



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,  
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

# ENGLISH POLICY

Primary setting





## Document control

<b>This document has been approved for operation within:</b>	All Trust Primary Schools		
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## Introduction

1. At Star Academies, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills that enable an individual to participate fully as a member of society.
2. The study of English develops pupils' abilities to listen, speak, read, and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate ideas, views, and feelings. It enables pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, and drama as well as non-fiction and media texts.
3. Pupils gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures, and origins. Pupils use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.
4. All trust Primary Schools ensure their pupils make outstanding progress in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum, with a particular focus on English and mathematics.
5. This policy is based on the expectations and aims of the new National Curriculum for English (2014), and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 'Development Matters'<sup>1</sup> documents.

## Aims

6. To describe the philosophy that underpins the teaching of English in all trust Primary Schools and to set out how this is planned, delivered and assessed.
7. 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 enjoyment.
8. To ensure, through the teaching of English, that all pupils:
  - are confident and articulate speakers of English who can express and discuss their ideas and experiences in a range of contexts
  - can listen attentively, paying attention to detail, to process the information and respond to speakers' implicit and explicit meanings
  - develop a love of books and high-quality literature and become fluent and active readers who enjoy reading a wide range of books
  - understand and interpret texts by retrieving and deducing information and explaining the writers' vocabulary use and literary features
  - acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
  - become skilled and adaptable writers who can write across a range of genres with an understanding of purpose, audience and impact, and can command a wide and flexible vocabulary
  - develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy
  - use discussion in order to learn
  - are able to elaborate, present and explain clearly to others their understanding and ideas
9. To ensure all pupils leave school with an ability to express themselves correctly and appropriately, in spoken and written language, and to read accurately, with understanding and with enjoyment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>



10. To support the mission, vision and values of the trust and its establishments.

## Who is responsible for this policy?

11. The trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to Star Central, the Local accountability board and the principal of each trust primary school.
12. The local accountability board and senior leadership team at each trust primary school has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## Statutory requirements/expectations

13. By the time pupils leave primary school, they should be able to communicate through speaking and listening, reading and writing, and express themselves with confidence, fluency and understanding in a range of situations.
14. **Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-school to the end of Reception):** By the end of EYFS, the school expects pupils to achieve at least a 'Good Level of Development.' In order to achieve this, children must at least achieve the 'expected' level in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in the prime areas, which includes communication and language, and the ELGs in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics.
15. **Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2): By the end of Year 1,** the school expects pupils to meet the Expected Standard (EXS) in the statutory Year 1 phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, the school expects pupils at a minimum to be working at the Expected Standard (EXS) in reading and writing as detailed in the assessment frameworks. These are aligned to the standards of the National Curriculum.
16. **Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6):** By the end of Year 6, the school expects pupils at a minimum to be working at the Expected Standard (EXS) in reading and writing as outlined in the assessment frameworks. These are aligned to the standards of the National Curriculum.

## The National Curriculum for English (2014)

17. English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. In following the English National Curriculum, the school teaches pupils to speak confidently and to listen to others. The school also teaches pupils to read and write accurately, independently and with enthusiasm.
18. The requirements of the National Curriculum for English are organised into distinct domains, but pupils should make connections across all areas of English to develop confidence, competence and mastery.
19. The requirements for the teaching of English in the National Curriculum are laid out in the following domains:
  - Spoken Language
  - Reading
  - Writing
20. **Spoken Language:** The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality



and variety of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently, using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary; and build knowledge. They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations.

