



Alexandra Infants' School and Alexandra Junior School



English Policy

This is the English policy for both Alexandra Infants' School and Alexandra Junior School. Alexandra School's understand that every child has the right to an education (as in accordance in with UNCRC article 28). The teaching of English will fulfil the children's rights.

English is a core subject and is a subject in its own right. All the skills of language are essential to participate fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently, are disenfranchised. It is our determination that every child will be successful, through a rigorous and sequential approach to develop skills in speaking and listening and teaching reading, writing and spelling through systematic phonics.

Aims

The aim for the English curriculum is to promote high standards of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the written and spoken word. At both schools our aim is to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; children should be able to elaborate and clearly explain their ideas and understanding.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
- Develop oracy skills to express themselves confidently, initiate and lead discussions, listen actively, challenge ideas respectfully, and support others in articulating their thoughts.

The teaching of the English curriculum is taken from the Prime Area (CLL) of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and 2 it is based on the National Curriculum for English.

Spoken Language and Oracy

The National Curriculum for English highlights 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; therefore, the quality and variety of language that pupils hear and use are crucial for developing their vocabulary, grammar, and understanding. At Alexandra Schools, we are committed to fostering a rich



oracy culture in line with Voice 21 principles. Pupils are provided with structured opportunities to agree with, build on, or challenge the views of others in a respectful and constructive manner. They are explicitly taught the conventions of discussion, debate, and dialogic talk, and are encouraged to instigate discussions with peers, ask meaningful questions, and support others in articulating their ideas. This includes helping their peers to build or refine their responses, nurturing a collaborative and inclusive classroom dialogue.

Adults model high-quality talk at every opportunity, including recasting and expanding on pupils' responses to promote the use of standard English. Teachers encourage children to adapt their spoken language according to audience and purpose, with opportunities to perform to a range of audiences—such as in assemblies, including Harvest and Christmas productions. Pupils learn to consciously control their vocabulary and grammatical structures in speech, forming a strong foundation for their writing across the curriculum.

All pupils will also engage in drama activities, enabling them to adopt, create, and sustain a variety of roles. Through improvisation, scripting, rehearsal, and performance, they refine their expressive abilities and develop empathy and collaboration skills. These spoken language experiences are integral to learning and are reinforced through the reading and writing elements of the curriculum.

Statutory requirements that underpin spoken language across primary education are embedded throughout our English curriculum and contextualised within classroom learning experiences.

Vocabulary

At Alexandra Infants' School and Alexandra Junior school, improving children's vocabulary is a whole school priority. We want all our children to acquire a wide vocabulary and gain a good understanding of words. We strongly believe that developing students' vocabulary will support them in reading, writing, and oral language.

At Alexandra Junior school, we teach four vocabulary lessons per week, alongside the vocabulary acquisition gained in guided reading and writing. We use research-based evidence to structure the teaching and learning of new vocabulary. During these lessons, teachers use the SEEC model as a structured approach to teaching, learning and understanding new vocabulary. The SEEC model is consistently applied across the school using a range of activities:

- Select – Tier 2 and 3 words have been selected by the English lead and class teacher.
- Explain – Child friendly definitions are given, multiple meaning examples are explored and misconceptions are clarified.
- Explore – Etymology, synonyms and antonyms are explored, as are strategies to remember the word or concept.



- Consolidate – The word is used in different contexts and will begin to be used across the curriculum.



At Alexandra Infants' School, vocabulary is a key focus area that permeates the entire curriculum. In Key Stage 1 (KS1) English lessons, explicit vocabulary instruction takes place whenever a new text is introduced, forming an integral part of our reading activities. During these lessons, new vocabulary is explored in depth, supported by the use of visual aids, and applied in a variety of contexts to reinforce understanding. Furthermore, we have identified key vocabulary, referred to as 'star words', which are revisited daily and displayed prominently throughout our English topics. This approach enables our children to confidently apply their newfound vocabulary in both reading and writing activities.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we adopt a similar approach, where 'words of the week' are taught during Communication, Language, and Literacy (CLL) sessions and reinforced daily. To encourage a love of language and celebrate our pupils' growing vocabulary, we have introduced 'Vocabulary Crocodiles' across the school. These displays showcase newly acquired vocabulary from various subjects and books read in class, providing a visual reminder of the children's progress and fostering a sense of achievement.

