

Bowburn Primary School

English Policy



Date of next review – December 2024

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English Policy 2023 - 2024

1. Aim and Intent

At Bowburn Primary School, we believe that language and English is fundamental to the overall development of the child and their access to the curriculum in all its aspects. We recognise that the acquisition of English, both spoken and written, will empower our pupils and provide the foundation for all future learning.

Therefore, we aim to enable all children to become literate; to be able to read and write with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. They should be able to use Standard English to express themselves imaginatively and clearly, and know how to listen attentively to others. Children at Bowburn Primary will use their English skills to communicate and work effectively with others, to develop as independent learners. We strive to promote a culture of reading, not simply as a life skill, but to also develop in pupils a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also enrich their lives. We hope that through their English skills, they will be able to become active participants in society beyond the school community.

We are very aware that some of our pupils have difficulties, which may inhibit their confidence or fluency with reading and writing. We value the fact that by working together to remove these barriers it will allow our pupils to accomplish their full literary potential.

This policy aims to clarify the teaching and learning of English at Bowburn Primary, and to provide guidance for teaching staff, parents and governors on agreed practice within the school.

Our aim in the teaching of English is that by the end of Year 6, all children will:

- develop the necessary skills to use the English language confidently
- be able to speak clearly, fluently and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners
- be able to listen to the spoken word attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy in order to identify the main points they have heard
- be able to read a range of materials fluently and with understanding for enjoyment and for information through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text level knowledge
- be able to write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes using spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and confidently
- be able to reflect and evaluate on their own and others' contributions and the language used
- be able to increase their ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Teaching of Phonics Policy
- Marking & Feedback Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy

2. **Statutory Requirements (DfE, 2013)**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are set out in the National Curriculum in England (2013) and in the Learning and Development Requirements section of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021.) The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The National Curriculum for English (DfE, 2013) aims 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; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

EYFS

In EYFS children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and opportunities to communicate

The early learning goals, summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year (*DfE, 2013*).

The early learning goals

Communication and language

- **Listening and attention:** children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- **Understanding:** children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- **Speaking:** children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

English

- **Reading:** children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- **Writing:** children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2)

In Key Stage 1, children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They learn to both quickly decode and recognise familiar words when reading, understanding the sounds that are spoken. They learn to read and write independently and at length in Y2. They plan, revise and evaluate their writing. They use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 - 6)

In Key Stage 2, children learn to alter the way they speak and/or write to fit different situations, purposes and audiences. They encounter a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry and engage in high-quality discussion to explore the use of language used and to develop their linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Children in Key Stage 2 become effective with their composition of writing by forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader, using their awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly widened knowledge of grammatical terminology.

3. Our Approaches

3.1 Speaking and Listening

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – it underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We recognise the importance of being aware of skills children have already acquired in order to build on this foundation. From entry in EYFS until Year 6, children are given opportunities to develop and learn new skills in formal and informal settings, both in and outside of the classroom.

Children are encouraged to speak clearly and listen carefully, and both speaking and listening are stimulated in a range of ways, including;

- listening to and responding to stories, rhymes, poems, songs and games from various cultures
- responding to visual and aural stimuli, such as pictures, paintings, radio or film clips
- describing/recounting events

- storytelling and reading aloud
- reciting lines, songs or poems learned by heart in school plays or class presentations
- using modelled writing sessions where they have the opportunity to talk through their ideas before they write, discussing vocabulary choices and impact of language
- listening and responding with constructive comments, questions or answers in a variety of speaking and listening activities across the curriculum, developing wide ranging and suitable vocabulary e.g. circle time/ happy schools class discussions – having the ability to listen and respond as and when appropriate
- joining in group discussions and interactions, taking on different roles, making a range of contributions, sharing own opinions and working collaboratively, e.g. whole class discussions/ debates/ group tasks
- joining in drama and role play activities, scripting and performing, and responding to performances e.g. conscience alley/ hot-seating
- carrying out imaginative play
- giving and receiving instructions and replaying messages accurately
- developing social skills and good manners; showing courtesy to each other and visitors
- using talk partners regularly throughout the curriculum to encourage development of ideas

3.2 Phonics – please see separate ‘Phonics Policy’

Key Stage Two:

If pupils still struggle to read fluently and accurately in Key Stage 2, they will work with their class and receive the reading teaching suitable for that age group, with reasonable adjustments made to ensure they can access these tasks.