21. **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 being of particular importance because “pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.” Reading allows pupils to “acquire knowledge” and to “build on what they already know.” The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:
- **Word Reading:** Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics is taught in the early teaching of reading to beginner readers when they start school.
  - **Comprehension:** Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on pupils’ knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils’ experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems, and non-fiction. The school encourages pupils to read widely, because reading widely and often increases pupils’ vocabulary as they encounter words they rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils’ imaginations and opens up a treasure-trove of wonder and joy to curious young minds. By the end of their time at school, pupils must be able to read fluently and with confidence in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.
22. **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
23. The 2014 curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:
- **Transcription:** Writing down ideas quickly is dependent upon effective transcription - spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding both word structure (morphology) and spelling structure (orthography). Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting
  - **Composition:** Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for the reader
24. **Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Punctuation:** the National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to “learning and progress across the whole curriculum,” since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently. Teachers should maximise opportunities that arise naturally in order to enhance pupils’ vocabulary. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how



to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning and how to develop their ability to understand and use figurative language. Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. Through creative and exciting lessons, they are taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar and punctuation contained in the statutory requirements.

## Planning

25. The English National Curriculum 2014 programme of study and outcomes are fully integrated into the school's planning systems.
26. Schools conduct the curriculum planning for English in three phases (long-term, medium-term, and short-term/weekly). The trust long-term plans state which writing genres are to be taught in each year group, and the trust medium-term genre plans detail the key skills, teaching sequences, suggested books and grammar foci for each genre.
27. The school completes weekly plans or unit plans for each unit of work. Each term, pupils are taught a range of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry units. The weekly/unit plans outline the sentence progression, text and word level objectives that support the final written outcome. Planning is based on formative assessment, stating the next steps. The fiction/non-fiction units are based on a quality text, which is chosen to suit the pupils in the class, and to develop strong cross-curricular links to the foundation curriculum.
28. The medium-term genre plans follow the five key aspects of the teaching of writing:
  - familiarisation with the genre and text type
  - capturing ideas
  - Teacher demonstration
  - Teacher scribing through supported and guided writing
  - independent writing, editing, and publishing

This is used as a basis for weekly/unit planning and adapted according to the needs of pupils.

29. Within each English writing session there are the following elements:
  - a clear learning objective/outcome with focused steps to success
  - an element of speaking and listening/oral rehearsal which is modelled by the teacher (e.g., the use of speaking frames to encourage the pupils to respond appropriately in full sentences)
  - Teacher modelling of writing at a level which is appropriate to the needs of the pupils within their class or set
  - integrated spelling, grammar, and punctuation foci
  - a plenary or series of mini plenaries used throughout the lesson to reinforce the learning objective/outcome, address misconceptions, refer back to the steps to success or to move the pupils' learning on further

## Teaching and learning sequence

30. Medium-term genre plans are used to outline the sequence of learning for each unit of work. The **three** key phases of the teaching of writing are:
  - **Phase 1** - Familiarisation with the text type/genre. Teachers select texts that pupils will enjoy and pinpoint how they are going to use them and how pupils are going to extract key features (book talk, writer talk, magpie books, toolkit).



- **Phase 2** - Capturing ideas/oral rehearsal. Teachers give pupils something to write about, including trips out, drama, dance, model making, experiences, visitors, ICT.
  - **Phase 3** - The writing journey. Teachers scaffold their pupils' writing journey through modelling; shared writing, supported writing and independent writing.
31. A 'hook' is used at the beginning of a unit. This could be a shared experience such as a drama activity, an educational visit, a game, cooking etc., which eventually leads into an extended piece of writing.
  32. Every week, each child completes an extended piece of writing that teachers and, if appropriate, pupils assess using the writing assessment framework. This assessment will be used by teachers and pupils to inform future development targets for the child's writing.
  33. The English Working Wall in the classrooms reflect the teaching sequence, models, and scaffolds.

## Class organisation

34. All pupils have a daily English writing lesson lasting for one hour. In this time, the focus is on the teaching of writing in line with the 2014 National Curriculum programmes of study. Years 2-6 pupils also receive a daily English Reading lesson lasting approximately 30 minutes. A daily phonics lesson of at least 30 minutes is delivered to all Reception and Year 1 pupils. Pupils in other year groups may also require discrete phonics lessons; This is decided on a case-by-case basis. All pupils receive dedicated handwriting focus, totalling at least 20 minutes per week. In Years 2-6, a discrete grammar lesson is also provided.

