

## English Policy

Reviewed November 2018

### Rationale

At The Baird Primary Academy, we are committed to ensuring all children reach their full potential. We strive to provide an outstanding, creative, inclusive and fun learning experience, which is underpinned by high expectations, positive behaviour, effective relationships and a welcoming ethos. We strive for our children to have positive attitudes, challenge themselves and develop strategies to become independent learners. As an academy we do not 'stand still' and are constantly looking to improve.

We understand the importance of equipping our pupils with literacy skills that prepare them for their future. We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading, Phonics and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of English within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

### Aims

We strive for all children to be prepared for their lives beyond our academy. Our broad aims as an academy are that our pupils:

- develop lively, enquiring minds and apply themselves to the task in hand
- acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment
- build their confidence and self-esteem and feel valued as individuals
- endeavour to do their best and achieve independence
- appreciate the differences and needs of others and acquire tolerance and understanding of people and their ideas

Through these aims we aim for them, by the age of 11, to be able to:

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- have an interest in books and read for enjoyment
- have an interest in words, their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

### Statutory Requirements

We follow the National Curriculum for English. This can be found at:

EYFS - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

KS1 and 2 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4> updated 2.12.14

We use the English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 (September 13) to inform our planning and delivery of the National Curriculum for English.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335186/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_English\\_220714.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335186/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_English_220714.pdf)

## Teaching and Learning

Our English Curriculum is delivered using a range of approaches (detailed below).

In the EYFS, Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum.

### Approaches to support 'Speaking and Listening'

We use an age appropriate quality text to form the background of reading, writing and foundation subject teaching and learning – The Power of Reading. '**The Power of Reading**' is designed to help teachers create a reading culture and creative literacy curriculum in their schools. Each identified text is linked with The Baird Primary Academy's English framework (see Planning R / Planning 2018-19 / English framework).

These texts also act as a stimulus for the wider curriculum. 'The Power of Reading' initiative encourages teachers to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

As well as sourcing these texts from 'The Power of Reading' book list, we also look to reviews from other colleagues and the media for inspiration on books which will be appropriate to classes and topics within the school.

'The Power of Reading' encourages teachers to give children rich experiences linked to the text and regular opportunities to discuss and act out topics covered. 'The Power of Reading' is also proven to help children to develop a rich vocabulary through choices of quality text, immersion in the language of the text, discussion and drama activities.

Power of Reading teaching strategies that support the development of Speaking and Listening skills include:

- responding to illustration
- illustrating
- role on the wall
- freeze-framing
- poetry
- conscience alley
- hot seating
- role playing
- jigsawing
- performing

**Word- Walls** – each class has a 'word-wall' where they display a range of vocabulary for the children to access during the day to support language and spelling. The word-wall also helps the children to expand their vocabulary. The word-wall is split into three criteria:

**Tier 1** – these words which commonly appear in spoken language and do not need further explanation, e.g. little, baby, funny. These words appear on the word-wall when they are commonly misspelled as a support for spelling.

**Tier 2** – these words are sophisticated words, more commonly used by mature language users, but not as limited in their use as Tier 3 words, e.g. devastating, inevitable, conceal. Tier 2 words are more commonly found in written text and children mostly learn these through interaction with books. These words appear on the word-wall because they extend the children's working vocabulary and add a level of maturity to their writing – Tier 2 words move the speech and writing from social, conventional language to a more formal, sophisticated language which can be fundamental to academic success.

**Tier 3** – are sophisticated words but have a limited use outside of the context that they are used in, e.g. photosynthesis, chrysalis, longitude. As these words are rarely used, they are not as significant as Tier 2 words. These words feature on the word-wall to support the spelling of technical and topic specific vocabulary.

Additionally, our reading programme '**Destination Reader**' has the teaching of vocabulary embedded daily within it (see below in the 'aims'). The class teacher identifies 'Tier 2' vocabulary, from the text that the children are going to read, and discusses this with the class before they read. This vocabulary is then displayed so that children then use these words in their writing.