Further to this, if children still require extra reading input beyond Year 2, they will be identified using their phonic assessments and may access interventions according to their needs, including Lexia and group phonics ‘catch-up’ teaching.

Phoneme grapheme correspondence charts are displayed in all classrooms for children and staff to refer to in order to support spelling and reading.

Phonics Screening:

The phonics screening check takes place within Year 1 and ensures that our teachers can check that children are making sufficient progress with their phonics skills to read words and that they are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning. It helps give us and parents information on how the child is progressing in phonics. We use the phonics screening to help us identify whether a child needs additional support at this stage and implement this accordingly, so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill.

3.3 Reading

Throughout the whole school, including EYFS, the value of speaking and listening skills and reading for pleasure are highly valued and teachers use their skills to extend the children's growing vocabulary and to rehearse sentences. As a school, we recognise the value of reading aloud to children to model appropriate use of story language and reading with expression. We want to enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers. We are always aiming to improve reading ability, to enhance independence and self-esteem. Reading is not restricted to the English lesson: many opportunities are provided for children to practice and extend their reading across other subjects.

Key Aims

For all children to be able to:

- develop a reading culture that promotes a life-long love and enjoyment of books; find the process of learning to read pleasurable and satisfying
- become independent readers who read with confidence and fluency and can understand and evaluate a variety of reading material
- use a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes
- become critical readers to give them greater understanding of the wider world
- understand the importance of reading as a means of communication and see it as a purposeful activity