Reading

Reading consistent of two dimensions:

- Word reading
- Comprehension (both listening and reading)

At Alexandra Infants' the teaching of early reading is completed through the systematic teaching of phonics, using Anima phonics. For those who fail their phonics screen at Alexandra Infants' Anima phonics is also delivered both in guided reading sessions and an afternoon phonics intervention at Alexandra Junior School. This ensures that teaching follows a carefully planned and tightly structured approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. The scheme contextualises each sound with a children's book to help support a love of reading. Anima Phonics has been validated by the government and is considered an accredited scheme. Through this scheme, 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.

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing competence in both ways, and adaptive teaching is required for each. At Alexandra Infants' School phonetically decodable books are introduced in EYFS and throughout Key Stage 1. Once a child enters Key Stage 2, and has passed the phonics scheme, an accelerated reading approach is introduced and children will choose a range of books according to their ZPD (Initial Reading Age - Zone of Proximal Development) which is identified in an initial reading assessment.



Word reading involves quickly working out the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and speedily recognising familiar words.



Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters represent sounds in spoken words.

Good comprehension draws from knowledge of linguistics and the world. All pupils must be encouraged to read a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts to broaden their knowledge. Additionally, reading widely can increase pupils' vocabulary and feed their imagination.

It is vital that all pupils are able to read fluently by the end of their primary education and it is expected that children read at least three times a week at home. A reading diary is given to the children at the start of every term. It is expected that a responsible adult signs the diary when the child has read and signs at the end of each week. This is monitored in school.

At Alexandra Junior School, targeted support is provided to ensure all pupils become confident and fluent readers. Daily reading sessions are prioritised for the lowest 20% of readers in each year group, identified through ongoing assessment and teacher judgement. During these sessions, an adult listens to each child read, providing immediate feedback. A positive comment and an area for improvement are recorded in the pupil's reading diary to support ongoing development and foster a love of reading.

To promote effective home-school communication, pupils' Accelerated Reader quiz results and ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) levels are also recorded in the diary. This enables parents and carers to monitor their child's progress, celebrate success, and remain informed about current reading levels and book choices.

Comprehension

Comprehension skills are developed 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. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. In Key Stage 1 children will complete a weekly comprehension activity either in a guided reading session or through taught English sessions. They will also complete a weekly 'cold' comprehension task on an unseen text. In Key Stage 2 children will complete a daily reading comprehension activity (see curriculum intent for sequence of learning).

Guided reading

In Key Stage 1 four times a week a skilled adult works with a small group of children, to target identified gaps in learning. The adult scaffolds the learning by guiding children



through the text and prompting them to apply a range of reading strategies during the session.



We are determined that every child will read by the end of their time at a school to a standard that is in line with national expectations, all pupils will be able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject enhancing learning in a cross-curricular context.

Guided reading KS2

Daily guided reading is taught across the school at a staggered time in every year group. This enables skilled staff to work with target groups within the guided reading session. For those who are working within the whole class guided reading session, an age appropriate text is used. The following reading skills are the key focus for guided reading sessions:

2a	2b	2c	2d	2e	2f	2g	2h
Give/explain the meaning of words in context	Retrieve and record information/ identify key details from fiction and non-fiction	Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph	Make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text	Predict what might happen from details stated and implied	Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole	Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choices of words and phrases	Make comparisons within the text

When reading, the teacher and/or pupils should model good use of intonation, movement, volume and expression. Children will pick up good reading styles from teachers' performances. Teachers should be actively monitoring pace, so as to ensure high levels of engagement throughout the lesson. Interspersing longer stints of reading with paired independent/ echo and choral reading is adopted and follow-up tasks include paired, group or class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to annotate and/or record unfamiliar vocab on the text or words/phrases they'd like to discuss. Children follow a set sequence, covering a wide range of genres during a week's session (see curriculum intent for further information).