## Approaches to support 'Reading'

As well as 'The Power of Reading' (see above), we have the following approaches to teach and develop pupils' reading skills:

- **Destination Reader** – this scheme is the result of a collaboration of practitioners from Hackney primary schools, facilitated by the Hackney Learning Trust and was introduced at The Baird Primary Academy in September 2018. The scheme was designed to improve class reading in KS2 but The Baird Primary Academy have adapted it to be used in Year 2 as well. Each daily Destination Reader session lasts for 45 minutes which is broken into: whole class teaching; 25 minutes of paired reading; a short five minute activity to assess understanding; and the plenary.

The aims of Destination Reader are:

- to foster a life-long love of reading
- to develop a consistent approach to reading across KS2 (*and yr2 at The Baird Primary Academy*)
- to guide teachers on best practice in teaching vocabulary
- to have a consistent approach to developing vocabulary
- to provide a curriculum in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum
- to accelerate children's progress in reading
- to provide a robust assessment approach, centred on formative assessment

The principles of destination reader are based upon:

- creating quality experiences
- promoting enjoyment
- increasing reading mileage
- building firm foundations
- developing thinking and understanding
- making talk more central

Within their Destination reader sessions, the children learn and use three learning behaviours, which foster both engagement and independence:

- support and actively listen to each other
- discuss and explain your ideas
- take responsibility for their own/their group's learning

Once these learning behaviours are embedded, the children learn seven key reading strategies in turn to deepen their understanding of texts:

- predicting
- inferring
- asking questions
- evaluating
- clarifying
- making connections
- summarising

Once the reading strategies have been taught and practised independently, the children move on to 'combined strategies'; at this stage, the teachers use a variety of strategies and key questions to explore texts.

- **Group Reading** - during the 25 minute 'paired reading' part of Destination Reader, a class teacher may work with a group of children on a shared text. The outcomes of these sessions are noted in the recording document at the back of the children's reading journals, and are used to inform teacher assessment.
- **1-1 reading** – it is expected that every child in a class will be heard read at least once per week; this could be during: the 25 minute paired reading slot in Destination Reader, group reading sessions; 1-1 with the class teacher or TA during assembly times; Better Reading Partners sessions with the class TA or SEN intervention groups.
- **Better Reading Partners** - BRP is a catch-up reading programme which is delivered to key pupils across the academy and focuses on developing independent reading strategies and text comprehension. BRP is usually delivered by Teaching Assistants, all of whom receive regular training to deliver this. BRP is a 10-week programme, which provides one-to-one additional support for reading. From September 2018, most children who are receiving BRP will have a daily 15 minute session during the Destination Reader timetabled slot.

- **Independent Reading** – each week, each class has an opportunity to visit the school library. Pupils select books to independently read.
- **Phonics** - We use **Letters and Sounds** to promote the teaching of synthetic phonics. Reception and KS1 are assessed termly and the majority of the class will work with the class teacher on the appropriate phase. These sessions take place for 20 minutes daily, after playtime. For those pupils who require additional support or challenge, interventions will be implemented in various forms. Pupils are tracked and assessed regularly to identify if further interventions need to be put in place.

Children in Year 1 take the Phonics Screening Test in May each year. Those who don't achieve the pass mark retake the test again in Year 2. Any children who have still not reached the pass mark at the end of KS1 are tracked through year 3 and appropriate support is given. This situation is reviewed at the end of year 3 with the SEN team if necessary.