Whole Class Reading

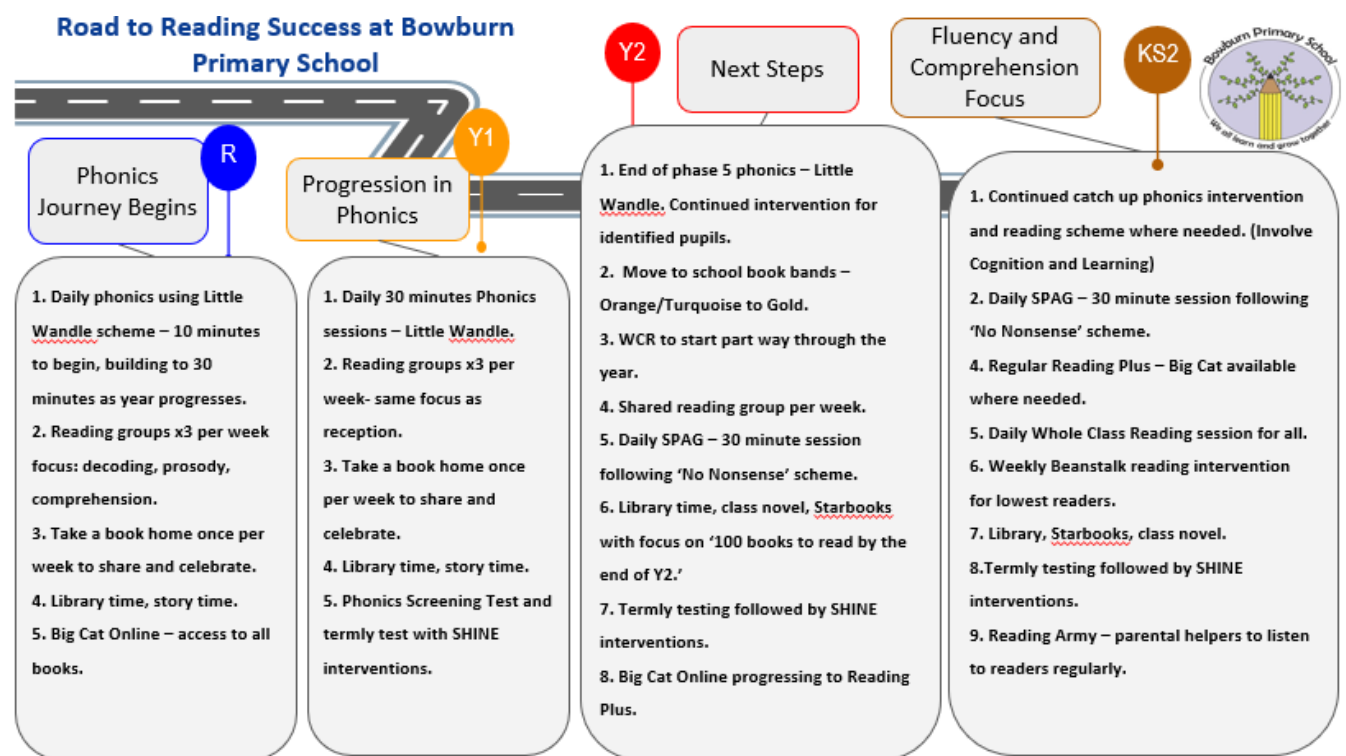
All children from Y2-6 will take part in daily whole class reading sessions of approximately 30 minutes where no child is left behind. These sessions are taught using a modelling and shared reading structure followed by a variety of question type and are separate to their daily English lessons. Texts are carefully selected to link to the wider curriculum such as science and geography. For example, in Y6 a WCR session may be based on Charles Darwin whilst studying Evolution in science. There are no exam-style questions, rather rich discussion on the over-arching themes of a text and these sessions end with a balanced argument question where children are encouraged to share their own thoughts and opinions. All children participate in these sessions, regardless of their reading age/ ability as texts are adapted for their needs or pre-reading takes place.

Whole Class Reading is in place by the end of Year 2 and throughout Key Stage 2. This approach develops confidence in spoken English and confidence when reading aloud. It encourages pupils to think about their own thought process during reading. Throughout the session, all pupils are actively involved.

These reading sessions should be recorded in children's reading comprehension books as evidence for teacher assessment purposes.

Additional

- **Targeted Readers:** Some readers in each class struggle with their reading ability and require more focussed 1:1 reading time. Reading volunteers listen to identified pupils several times per week. The volunteer has regular dialogues with the teacher and evaluates and adapts their approach to continue to develop that pupil's confidence, self-esteem and reading ability.
- **Reading for pleasure:** Time in daily class timetable is made available for a reading for pleasure slot. In this time, staff also aim to hear individual readers, change books and visit the library.
- **Class novels:** All pupils are read to during daily 'class novel' time. Once per week, children share recommendations with the class.
- **Libraries:** Their usage is timetabled, staff and trained librarians run library slots for each year group. Access to this is weekly in order to change books and read for pleasure.
- **Bowburn Book Store** – Children earn 'gold coins' to spend in the school book shop. Through the use of an audit, books are purchased from the school budget. Coins are awarded for success in reading E.g. Progressing a level on Reading Plus
- **Big Cat Phonics Online Reading Programme** – This programme is linked to the Little Wandle Phonics Programme and is designed to allow all pupils to access all books at home to practise.
- **Reading Plus** – All children that are able to access the assessment can progress from BCP use the programme on a daily basis. The programme is designed to improve fluency and comprehension



3.4 Writing

Our aim at Bowburn Primary is to develop children's love and enthusiasm for writing across the curriculum, whilst providing them with the necessary skills to do so. In KS1, the basics of writing is taught so that children can form all letters correctly and write sentences to prepare them for Y2 when writers are encouraged to become more creative and independent. At this point, teachers teach around a class text; all writing is linked to the text. Together, children and staff establish the purposes and audiences for writing, promoting the idea of writing for a purpose. A success criterion is created as a class using the 'Boxed Up' method by James Durran.