Some pupils will require an adaptive teaching approach to whole class guided reading. Those identified as either failing phonics screening or those identified as significantly behind ARE expectations, or who are new to English across the school will take part in the reading squad approach (Read phonetically decodable book based on their stage of phonics



development). Choral and echo reading are also used during this session and the reading for meaning focus concentrates on reading fluency, voice, prosody, phrase boundaries, or



intonation, as well as promoting comprehension, and oral language skills. This approach builds up on the guided reading sessions from KS1 and enables every child to work with a skilled adult on a daily basis.

In addition, at Alexandra Junior School, some pupils may require explicit phonics teaching to support the development of early reading skills. These pupils access targeted intervention sessions in the afternoon using the *Anima Phonics* scheme. This structured, systematic programme is delivered by trained staff and is closely monitored and assessed to ensure pupils make measurable progress. The aim is to equip children with the phonetic knowledge and decoding skills needed to pass the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and to apply phonics confidently in their independent reading.

Writing

Writing is a complex process that draws upon more than handwriting and spelling. It is the ability to construct and convey meaning in written language. Successful writers understand the social function of writing in order to use different genres appropriately, matching it to audience and purpose. Writing also requires the writer to understand and apply accurately the conventions of syntax, spelling and punctuation whilst presenting narrative in a legible form. English is taught through an adaptive teaching approach at both schools and children will have access to both adaptive and original texts.

The English National Curriculum outlines the programmes of study for Key Stages 1 and 2, which are structured around two key dimensions:

- **Transcription** – encompassing spelling and handwriting.
- **Composition** – focusing on articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing.

It is vital that teaching focuses on developing competence in both skills, and in addition, that pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing.

Writing ideas down fluently depends on spelling words quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters, morphology, and orthography of words. Additionally, effective composition involves forming, articulating, and communicating ideas, then organising them for a reader in a coherent manner. Writing needs to be fluent and legible, as well as requiring clarity, awareness of audience, purpose and context, and a wide, broad knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

The spelling policy provides a further overview of the specific features that should be included in the programmes of study.



From reading and writing, chances arise naturally to learn more vocabulary. It is a teacher's job to show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, nuances in meaning, and how to understand and use figurative language. Additionally, they should teach pupils how to work out and clarify meanings of unknown words, and words with more than one meaning.

Standard English should be encouraged, and pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously for different audiences and purposes. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and 'language about language' should also be taught to them. These guidelines are intended to help teachers with structure, not constrain or restrict their creativity.

It is vital that pupils learn correct grammatical terms in English, and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

School curriculum

The programme of study for English is set out year-by-year. There is rapid development over the two years in word reading in key stage 1; however, schools are only required to teach the programme of study by the end of the key stage. This gives our school the flexibility to introduce content earlier or later than set out in the programme of study. Alexandra Junior School is required to set out our school curriculum on a year-by-year basis and make this information available online.

Attainment targets

At the end of each stage, pupils are expected to know, apply, and understand the skills specified in the relevant programme of study.

Spoken language – years 1 to 6

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to all teachers and pupils.
- Ask relevant questions to develop knowledge and understanding.
- Build their vocabulary via relevant strategies.
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments, and opinions.
- Structure coherent descriptions, explanations, and narratives for different purposes (for example, expressing feelings).
- Be attentive and participate in collaborative conversations, while staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.
- Speculate, hypothesise, imagine, and explore ideas using spoken language.
- Speak audibly and fluently in Standard English.
- Participate in debates, discussions, presentations, improvisations, performances, and role-play.
- Gain, maintain, and monitor the interest of the listener(s).



