part in discussions.

All Guided Reading groups are ability-set and the texts are carefully chosen to suit the reading ability of each group.

INDEPENDENT READING

For those children who need a structured reading support system in addition to Guided Reading, we may use other reading materials such as the Project X Code series. These books are taken home by the children and are read with parents or carers. Volunteer helpers may also hear the children read these books in school.

Reluctant Readers.

If the teacher feels that a child is reluctant to read, it may be appropriate to give the child extra reading time which is usually monitored by a Teaching Assistant and volunteer helpers.

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ASSESSMENT OF READING

Reading is assessed by all teachers using the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Reading. The assessment of individual children's progress in reading is completed during guided reading time. Teachers then use the school's assessment system FLiC to record the assessment of children against each individual reading target.

In Year 2 and Year 6, the children take National Reading SATs test in May from which each child receives a scaled score for reading.

In Year 3, 4 and 5, the children sit NFER tests in January and May from which each child is given a standardised score for reading. Again, these results are used to set individual targets for reading and inform teacher assessment.

All these results are analysed to inform the Pupil Data Tracking System and identify which children need extra support in reading the following year. This may consist of giving the children specific reading targets if they are on the SEND register or targeting the group in Literacy lessons for more focused teaching. Some children may be taken out to read by Teaching Assistants and/or volunteer helpers. These children may also be chosen to be part of the Literacy Support Interventions within school.

READING HOMEWORK

Guided reading homework is set twice-weekly by the teacher and/or TA. This will consist of reading further pages of the book and/or collecting words, phrases and ideas from published authors, which can then be used to support their writing. The teacher may also ask the children to work on their comprehension skills by (for example) summarising, predicting and explaining their opinions.

Reading to a parent/carer is encouraged as much as possible in both Key Stages and the frequency of reading and choice of book can be recorded in the child's Reading Journal.

TEACHING OF WRITING

The Programmes of Study for writing at KS1 and KS2 consist of two dimensions:

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

At Molescroft Primary School, we believe that children need to develop competency in both these skills in order to be confident writers. We must therefore ensure that we:

- Teach children to perceive the power of writing and equip them to use it well.
- Teach children to enjoy writing and to be competent, confident and not to hesitate in putting their ideas on paper.
- Teach children to recognise the need to adapt their writing to suit a range of audiences and purposes.
- Teach the children the most appropriate form of writing for a given task.
- Teach children to use spelling and grammar accurately and with confidence.

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- Take opportunities to enhance pupil's vocabulary.
- Teach children a fluent and legible handwriting style in which to write.
- Give children opportunities to listen to and discuss quality literature in English lessons

As part of a Literacy unit in any Year group, there will be opportunities for Shared and Independent Writing. At Molescroft, we firmly believe that children are inspired to write by firstly engaging in good quality texts which act as a model for what the children will be asked to write later in the unit. Therefore, the first part of a unit tends to be devoted to Reading activities where appropriate. The second half of the unit is often devoted to Writing activities.

Writing 'Mastery'

We have chosen some key 'grammatical' elements of writing we want to ensure are mastered in every year group before children progress to future years. These skills are to be a real focus at the start of each year and throughout all writing sessions. The three areas to be focused on are

- Punctuation
- Sentence structure
- Conjunctions

A designed progression throughout the school ensures that children build on previous years' skills in order to become proficient writers.

Shared Writing.

Shared writing can be observed in all classrooms at the appropriate times. We believe that shared writing enables us as teachers to work with the whole class, to model, explore and discuss the choices writers make at the point of writing. It is also invaluable for making links between reading and writing by investigating how an author has used language to achieve a particular effect. During Shared Writing we also scaffold aspects of writing-e.g.-spelling and concentrate children's attention on how to tackle more difficult words. Shared Writing is invaluable for allowing the opportunity to teach different aspects of the Writing Process. In all KS1 and KS2 classrooms, teachers model how to plan, draft, edit and proof-read writing.