We aim to develop their ability to produce well-structured writing with appropriate detail, in which the meaning is clear and the interest of the reader is engaged. Our approach to writing aims to instil the importance of transcription and composition, as required in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013).

Key Aims

For all children to be able to:

- become independent and confident writers
- see writing as a purposeful activity
- understand the importance of audience and purpose and write in a variety of genres
- develop strategies to communicate effectively through the written word and understand the importance of writing as a means of communication
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and with confidence
- recognise that drafting and editing are essential parts of the writing process
- develop powers of imagination and inventiveness through writing

EYFS

Within the Foundation Stage opportunities for real writing are provided in a range of areas and as a result of varied stimuli. Writing opportunities are planned from a class text, linked to the children's interests, and the skills and outcomes required are planned for to enable children to work progressively towards meeting the early learning goal for writing. Children engage in shared writing, guided writing and independent writing opportunities, as their skill and confidence increases.

Bowburn Primary Writing Journey

A whole school book spine is created to ensure high quality texts are chosen and to provide a coverage of themes and authors across the school, to stimulate children's creativity and to help to develop their enthusiasm for writing. Writing is planned towards a journey of work, which is creative, imaginative and engages the interests of our pupils.

By the end of Year 6, we aim for our children to be confident in writing and recognising a range of text types:

- Narrative
- Poetry
- Recounts in various forms
- Reports and information texts
- Instructions
- Explanations
- Biographies
- Discussions
- Persuasion

Children's work is recorded in their English books, which then demonstrates the child's whole writing journey up to the final piece.

Additional

- At all stages of the journey, opportunities for developing spoken language skills are woven through the sessions to consolidate learning (*see speaking and listening section*), in addition to practicing core reading skills at word, sentence and text level.
- We value the efforts children put into their work and it is displayed around school.
- There are planned opportunities to write across the curriculum to further embed writing skills, including spelling, punctuation and grammar. Our diverse topics give the opportunity to allow writing for a range of purposes, in a variety of contexts and continue to inspire a love of writing, as well as instilling in them that all writing has a purpose.

Bowburn Writing Journey



At Bowburn Primary School, children follow a clear road map of non-negotiables per year group. From Y2, English lessons are planned around a whole class novel. Writing is based upon themes covered in the novel, non-fiction and fiction are covered (as shown on reading spine). We find that as the children get to know the plot and characters, this inspires their love of writing.

Exploring

Children look at a high-quality model, which shows them 'what a good one looks like'. They also recall their experiences from previous year groups and reflect on their 'next steps'. Activities are set which allow children to read, analyse, discuss, interrogate and sometimes compare texts, specifically looking at key features, skills and techniques used by the author. These texts are added to books or working walls as part of a writer's toolkit and can be referred to during the writing process.

Success Criteria

It is important that purpose, audience and impact are defined and understood. The ingredients needed to achieve success and high level vocabulary must be established. Children think independently, share ideas with talk partners then record as a whole class on the planning board. This adds to the writer's toolkit to be referred to during and after the writing process. Planning formats allow children to order their thoughts and prepare for their first draft.

Skills Sessions/ Writing

Using knowledge and information they have gathered through the exploration lesson, the success criteria and planning created, their writing journey is made up of direct teaching of skills/techniques (this may take place in a separate SPAG lesson), teacher modelling and paired writing on whiteboards. After teacher modelling, the children practise their skills on whiteboards in pairs. Good practice is shared and misconceptions discussed. Children then begin their first draft in books. To support, the teacher circulates to offer suggestions and encourage the use of the toolkit. Any common misconceptions can be addressed through mini plenaries.