- Consider and evaluate differing viewpoints, while attending to and building on the contributions of others.
- Use appropriate registers for effective communication.



1. Key stage 1 – year 1

Building on working from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is important, as well as making sure pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using phonic knowledge and skills they have already learnt.

Grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) should be continued to be learnt by pupils. The understanding that the letters on a page represent sounds in spoken words should support spelling and reading of all words; this includes common words containing unusual GPCs. 'Common exception words' is used throughout the programme of study for such words.

Additionally, pupils need to develop the skill of blending the sounds into words and apply this skill whenever they encounter new words. Reading, sharing, and discussing a wide range of books, helps pupils to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary. Pupils should be helped to read words, and those who are slow to develop this skill should be given extra practice.

If pupils entering year 1 have not yet met the early learning goals for literacy, they should continue to follow their school's curriculum for the EYFS to develop their reading, spelling, and language skills. However, these pupils should follow the year 1 programme of study so that they can also develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar. If they are struggling with spelling and decoding, they need to be taught how to do this urgently so that they have a chance to catch-up quickly.

Teachers should ensure their pupils' oral vocabulary, ability to understand, and grammatical structures are developing as they should, and give extra support to those who need to develop more.

Year 1 programme of study

1.1 Reading – word reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills to decode words.
- Respond quickly with the correct sound to graphemes for all 40+ phonemes, including alternative sounds for graphemes.
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught.
- Read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word.
- Read words containing taught GPCs and –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er, and –est endings.



- Read other words of more than one syllable that contains taught GPCs.
- Read words with contractions and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s).
- Read accurately aloud books that are consistent with the pupils' developing phonic knowledge and that do not require strategies to work out words.
- Re-read the previously stated books to build up fluency and confidence in word reading.

1.2 Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
- Listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently.
- Being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences.
- Becoming very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their specific characteristics.
- Recognising and joining in with predictable phrases.
- Learning to appreciate rhymes and poems, and to recite some by heart.
- Discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known.
- Understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
- Drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher.
- Checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading.
- Discussing the significance of the title and events.
- Making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done.
- Predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far.
- Participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say.
- Explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them.

1.3 Writing – transcription

Spelling

Pupils should be taught to:

- Spell:
 - Words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught.
 - Common exception words.
 - The days of the week.
- Name the letters of the alphabet:
 - Naming the letters of the alphabet in order.
 - Using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound.
- Add prefixes and suffixes:



- Using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs.
- Using the prefix un–.
- Using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words.
- Apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in the grammar list.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far.

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form capital letters.
- Form digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Writing – composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- Write sentences by:
 - Saying out loud what they are going to write about.
 - Composing a sentence orally before writing it.
 - Sequencing sentences to form short narratives.
 - Re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense.
- Discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils.
- Read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the concepts set out in the grammar list by:
 - Leaving spaces between words.
 - Joining words and joining clauses using and
 - Beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
 - Using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun ‘I.’
 - Learning the grammar for year 1 in the grammar list.
- Use the grammatical terminology in grammar list in discussing their writing.

2. Key stage 1 – year 2

By the beginning of year 2, pupils should be able to read all common graphemes, and read unfamiliar words containing these graphemes by sounding them out in books that are



matched closely to each pupil's level of word reading knowledge. They should also be able to read many common words containing GPCs taught so far, without blending the sounds out loud first. Pupils' reading of common exception words should be confident. Finally, pupils should be able to retell some stories that they have remembered during year 1.

During year 2, teachers should focus on establishing pupils' accurate and quick word reading skills. They should also make sure that pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of stories, poems, plays and non-fiction, including whole books. In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should compose individual sentences orally and write them down. They should be able to spell correctly many of the words covered in year 1. They should also be able to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words they have not yet learnt. Finally, they should form individual letters correctly.

It is vital to know that pupils meet extra spelling challenges during year 2. Therefore, they should learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table.

