Willowpark Academy

English Policy

Updated: September 2025

Date for review: September 2026

Policy Statement and Rationale

This policy reflects Willowpark Primary Academy's aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of English. It sets out a broad framework within which teaching staff can operate and outlines principles of planning, teaching and assessment.

This policy is reflection of our commitment to deliver excellence in teaching and to act in accordance with, or to exceed, statutory requirements. It should be read in conjunction with the 2014 National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which set out the rationale for teaching each area of the English curriculum and specify the skills to be developed by the majority of pupils in each year group. Specific skills, including phonics, spelling, handwriting and shared and guided reading are otherwise defined and explained in individual sections of this policy.

At Willowpark, we are concerned with the development of the whole child; the ability to communicate effectively leads to self-confidence and a healthy self-esteem and it is in this context that this policy is set. Our aim is that all pupils leave us with an ability to express themselves correctly and appropriately, in spoken and written language, and to read accurately, with understanding and with enjoyment. In order to develop in these areas, pupils are taught to:

- Learn to use spoken and written language confidently, allowing a variety of interpretations and outcomes without fear of destructive criticism.
- Use a range of activities and contexts for spoken and written language to entertain, reason, persuade, argue, explain, instruct and describe, including opportunities for interactive learning and for the use of language in relevant, real life contexts.
- Develop language skills in and through ALL curriculum subjects
- Become keen readers across a wide range of texts
- Make articulate, perceptive and informed comments about a variety of texts, including media and moving image texts
- Recognise that writers manipulate language and form according to purpose and audience

At Willowpark we intend for all pupils to experience an inspiring, language-rich and motivational English environment. We aim to foster a love of books and reading, alongside a positive culture of writing, for a variety of purposes and audiences and across all subjects within our broad curriculum.

When children begin their schooling at Willowpark, they will begin their early reading and writing development supported by excellent synthetic phonics teaching, giving them the foundational skills needed to confidently segment, decode and build words. During their times at our school, all pupils will be given the opportunity to immerse themselves in a wide range of texts from a range of different cultures.

Through shared texts and explicit teaching, they will experience a wide range of vocabulary, giving them the understanding and power of language that they need to flourish. Our intent is for every child to leave our care as able and independent communicators, with the confidence and skills required to read and write fluently. They will be thoroughly prepared in all aspects of English and fully equipped for the next step in their educational journey.

Teachers use materials which reflect cultural and social diversity and which provide positive images of race, gender and disability, free from discrimination and stereotyping. A variety of teaching and learning styles are adopted to ensure that all children are included and valued and in accordance with requirements of the 2014 curriculum.

The school believes that English skills are vital to the development of children so they are prepared for their future life. A broad and balanced English programme using objectives from the National Curriculum 2014, determines the skills that each year group and Key Stage must cover. A range of genres studied and promoted. A variety of resources are used to promote a reading and writing culture. Children are given a range of writing opportunities including the use of paired, group and independent writing tasks across the

curriculum. A culture of learning from each other is promoted through use of co-operative learning structures. This is developed across both key stages, so that the children learn to respond appropriately and supportively to each other regardless of gender, age, cultural or ethnic background.

At Willowpark Academy, we are committed to teaching our pupils to become skilled readers who develop a comprehensive understanding of words, language and texts as they move through school. They learn to read and then read to learn. Through using a range of strategies, our aim is to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading so that they can read for purpose and for pleasure.

Teaching and Learning Overview

English is at the heart of the curriculum, so that subject matter from other areas is available as content or stimulus for speaking, listening, reading and writing. All curriculum areas involve some aspects of English.