**Table 1: Minimum Trust expectations for English time allocations**

Year	Writing	Reading	Grammar	Handwriting	Phonics
EYFS	1 hr daily			20 mins weekly	30 mins daily
Year 1	1 hr daily			20 mins weekly	30 mins daily
Year 2	1 hr daily	30 mins daily	20-30 mins weekly	20 mins weekly	As required
Year 3	1 hr daily	30 mins daily	20-30 mins weekly	20 mins weekly	
Year 4	1 hr daily	30 mins daily	20-30 mins weekly	20 mins weekly	
Year 5	1 hr daily	30 mins daily	20-30 mins weekly	20 mins weekly	
Year 6	1 hr daily	30 mins daily	20-30 mins weekly	20 mins weekly	

## Phonics

35. Phonics is taught using the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics programme. This is a fast-paced, rigorous, and structured programme and helps to get every child reading fluently as quickly as possible.
36. Teaching is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning. Phonics is taught in short, briskly paced sessions and then applied to reading and writing in a meaningful context. They are discrete, daily phonics sessions with a clear teaching sequence:





- Revisit/review: recap on last session
  - Teach: teach something new (phoneme/skill)
  - Practise: practise what has been learnt
  - Apply: apply to real reading and writing situations
  - Blending and segmenting through the word as soon as the first few phonemes are known (no teaching of blends as pupils should be able to use their blending/segmenting skills effectively)
37. The school ensures that phonemes are correctly and consistently pronounced by all members of staff.
  38. Discrete teaching of tricky words and high frequency words are embedded into daily phonics sessions.
  39. Weekly spellings follow the spelling patterns/phonics focus taught during that week.
  40. Phonics is taught in groups where pupils are at the same stage of development. This may mean grouping across year groups, where appropriate, in order to ensure that all learners are working at an appropriate level.
  41. It is an expectation that all pupils pass the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. Where pupils have not reached the required standard, they continue following a personalised phonics programme in Year 2 until the expected standard is reached.
  42. Phonics workshops are delivered to parents of Reception and Year 1 pupils at the beginning of the academic year, to explain to parents how to support the development of phonics skills and share information about the Phonics Screening Check.
  43. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 regularly take reading books home that are fully matched to their exact stage of phonic development, as per the 'Read Write Inc.' programme.



## Reading

44. Reading is taught daily and discretely, as well as being taught within the context of the writing lessons, often in the initial phases of the writing learning journey when pupils are familiarising themselves with particular text types.
45. In 'shared reading,' teachers explicitly model word reading and comprehension skills, ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Shared reading provides a context for teacher modelling, teaching, and applying reading skills (word, sentence, and text level). Teaching objectives are pre-planned, and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading domains, oral response, and collaboration. This is an opportunity to discuss the use of language and widen pupils' vocabulary, as well as noting authorial organisation and choice.
46. During daily discrete reading lessons in Years 2-6, pupils are taught reading via the three identified types of reading lesson – fluency reading, extended reading and close reading – as per the Trust primary reading comprehension framework. These lessons focus primarily on the development of reading fluency and the generation of rich discussion of a range of high-quality texts. Reading comprehension is viewed as an emergent property, resulting from the development of background knowledge, fluency, vocabulary and knowledge of text types and syntax. The trust's [primary reading comprehension framework](#) (MS Teams link) provides further detail on this topic.
47. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read, reading passports and other various methods. The Star Reader series is used to support this.
48. Every class is read to by their teacher regularly, either a single story or longer text, which is read over a period of time.
49. Teachers ensure that all pupils read to an adult at least once a week, and more frequently for struggling readers (bottom 20%).
50. All pupils are expected to read to an adult every night. Home reading logs are sent home regularly.
51. Dedicated reading programmes boost the reading ability of individual pupils.
52. More general reading programmes are used with Years 1 to 6. For example, Accelerated Reader – a programme to foster the habit of regular independent reading may be used. The internet-based software initially screens pupils according to their reading levels and suggests books that match their reading age and reading interest. Pupils take computerised quizzes on the books they have read and earn points related to difficulty.
53. Special projects e.g., themed weeks, book projects and writing competitions, are organised to foster pupils' enthusiasm for English.
54. Parent workshops are held at the start of each academic year to explain to parents how to support the development of word reading and comprehension when listening to children read.