Editing and Improving

Children are given the opportunity to review, edit and improve their writing at the start of each session. The teacher will have established common errors through whole class marking, explicit teaching and modelling may be needed to move learning forward. Children will read over and edit their own work based upon the whole class marking. Tools such as dictionaries, thesaurus, the writing toolkit and word banks are useful. Pupils may choose to revise their writing and use an editing flap. The writing process described above will continue until the writing is complete; this may take several days.

Peer Assessment/Final Draft

Children are given the opportunity to share their work with a partner. Both children look at one piece of work together. They are taught to check the success criteria and to use editing stations as prompts. Children are encouraged support their partner to make improvements. If a child would like to re-write any section of their work, they can do this on an editing flap and stick this in their margin. Teachers will then mark this final piece identifying what is good and how it could be improved the next time this text type is covered.

Greater Depth Writers

More confident writers should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of their writing and any editing they carry out. Why did they make specific vocabulary choices? Opportunities to write from a different perspective should be offered.

3.6 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

SPG teaching

Within our writing journey (*see writing section*) SPG teaching is included. Teachers plan and teach lessons with SPG activities, which are specifically linked to the writing outcome, allowing children to embed the new SPG learning but also apply it within the correct context. Following on from the phonics programme, staff in Y2-6 teach SPG discretely on a daily basis 9:00-9:30 following the 'No-Non-Sense Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation Programme.'

Spelling

At Bowburn Primary we follow the 'No- Non-Sense' Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation Programme, which coincides with the National Curriculum requirements for spelling:

EYFS & Year 1:

Little Wandle_u phonic focus (*see Phonics Policy*).

Year 2:

- 5x 30 min sessions per week:

As outlined in the Phonics Policy, some Year 2 pupils will continue to receive the Little Wandle programme.

Year 3 & 4:

5x 30 min sessions per week

Year 5 & 6:

5x 30 min sessions per week

Statutory spellings are continuously checked and taught/recapped when or if needed.

In addition to teaching the required spelling rules, children will also continue to work on common exception words applicable to each year group/ the learning needs of the children. They also apply their spellings within dictations. Work completed in SPG sessions is recorded in children's spelling, grammar and punctuation books.

3.7 Handwriting

Accurate letter formation is taught following the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme from reception. When letters are correctly formed, the school handwriting scheme, Letter Join, is followed.

Teachers are expected to consistently and continuously model how to form and join letters correctly throughout every lesson of every day, for example when writing on the board as part of a lesson; when writing the date and learning objective for the lesson; when writing in children's books or when writing on working walls. Handwriting sessions should take place daily following Letter Join scheme.

Writing is to be completed in pencil until the child is able to form and join letters correctly or their teacher deems it appropriate to swap to the use of a pen. We aim for all children to develop a handwriting style that is fluent, joined and legible.

4. Assessment

Writing

Our assessment tools link to the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum and have been broken down into small, achievable steps. These are Durham writing assessment grids and are used to assess writing from Year 1 to 6 – they identify whether a child is emerging, developing, secure or exceeding writers within their year group and clearly measure progression across the school. Each year group have non-negotiables, to ensure children make progress through the programme of study for their year group. Our grids also help teachers select the writing elements they will teach during the writing journey.

Alongside continuous assessment for learning, the grids are used to assess writing on a half termly basis. Teachers use a selection of writing from the half term to make an overall judgement on which of the criteria are met and therefore the overall outcome for the child. From the completed assessment for writing, children will be categorised as emerging, developing or secure for their year group, which is to be tracked to measure progress. Staff are given exemplars provided by the Durham English development Team; they also attend yearly writing moderation 'drop in' sessions with the Local Authority which gives them the opportunity to share and discuss writing examples.

Staff meet termly to moderate writing with the English lead as well as taking part in cluster moderations with local schools and LA moderation events.

For more information please see the school Assessment Policy.