Pupils' motor skills also need to be sufficiently advanced for them to write down ideas that they may be able to compose orally.

Teachers should use the year 1 programme of study for pupils who do not have the phonic knowledge and skills they need for the year. However, teachers should use the year 2 programme of study also, so that these pupils hear and talk about new books, poems, other writing, and vocabulary with the rest of the class.

Year 2 programme of study

2.1 Reading – word reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- Continue to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words until automatic decoding has become embedded and reading is fluent.
- Read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, especially recognising alternative sounds for graphemes.
- Read accurately words of two or more syllables that contain the same graphemes as above.
- Read words containing common suffixes.
- Read further common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word.
- Read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered.
- Read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation.
- Re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.



2.2 Reading – comprehension



Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - Listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently.
 - Discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related.
 - Becoming increasingly familiar with and retelling a wider range of stories, fairy stories and traditional tales.
 - Being introduced to non-fiction books that are structured in different ways.
 - Recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry.
 - Discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary.
 - Discussing their favourite words and phrases.
 - Continuing to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear.
- Understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:
 - Drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher.
 - Checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading.
 - Making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done.
 - Answering and asking questions.
 - Predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far.
- Participate in discussion about books, poems and other works that are read to them, and those that they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say.
- Explain and discuss their understanding of books, poems and other material; both those that they listen to and those that they read for themselves.

2.3 Writing – transcription

Spelling

Pupils should be taught to:

- Spell by:
 - Segmenting spoken words into phonemes and representing these by graphemes, spelling many correctly.
 - Learning new ways of spelling phonemes for which one or more spellings are already known, and learn some words with each spelling, including a few common homophones.
 - Learning to spell common exception words.
 - Learning to spell more words with contracted forms.
 - Learning the possessive apostrophe (singular).
 - Distinguishing between homophones and near-homophones.



- Add suffixes to spell longer words, including –ment, –ness, –ful, –less, –ly.
- Apply spelling rules and guidance.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs, common exception words and punctuation taught so far.

Handwriting (please see a separate handwriting policy for further information)

Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Writing – composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - Writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others.
 - Writing about real events.
 - Writing poetry.
 - Writing for different purposes.
- Consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
 - Planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about.
 - Writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary.
 - Encapsulating what they want to say, sentence by sentence.
- Make simple additions, revisions and corrections to their own writing by:
 - Evaluating their writing with the teacher and other pupils.
 - Re-reading to check that their writing makes sense and that verbs to indicate time are used correctly and consistently, including verbs in the continuous form.
 - Proof-reading to check for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Read aloud what they have written with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the concepts by:
 - Learning how to use both familiar and new punctuation correctly, including full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contracted forms and the possessive (singular).
- Learn how to use:
 - Sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command.
 - Expanded noun phrases to describe and specify.



- The present and past tenses correctly and consistently including the progressive form.
- Subordination and co-ordination.
- The grammar for year 2.
- Some features of written Standard English.
- Use and understand grammatical terminology.

3. Lower key stage 2 – years 3 and 4

At the beginning of year 3, pupils should be able to read books written at an age-appropriate interest level. They should be able to read them correctly and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on deciphering individual words. They should be able to decode most new words outside their spoken vocabulary, making a good estimate to the word's pronunciation. As their deciphering skills become more secure, teachers should focus more on developing their pupils' vocabulary, including the breadth and depth of their reading, becoming independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers. They should develop their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learn to read silently. They should also develop their knowledge and skills in reading a wide range of non-fiction. Justifying their views about what they have read should be important, with support at the start of year 3 and increasing independence by the end of year 4.

Pupils should write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of precision and with good punctuation. Teachers should therefore be joining pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of terminology. Developing as writers involves teachers teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their proficiency. Pupils should build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing, grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures. Pupils should begin to understand how writing can be different from speech. Joined handwriting should be the norm, and they should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.