As part of our Accelerated Learning philosophy, we believe that Shared Writing should be as interactive and as fun as possible. Therefore, we tend to use one or a combination of the following teaching techniques:

- Teacher Demonstration - we demonstrate how to write a text or a particular feature of that text.
- Teacher Scribing- the pupils offer their contributions building upon the teacher's demonstration.
- Supported Composition- Children use white boards or books to write in pairs or individually a limited amount of the text to ensure understanding.

By using an appropriate combination of these techniques, it ensures that the children are fully engaged in the Writing process.

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Independent Writing.

It is our aim in Molescroft to make the flow from Shared Writing to Independent Writing as smooth as possible. By engaging in Shared Writing first, every child in the class has been 'warmed up' and is ready to work. There should be no occasions where children are given books or paper and asked to write without any Shared Reading or Writing to support them (The exception to this may be if the writing is part of an independent writing assessment)

Independent writing tasks can take many forms but must flow from Shared Writing and take the child on to the next step of becoming an independent writer. During this time, the teacher and TAs within the classroom will provide differentiated support for targeted groups of children or individuals.

Children will be expected to write independently for specified periods of time; this includes going through the **processes** of planning, drafting, editing and proof-reading. Publishing work will also be used as an assessment of handwriting.

It is important that children are asked to write in different forms, for different purposes and different audiences. **Cross-curricular writing** is encouraged in all classes and high levels of presentation and grammatical accuracies are insisted upon.

The teaching of Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation.

Explicit knowledge of grammar gives us a greater control and choice in our language, both spoken and written. Focusing on grammar within the teaching of reading, writing and speaking allows children to grasp the concept, then use it independently. There may be a need to teach specific grammar lessons with the understanding that children are then given the opportunity to show this new learning in their independent writing. The children will also complete GPS slides regularly within the school day which ensures that key concepts are continuously revisited.

The Teaching of Spelling.

The teaching of spelling has been given considerable thought in Molescroft Primary School as it is an important aspect of writing. Although spelling must not be allowed to dominate our responses to children's writing, it is still important for children to show a competent level of spelling knowledge. When drafting writing, children are encouraged to 'have a go' at unfamiliar spellings in order to continue the 'creative flow'.

In Foundation Stage leading into KS1, children are encouraged to try spelling words and phonetic plausibility is acceptable when the children have not yet been taught the spelling.

In KS2, common keywords/Year Group words and cross-curricular words that have been taught should be spelled correctly. During the editing and proof-reading stage, children must use various strategies (dictionaries/spelling buddies, etc.) to identify and change spelling mistakes.

Teachers will teach specific spelling rules, conventions, patterns and the children will investigate the key words studied. There is then an expectation that children use these new words in their independent writing.

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We have access to a range of resources and multiple approaches to offer bespoke spelling support to individuals, groups or whole classes. These include, but are not limited to, Spelling Shed, SOS Spelling, Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check, Rising Stars resources and games, picture strategies, Word Wasp, muscle memory techniques, mnemonics and crosswords.

Please refer to the Homework Policy for further clarification of spelling homework.

ASSESSMENT OF WRITING.

The Marking Policy of 'Green to be Seen' and 'Pink to make you think' will be used to mark writing where appropriate. From writing assessments, children will be given specific writing targets which they will adhere to when writing in English lessons or in cross-curricular tasks.

In writing, it may be valid to draw attention to different mistakes for different children. Each classroom displays a 'Marking at Molescroft' poster. The teacher chooses a symbol which fits the mistakes the child has made. The child then reads looks at the symbol and the chart and is given time to improve the work in that chosen area. The teacher then checks the improvement and puts TA if target achieved.

Response Time is crucial in writing tasks where the teacher asks the child to modify or extend their writing for a specific reason and then the child is given time to do this; it is an invaluable form of assessment and proves that the child is secure in his/her understanding.

Once the teacher has seen evidence that a child is secure in a specific writing objectives, he/she will assess them using FLiC.