Reading

Due to our WCR approach (*see reading section*), teachers are continuously assessing the children's reading ability alongside each skill within the lesson and in correspondence with the National Curriculum objectives. Alongside the lesson assessment for learning, work produced within reading comprehension books and hearing children read, Durham County assessment grids are also used to support the overall teacher assessment of reading at the end of every term. Moreover, termly written reading tests (NFER) from Year 1 to 6 are completed each term to further support teacher judgement. From the completed assessment for reading, children will be categorised as emerging, developing, secure or exceeding for their year group, which is to be tracked to measure progress.

For more information please see the school Assessment Policy.

5. Marking

Please see separate Making and Feedback Policy.

6. Inclusion in English

At Bowburn Primary School, we understand that the children have different backgrounds in terms of knowledge, experience, ability and circumstances and we have high expectations of every child. We know that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and engaged and therefore aim to ensure that English throughout the school is accessible by all pupils, regardless of ability, gender, race or belief.

The needs of all children are considered carefully when planning and teaching English as we want children to reach their full potential. We recognise that some children may need some additional support and they will receive this. Where necessary, teachers identify which children are not making progress and take steps to improve their progress and attainment in English, alongside the English subject leads and in liaison with the SENCO. More able and talented children are identified and suitable learning challenges are provided.

For more information please see the school Equality Policy and SEND Policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

English, as with all subjects, is routinely monitored and reviewed through the School's Self Evaluation procedures.

It is monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- the monitoring of teaching and learning by the SLT and English leads through lesson observations, learning walks, monitoring of planning, monitoring of displays etc.
- sampling of pupil books/work by English leads/ SLT
- in school moderation of writing by English leads/ SLT
- analysis of data
- pupil progress meetings
- pupil and staff questionnaires

8. Role of Governors

Our governors are extremely supportive of the school and it is the role of the English governor to play a key role in the monitoring and evaluating of English throughout the school. The English leads are responsible for keeping the link governor up to date with the subject and they will make monitoring visits to the school to liaise with the English leads, for example holding discussions, carrying out learning walks and reviewing data and results.

9. Parental Involvement

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children learn and progress within our school. We understand that the active support and involvement of parents is crucial to children achieving their potential in English and in all aspects of the English Curriculum. There is recognition that the nature of the school's catchment is such that the school will need to reach out to parents and offer support to them in carrying out this role. We do this by hosting parent workshops to provide practical advice on how parents can support their children in certain areas of the English curriculum; inform them about and encourage an engagement with home learning (in line with our homework policy) and host celebrations (special events such as World Book Day, assemblies and book fairs).

We are committed to ensuring that parents are kept well informed about English teaching and learning. On a formal basis, regular parents' evenings are held throughout the year to review each child's learning. Alongside this, we pride ourselves in having a range of opportunities to informally discuss children's development with parents. A formal written report is also presented to parents annually, detailing attainment, areas of strength and those areas needing support with suggested next steps for improvement. We also have a half termly reading newsletter, 'No Shelf Control', where parents are informed of reading developments in school, competitions, book reviews and book fairs.

10. The Role of the English Leads

It is the role of the leads to:

- Create, monitor and review the implementation of the English policy and report the results to the Head Teacher and the SLT team.
- Provide training, guidance and support to staff in accordance with Continual Professional Development.
- Prepare the English Development Plan in consultation with the head and ensure that it is carried out.
- Monitor and review standards of English teaching and learning through lesson observations, team teaching, samples of work, book scrutiny, moderation, monitoring planning etc.
- Purchase and manage resources across the school to ensure high quality resources are available for all aspects of the English curriculum.
- Manage the English budget in liaison with the School Business Manager.
- Liaise with relevant outside agencies.
- Attend English network meetings, keeping up to date with developments in English and disseminate training.
- Lead by example and provide a positive role model for the teaching of English.
- Support the requirements of the Assessment Policy and systems.
- Fulfil the requirements of the Responsibility Leader policy.

Policy Status

The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance).

Written by:	C.Middleton – English Lead
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