Spelling of common words should be correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt. Pupils should spell words as accurately as possible.

Most pupils will not need further direct teaching of word reading skills: they are able to decipher unfamiliar words accurately, and need very few repeated experiences of this before the word is stored in such a way that they can read it without overt sound-blending. They should demonstrate understanding of figurative language, distinguish shades of meaning among related words and use age-appropriate, academic vocabulary.

As in key stage 1, however, pupils who are still struggling to decipher need to be taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly. If they cannot decipher independently and fluently, they will find it increasingly difficult to understand what they read and to write down what they want to say. As far as possible, however, these pupils should follow the year 3 and 4 programme of study. Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study. In years 3 and 4, pupils should become more familiar with using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations and debate.



Years 3 and 4 programme of study



Reading – word reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- Apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes (etymology and morphology) both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words they meet.
- Read further exception words, noting the unusual correspondences between spelling and sound, and where these occur in the word.

3.1 Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:

- Listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks.
- Reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes.
- Using dictionaries to check the meaning of words that they have read.
- Increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including fairy stories, myths and legends, and retelling some of these orally.
- Identifying themes and conventions in a wide range of books.
- Preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action.
- Discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination.
- Recognising some different forms of poetry.
- Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - Checking that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and explaining the meaning of words in context.
 - Asking questions to improve their understanding of a text.
 - Drawing inferences, such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.
 - Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied.
 - Identifying main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarising these.
 - Identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning.
 - Retrieve and record information from non-fiction.
 - Participate in discussion about both books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say.

3.2 Writing – transcription

Spelling

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use further prefixes and suffixes and understand how to add them.
- Spell further homophones.
- Correctly spell words that are often misspelt.



- Place the possessive apostrophe accurately in words with regular plurals and in words with irregular plurals.
- Use the first two or three letters of a word to check its spelling in a dictionary.
- From memory, write simple sentences, dictated by the teacher, that include words and punctuation taught so far.

Handwriting

Handwriting

Being able to write comfortably and legibly frees a pupil's working memory and allows them to present and learn more. At Alexandra Junior School, our aim is for a pupil to develop a good handwriting style, which means:

- They can produce and maintain a good speed.
- Have a fluid hand movement that is comfortable.
- Letters are of a consistent and appropriate size, positioned correctly on the line with an upstroke to begin the letter formation.
- Handwriting is legible (so others can read it easily).

Handwriting joins are taught daily in each year group across Alexandra Junior School. Pupils are taught which letters to join and a cursive script is encouraged when publishing work. For those requiring an adaptive teaching approach, the Teach Handwriting scheme is used. This scheme takes a holistic view of teaching handwriting, developing both a pupil's key strengths (gross and fine motor skills) and key abilities (knowledge).

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.

At the beginning of every English lesson, children will be given opportunities to practice.

Writing – composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- Plan their writing by:
 - Discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar.
 - Discussing and recording ideas.
- Draft and write by:
 - Composing and rehearsing sentences orally, progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures.
 - Organising paragraphs around a theme.
 - In narratives, creating settings, characters and plot.
In non-narrative material, using simple organisational devices.
- Evaluate and edit by:



- Assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing and suggesting improvements.
- Proposing changes to grammar and vocabulary to improve consistency, including the accurate use of pronouns in sentences.
- Proof-reading for spelling and punctuation errors.
- Reading aloud their writing using appropriate intonation and controlling the tone and volume so that the meaning is clear.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the concepts set out in the grammar list by:
 - Extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when, if, because, although.
 - Using the present perfect form of verbs in contrast to the past tense.
 - Choosing nouns or pronouns appropriately for clarity and cohesion and to avoid repetition.
 - Using conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to express time and cause.
 - Using fronted adverbials.
 - Learning the grammar for years 3 and 4 in the grammar list.
- Indicate grammatical and other features by:
 - Using commas after fronted adverbials.
 - Indicating possession by using the possessive apostrophe with plural nouns.
 - Using and punctuating direct speech.
 - Use and understand the grammatical terminology in the grammar list accurately and appropriately when discussing their writing and reading.