- **Class Text** – to help nurture a love of reading each teacher shares a class text with their class at the end of every day.
- **Nurturing a love of reading** – children take part in local reading initiatives (i.e. ESCC Book Awards) and school staff share books they have enjoyed with children in assembly and around the school.
- **Buster's Book Club** – we belong to an initiative run by The Kent Messenger Charity Team which is designed to improve reading levels by encouraging children to read for pleasure at home. The initiative sets children an individual home reading target, depending on their year group, and then challenges children through inter-class and inter-school events that culminate with an annual record attempt.
- **Read 2 Dogs** – as part of a reward scheme for reading, we have a 'Pets as Therapy' (PAT) dog who comes in weekly to listen to children read.
- **Reading at home** - We use a range of books for home reading books. There is an expectation that children read every school night, and this is monitored by class TAs. Each child has a 'reading record' which is completed by parents and staff to record children's reading. We encourage pupils to read at home through incentives such as Buster's Book Club, the PAT dog and stickers in their reading records.
- **Reading Champions** - each year, children are chosen from year 5 to be Reading Champions. These reading champions will be available to help plan and organise reading events in school and they will read with children at lunchtimes on the playgrounds.
- **Library** – We have a well-stocked library which is used by children and staff during the school day. The children are free to choose any book that they like: it may be an easy or familiar story that they wish to re-read and enjoy or it may be too difficult for them to read but they want to listen to it. One day a week, there is a **library club**, at lunchtime, and children can spend time in the library choosing books and reading with their friends.
- **Home reading books** – Children who are working at white level or below are still learning to read so read books at their 'instructional reading level' daily; these children take home banded reading books. Children in KS1 become a 'free reader' once they have finished 'lime band' and children in KS2 become free readers once they have finished 'white' band.

All children are assessed against book bands and their progress is tracked termly.

### Approaches to support 'Writing'

As well as 'The Power of Reading' and 'Letters and Sounds' (see above), we have the following approaches to support writing at The Baird Primary Academy:

- **The Baird Primary Academy English Framework** (see Planning R / Planning 2018-19 / English framework) using the National Curriculum criteria for Writing, we have devised an English Framework which ensures that each year group teaches a range of genres and text types (see Planning R / Planning 2018-19 /

English framework). The Framework sets out the genre and text type with suggestions of assessment opportunities for composition.

At the beginning of each lesson, there is a SPaG activity; the focus for this is taken from the National Curriculum and the whole Curriculum is covered across the year. There is one SPaG focus each term and these are broken down into progressive steps each week. The Framework suggests both technical and topic specific vocabulary to be taught, reading objectives when they link with the lesson, and weekly spellings - these are all taken from the National Curriculum.

- **Spellings** - we teach spellings through a combination of the spelling rules from the 'Assertive Mentoring' scheme (which are set out in the English Framework – see above), Common Exception Words and teacher's choice. The children are taught the spelling rule at the start of the week. These spellings are sent home to practise and children are also given opportunities to practise in school. At the end of the week, the children are tested on their spellings and this score is recorded.
- **'Cold' to 'Hot' tasks** – Each term, every class is expected to cover two genres in detail; these genres are detailed on the English Framework. Before commencing the unit from the English Framework, the children complete a 'cold task' unsupported. During the first week of the unit, the children work on the key features of the genre while editing and improving their 'cold task'. Over the next ten days of the unit, the children work in more depth on the genre and text type, using their class text and topic as a stimulus. At the end of the unit, the children complete a 'hot task' to demonstrate the progression in their learning.
- **Grammar Hammer** - we use a scheme called 'Grammar Hammer' to help the teaching and assessing of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG). The scheme is devised to cover aspects of SPAG at the correct level for years 1-6. There are 15 tests per year and the class teacher chooses how often to test the children. The outcomes of the tests are used to assess strengths and weaknesses and to inform planning.
- **Handwriting** – see 'Handwriting and Presentation Policy'

## Inclusion

We aim to provide opportunities for all children to enable them to achieve highly. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving, or finding English challenging, and take steps to improve their attainment. Teachers will be expected to scaffold and differentiate the learning appropriately to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Gifted children will be identified, and suitable learning challenges provided.

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

## The Role of Subject Leader

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English including:
  - pupil progress through data and feedback from termly Pupil Progress Meetings
  - provision of English (including Intervention and Support programmes)
  - the quality of the Learning Environment
  - the deployment and provision of support staff (with SENCO)
- Policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments

## Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to support their children's literacy through:

- reading with them daily
- supporting their children with their English homework
- involvement with Book Week and other literacy events in school

The Academy provides Parent Workshops on all aspects of English throughout the year.