THE TEACHING OF HANDWRITING.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription (spelling quickly and accurately) and forming, communicating and articulating ideas coherently. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and eventually, speedy handwriting.

In the Foundation Stage the children are taught the correct formation of each letter during the phonics sessions. This is then further developed in guided group work as appropriate to meet the needs of the children. Opportunities will also be taken within phonics sessions to model and reinforce the correct letter formation. Further time will be used by teachers for direct teaching and independent practice.

The Agreed "Patter" for teaching From the Foundation stage onwards handwriting will be taught using the four main movement groups.

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l -long ladder letters
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r-one-armed robots
- anticlockwise round, exemplified by the letter c-curly caterpillar letters
- zig-zag-letters

The children will be taught the upper case formation for each letter

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Once the children are able to form all letters with the correct orientation and size they will be introduced to the joined script and the four basic handwriting joins.

The four basic joins are:

diagonal joins to letters without ascenders
horizontal joins to letters without ascenders
diagonal joins to letters with ascenders
horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

Letters not joined are: b,s,j,y,g,p,x

By the end of Year 2 most children will be expected to join letters using the four basic handwriting joins showing clear ascenders and descenders. This will be developed in Year 3.

In Year 3 and Year 4 the children will have a regular handwriting sessions which will build upon the skills learnt from Key Stage 1.

In Year 5 and Year 6 the children will be encouraged to develop their own handwriting styles in line with the school script and teachers will plan handwriting sessions as appropriate.

5. DOCUMENTATION

- English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2- Department for Education

6. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In each class, it is standard practise that teachers will differentiate work to suit the ability of children within the class. Groups are often ability set and the focussed Writing and Guided Reading sessions are planned to each group's ability.

Writing targets are specific to the child and therefore at their ability.

Assessments are very carefully analysed in order to identify children that may be either developing or enhancing in Writing and the teacher is made aware of those children (supported by the SEN and Talented Mole subject leader) to ensure they are appropriately accommodated within the literacy lesson.

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The Writer's Charter

- Children will not be asked to write without preparation beforehand about what to write.
- There must be no loss of momentum between shared writing activities and independent writing activities.
- There must always be a reason for asking pupils to write, and they must know what it is.
- The atmosphere in the classroom must be conducive to writing.
- Writing sessions should be appropriately divided with short breaks between bursts of intensive and focused writing time.
- Before writing children should warm up, physically and mentally.
- Before writing children should have had the opportunity to imagine their work, use a range of Dramatic techniques including 'hot seating' and verbalise their writing with a partner or group.
- Young children should always verbalise their ideas before writing.
- Writing tasks should be broken down and linked to clear time limits, until the pupils have the maturity to do this for themselves.
- Children should know what they have to do to achieve the level they are aiming to reach.
- Teachers must use positive criticism with pupils and not accept basic answers; they should always challenge pupils. Teachers must not accept mediocrity.
- During Shared Writing, teachers must be explicit about what they are doing.
- In all subjects children should not be expected to write without there being some revision of the expectations of the piece.
- When writing in all subjects and in all situations, children must know the form, purpose and audience of the writing.
- Children should be reminded when necessary that 'If they have been taught something, they are expected to do it!'
- Pace should be expected at all times.
- Time targets are essential whenever children write.
- Children should be taught active punctuation with sound effects.
- Every writing activity including assessments should be preceded by quick fire activities.
- Peer/paired marking strategies should be employed where appropriate.
- Skeleton frames should be used to give children confidence and understanding when writing.
- Pupils should be exposed to good examples of the relevant, different elements of narrative writing that they will tackle. Children must be able to appreciate what a 'good one' looks like.
- Poetry must not be underestimated as a powerful tool for language development.
- The emotional ability of pupils to describe feelings/emotions must be developed orally and in writing.
- Visual and sensory stimulation (including video) should be used to excite pupils to write.
- When planning writing sometimes use a senses chart so that pupils consider for example what a character: saw, heard, smelt, touched, tasted.