4. Upper key stage 2 – years 5 and 6

By the beginning of year 5, pupils should read a wider range of poetry and books aloud which are written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. Reading most words should be effortless, and they should be able to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words more easily. Help should be asked for if the pronunciation sounds unfamiliar.

Preparing readings, summarising, and presenting a familiar story in their own words should be increasingly easy. Reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information should be commonplace. They should read silently with a good understanding, infer the meanings of unfamiliar words, and then discuss what they have read.

Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly. Their grammar and punctuation should be broadly accurate. Pupils' spelling of most words taught so far should be accurate, and spelling words that they have not yet been taught by using what they have learnt about how spelling works in English should be simpler.

During years 5 and 6, teachers should continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing.

Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, will support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their



comprehension. As in years 3 and 4, pupils should be taught to enhance the effectiveness of their writing as well as their competence.



It is vital that pupils who are struggling are taught through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch-up rapidly with their peers in terms of their decoding and spelling. However, as far as possible, these pupils should also follow the upper key stage 2 programme of study by listening to books and other writing that they have not come across before, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and having a chance to talk about all of these.

By the end of year 6, pupils' reading and writing should be satisfactorily fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7. Understanding of the audience and purpose of writing is important for their writing, by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Consciously controlling sentence structure should be important for teachers to focus on in their pupils' writing, and pupils should understand why sentences are constructed as they are. Pupils should understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. This involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study. Public speaking, performance, and debate should be trialled.

Years 5 and 6 programme of study

4.1 Reading – word reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- Apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes as listed in the grammar list, both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words that they meet.

4.2 Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- Maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
 - Continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks.
 - Reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes.
 - Increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions.
 - Recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices.
 - Identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing.
 - Making comparisons within and across books.
 - Learning a wider range of poetry by heart.



- Preparing poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience.
- Understand what they read by:
 - Checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context.
 - Asking questions to improve their understanding.
 - Drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying with evidence.
 - Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied.
 - Summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas.
 - Identifying how language, structure and presentation add to meaning.
- Discussing and evaluating how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader.
- Distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion.
- Retrieving, recording and presenting information from non-fiction.
- Participating in discussions about books that are read to them/ by themselves and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously.
- Explaining and discuss their understanding of what they have read, through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary.
- Providing reasoned justifications for their views.

4.3 Writing – transcription

Spelling

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use further prefixes and suffixes and understand the guidance for adding them.
- Spell some words with 'silent' letters.
- Continue to distinguish between homophones and other words which are often confused.
- Use knowledge of morphology and etymology in spelling, and understand that the spelling of some words needs to be learnt specifically, as listed in the grammar list.
- Use dictionaries to check the spelling and meaning of words.
- Use the first three or four letters of a word to check spelling, meaning, or both of these in a dictionary.
- Use a thesaurus.
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Handwriting and presentation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices, and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
 - Choosing the writing tool that is best suited for a task.

Writing – composition

Pupils should be taught to:



- Plan their writing by:
 - Identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own.
 - Noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary.
 - In writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in what pupils have read, listened to or seen performed.
- Draft and write by:
 - Selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning.
 - Describing settings, characters, atmosphere, and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action in narratives.
 - Summarising longer passages.
 - Using a wide range of devices to build consistency within and across paragraphs.
 - Organising and presenting text to guide the reader.
- Evaluate and edit by:
 - Assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing.
 - Suggesting changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to make the piece more effective and clarify meaning.
 - Ensuring consistent and correct use of tense throughout a piece of writing.
 - Ensuring correct subject and verb agreement when using singular and plural, distinguishing between the language of speech and writing, and choosing the appropriate register.
- Proof-read for spelling and punctuation errors.
- Perform their own compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume, and movement so that meaning is clear.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop their understanding of the concepts set out in the grammar list by:
 - Recognising vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal speech and writing, including subjunctive forms.
 - Using passive verbs to affect the presentation of information in a sentence.
 - Using the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause.
 - Using expanded noun phrases to convey complex information concisely.
 - Using modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility.
 - Using relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or with an implied relative pronoun.
 - Learning the grammar for years 5 and 6.
- Indicate grammatical and other features by:
 - Using commas to clarify meaning or avoid vagueness in writing.
 - Using hyphens to avoid vagueness.
 - Using brackets, dashes or commas to show parenthesis.
 - Using semi-colons, colons or dashes to mark boundaries between independent clauses.
 - Using a colon to introduce a list.