## Early Readers

55. Developing early reading is key to academic success and is a primary focus for the school. It is through developing fluency and confidence in reading at an early age that pupils are then able to fully access the wider curriculum in later years.
56. As well as systematically developing phonic knowledge via complete fidelity to 'Read Write Inc.' as per paragraphs 41-48 above, we also prioritise developing the fluency of our struggling



readers – the lowest 20% of readers in each cohort – as identified by reading age data extracted from termly standardised tests.

57. These struggling readers receive one-to-one fluency reading support three times per week. Over time, this then enables these readers to fully access and succeed in whole class reading lessons; once fluency is secured via intensive additional support, pupils can then make and analyse meaning from age-related texts. Further details on this are included within the [world class book culture handbook](#) (MS Teams link).

## Writing

58. The writing process splits the specific sequential stages of writing into a number of steps:
- Exploration of a text-type and oral rehearsal – discussing and preparing ideas
  - Practicing key grammatical constructions and building appropriate vocabulary banks
  - Planning
  - Drafting
  - Editing, proof-reading, and publishing
  - Reading aloud and sharing
59. The trust believes writing should be enjoyable and the purpose for writing should be based on real and meaningful experiences.
60. Teachers use shared writing to model the writing process. This provides a context for discussion and demonstration of specific word-, sentence- and text-level foci. Shared writing allows the teacher to introduce or revise a particular style of writing. Through modelling, a teacher is able to demonstrate how to write, commenting explicitly on what he/she is doing and why. During this process, pupils are able to contribute ideas and suggestions, while the teacher scribes.
61. Guided writing allows the teacher to work alongside a group of pupils of similar ability. Support and scaffolding is provided, enabling pupils to apply the principles they have learnt in shared inputs.
62. Writing activities are scaffolded for the needs of different learners through the use of writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support.
63. All lessons include relevant success criteria.
64. Pupils are taught and encouraged to use a range of drama activities to enable them to respond to reading and rehearse ideas and themes for writing. These include:
- Hot Seating – questioning someone in role as a character to develop understanding
  - Conscience Alley – debating the two sides of a character's dilemma
  - Freeze Frame – isolating and analysing key moments in a text
  - Readers' Theatre – preparing texts and poems for choral performance
65. Regular opportunities for extended writing are provided for all pupils. By doing so, pupils have the chance to demonstrate their understanding of the taught genre independently.

## Writing across the curriculum

66. It is important to teach writing as a skill across the curriculum and not just in the dedicated English lesson time.



67. The National Curriculum states that teachers are to teach writing that develops pupils “to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.”
68. Pupils can only truly cover writing across a range of contexts when they are expected to write for the different subject areas across the curriculum.
69. Teachers seek to ensure that writing expectations, standards and outcomes remain high across the teaching and learning of the foundation subjects.
70. Teachers plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.
71. The marking of writing across the foundation subjects encourages pupils to reflect and action their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and composition and effect within their writing.
72. The English targets set for English lessons are also implicitly used across the foundation subjects when writing, and reminders throughout the lessons ensure pupils work towards evidencing achievement in writing. However, English targets are not used as explicit success criteria in foundation subject lessons.
73. Teachers use the English working wall to display key vocabulary, modelled writing and shared work from the class input.
74. Where possible, class teachers are encouraged to make links between foundation subject learning and English.

## Grammar

75. Developing essential skills in grammar are fundamental in order to promote effective communication. Therefore, grammar is taught explicitly through well-planned and purposeful lessons based upon the progression of word and sentence level objectives, as well as discretely through shared and modelled writing, including lesson starters.
76. From Year 2 onwards, pupils receive a discrete weekly grammar lesson. Grammar foci are also embedded within writing lessons.