Early Years Foundation Stage

By the end of Foundation Stage, most children should be able to:

- Listen attentively in a range of situations
- Listen to stories, anticipate events and respond with relevant questions, comments or actions
- Give attention to what others say and respond appropriately
- Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions
- Answer how or why questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events
- Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of the listener's needs
- Use past, present and future forms when talking about events
- Develop their own narrative and explanations by connecting ideas or events

In reading and writing, most should be able to:

- Read and understand simple sentences
- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately
- Read some common irregular words
- Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read
- Use phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds
- Write some irregular common words
- Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others
- Spell some words correctly and others in a phonetically plausible way

Key Stages 1 and 2

The English programme of study, as detailed in the National Curriculum 2014, is based

on the following 4 areas of teaching and learning:

- Spoken language
- Reading
    - Word reading/decoding
    - Comprehension

Writing

- Transcription
- Handwriting and presentation
- Composition
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

By the end of each Key Stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in each area.

Spoken Language/ Oracy

Pupils should:

- Be taught to speak confidently, clearly and audibly in a range of contexts
- Learn to adapt spoken language, varying use and register according to purpose and audience
- Learn to listen with concentration in real contexts
- Learn to take part in discussions, negotiations, debates and presentations, justifying opinions and evaluating and building on others' ideas
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Asking questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Give well-structures descriptions and explanations
- Participate in performance, in both drama and poetry.

Outside English lessons, the school provides a variety of forums in which to practice these skills. These include School Council meetings, sharing assemblies, public performances and plays and opportunities to participate in local or national initiatives and competitions as they arise. *(Please see Oracy Policy)*

Reading

Teachers should understand the skills and strategies needed to enable pupils to read accurately for meaning and pleasure, using methods and strategies such as shared and guided reading and systematic, synthetic phonics teaching.

Pupils should:

- Read for pleasure as well as study
- Read a wide range, including media and ICT texts and texts from a variety of cultures and traditions
- Learn to be discriminating readers, with ability to understand layers of meaning
- Learn to make critical responses to what they read
- Explore meanings of text using drama.

Reading for information and other purposes should be reinforced in all subjects.

Please see Early Reading Action Plan / Early Reading Policy

Writing

Teachers should understand the skills and strategies involved in teaching writing and understand that writing is essential to thinking and learning and to investigating and organising ideas. Writing should be seen as an enjoyable activity in itself and there should be opportunities to write planned into the wider curriculum.

Pupils should:

- Be taught to write fluently and accurately, understanding related rules and conventions
- Learn to write for communication by creating images, describing experiences, ideas and feelings, and organising information in order to engage, inform and persuade
- Learn a variety of forms of writing, such as letters, notes, narrative and poetry
- Be able to choose form and content to suit purpose and audience

- Be able to compose on paper and on screen, using different fonts and layouts
- Learn to respond critically to their own and to others' writing
- Learn to redraft their work to develop and improve content, style and accuracy.

Writing at Willowpark

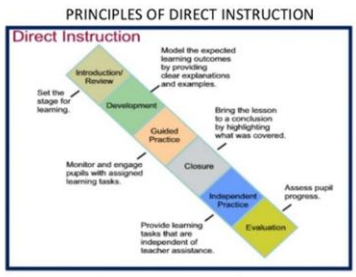
Implementation

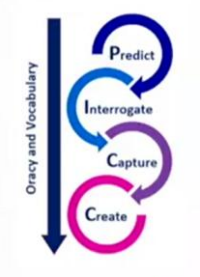
Our school provides daily English lessons that are progressive and support skill development. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is followed to ensure continuity &progression from entering Nursery, moving on to Reception Class & then through to the National Curriculum in KS1 & KS2.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is divided into prime & specific areas of learning and development. 'Communication & Language' is one of 3 prime areas that are fundamental to supporting their language development. 'Communication & Language' is made up of the following aspects: listening and attention, understanding and speaking. 'English' is one of 4 specific areas which include the development of essential skills and knowledge and is made up of the 2 aspects: reading & writing. Pupil provision is related to attainment, not age. Children learn through play, speaking and listening activities, teacher modelling, group work and self-direction.