- Punctuating bullet points consistently.
- Use and understand the grammatical terminology accurately and appropriately in discussing writing and reading.



Cross curricular expectations (see Foundation policies)

It is expected that pupils will have opportunities to apply skills in reading and writing in other areas of the curriculum, teachers will provide pupils with cross curricular writing opportunities that link closely to children's writing targets. These opportunities will be stated on MTPs.

Planning/Subject Coverage/Timetabling

The English subject lead will take overall responsibility for ensuring effective planning and consistency of approach by teachers in accordance with the National curriculum.

A long term overview is provided by the subject lead of the texts covered for each year. This identifies fiction and non-fiction writing that will take place. Short term planning is carried out by individual teachers within each year group and shared with their teaching partner. The agreed school format for planning is on active inspire and a structured flipchart planning template is followed.

Planning will ensure that there are frequent and regular opportunities for:

- Extended writing, which will be based on and will develop further skills covered in the English lesson and which will include both fiction and non-fiction in order to facilitate children's ability to develop as independent writers.
- Extra reading activities, e.g. comprehension. Also teachers will provide the opportunity to change their home/school reading books.
- Handwriting development.

Inclusion

Inclusion statement for subject policies

The starting points for educating all pupils are the same: an acceptance of diversity, pupils' rights, and the knowledge that all pupils can learn if they receive good teaching. All pupils have a right to effective teaching and full participation in the community of a school as set out in international agreements (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) and education law in England (the Equality Act, 2010 and the Children and Families Act, 2014).

At Alexandra Infants' and Junior School it is our belief that all children have an equal right to a broad and balanced curriculum, which enables them to meet their full potential. Through our teaching we provide learning opportunities that are ambitious for all and enable all pupils to make good progress.

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils in English. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:



- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)



(For further details, see separate policies)

Teachers will plan lessons so pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study English, and ensure that barriers to learning are reduced through adaptations as part of high-quality teaching. Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in English.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

As a school we strive to ensure that all children, staff and members of our school community are treated fairly and equally. All children have equal rights to access all areas of the curriculum, regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and disability. Within this subject area, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all staff endeavour to provide the appropriate provision for this to occur. This policy follows the guidelines and practices that are stated and outlined in Alexandra Infants' and Junior Schools Equality Scheme. Please see this policy for further detail.

Updated January, 2018 by Claire Mountford and Hayley Thompson. (English Lead and Deputy)

Updated June 2020 by Lauren Davenport (Key Stage One English Lead)

Updated June 2021 by Lauren Davenport (Key Stage One English Lead) and Claire Mountford (Key Stage two English lead).

Updated April 2022 by Hayley Thompson (Acting Key Stage One English Lead) and Claire Mountford (Key Stage Two English lead).

Updated May 2023 by Claire Mountford (English Lead at Alexandra Junior School)

Updated May 2024 by Claire Mountford (English Lead at Alexandra Junior School)

Updated April 2025 by Claire Mountford (English Lead at Alexandra Junior School) and Lauren Davenport (English Lead at Alexandra Infants' School)

Updated February 2026 by Lauren Davenport (English Lead at Alexandra Infants' School)



This policy will be reviewed annually.