## Spelling

77. The school uses the 2014 National Curriculum ‘English Appendix 1: Spelling’ as a basis for the spelling curriculum.
78. Pupils learn to spell explicitly in weekly spelling lessons. In line with this spelling appendix, a balanced programme of learning includes five main components:
  - understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological)
  - recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words
  - practising and assessing spelling
  - applying spelling strategies and proofreading
  - building pupils’ self-images as spellers
79. Pupils have personalised spelling banks, where they add words that they have spelt incorrectly. Pupils practise spelling corrections in their English books as part of their response to marked work.



80. Spellings are also given to pupils as part of their homework, and weekly spelling tests are undertaken.
81. Key Stage 1 high frequency 'tricky' words also form part of weekly spelling lists.
82. Pupils are explicitly taught 'Tier 2' vocabulary. These are systematically introduced during daily reading lessons and pupils are encouraged to use them in their writing and practice the spelling of them. The trust 'primary reading comprehension framework' provides further details of this.

## Marking

83. The school provides regular feedback to pupils, centred on improving their work further. This feedback may take a variety of forms including written feedback, both during a lesson and at the end of a piece of work; verbal feedback; peer comment; and self-reflection. Feedback should be provided in a timely fashion in order to improve understanding and accelerate progress.
84. 'Next step' marking, whenever possible, takes place during lessons for maximum effect. This takes the form of the teacher or learning coach talking through with the pupil how their work could be improved. A 'next step' is suggested, and the pupil responds to this, enabling them to make progress during the lesson. 'Next steps' may also be giving via 'distance marking' (marking conducted away from the pupil), however, the teacher must give adequate time in the next lesson for the pupil to respond.

## Working walls

85. Working walls are crucial to a successful learning environment. They are a public display of the learning process and evolve as each day progresses. They are not static. They support effective learning and teaching. The purpose of the working wall is to support pupils' independent learning. It evolves as a unit of work unfolds and is not intended to be a tidy display of finished work.
86. Well-planned working walls support independent working and learning. They help support pupils who become stuck and direct pupils to new tasks when they have self-assessed that they have successfully finished an activity.
87. Working walls can include, for example, key vocabulary, useful prompts, ideas for creative writing and punctuation ideas in order to support the pupils with their work.

## Assessment, reporting and recording

88. In English, half termly assessment takes account of both progress and attainment in each of the distinct domains of reading and writing. The assessment frameworks for reading and writing are used when making judgements about the standard of work in English.
89. Formative assessment is an integral and continuous part of the teaching and learning process at the trust. It enables teachers to identify pupils' progress and their next steps and to modify their teaching to best meet pupils' needs. Teachers typically use the following formative assessment strategies: effective questioning; clear learning objectives/outcomes; the use of success criteria; quality marking; and effective feedback and response.
90. Independent, extended writing tasks are assessed using the criteria set out in the writing assessment framework.



91. When making summative pupil judgements for writing, the year group leader ensures that moderation meetings are held regularly within the year group. This gives the teachers the opportunity to look at evidence of writing from across the curriculum in conjunction with the assessment pieces when making their judgments.
92. In the Early Years, pupils are assessed individually on an on-going basis.
  - **Statutory Testing - Phonics Screening Test:** All pupils are expected to complete the National Phonics Screening Check, which takes place towards the end of Year 1. A pupil who does not meet the expected standard will be required to continue working on their knowledge of phonics through Year 2 until the expected standard is reached.
  - **Statutory End of Key Stage Assessment:** The National Curriculum requires that each child be assessed on all age-related expectations within the English curriculum. Consequently, at the end of Years 2 and 6, all pupils undertake the national assessments in Reading and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. Writing is subject to teacher assessment and is moderated within the school's local authority and additionally, within the Trust's primary network.

## Targets

93. Writing targets are formed through teacher assessment of extended pieces of writing. These are then turned into 'next steps' and recorded.
94. Pupils are informed of their own targets for learning and supported to make progress towards them. Writing targets are explicitly taught regularly. Pupils are also involved in reviewing their progress towards these through self, peer, and teacher assessment.