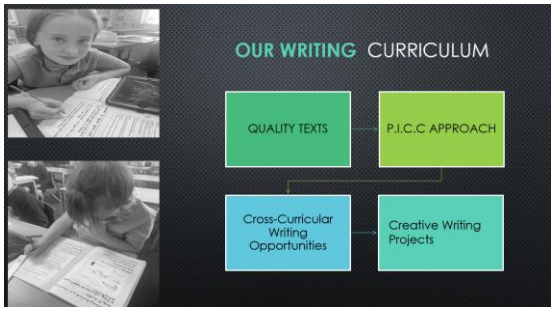
We teach children to read using Read, Write, Inc *(please see Early Reading Policy for further information)* From EYFS to Year 6 we the P.I.C.C. a text approach is used throughout Reading and writing lessons. Reading and writing are inextricably linked.

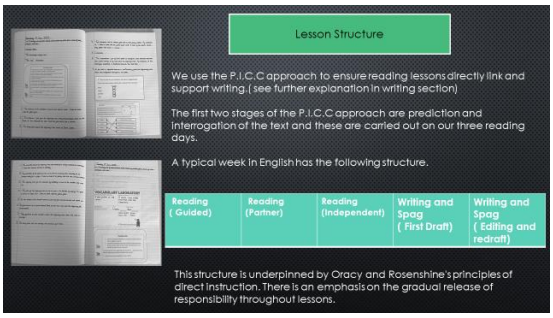
In English lessons across both Key Stages, teachers plan a sequence of lessons that explore quality texts using VIPERS. They make predictions and interrogate the text they are studying as part of the P.I.C.C. a text approach. Pupils are given the opportunity to capture ideas and create their own writing. They explore grammar in context and use this in their independent writing. Throughout the approach, we use Rosenshine's principles of direct instruction and focus on the gradual release of responsibility. Teachers model these skills on regular basis and planning, editing, publishing and ICT based tasks can be planned in as part of the teaching sequence.

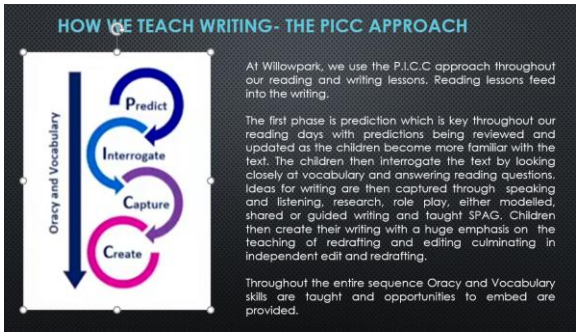


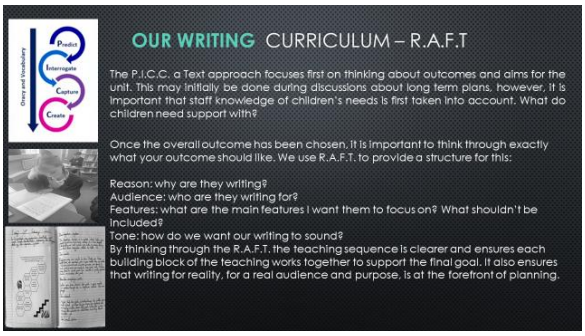


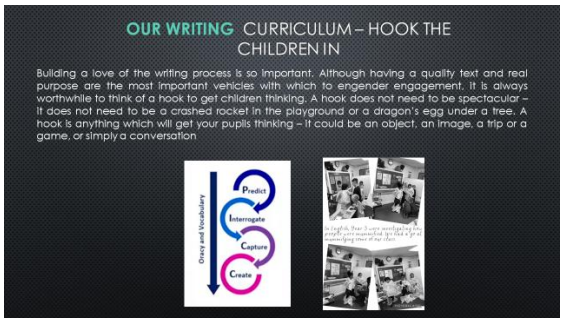
P.I.C.C. a text approach

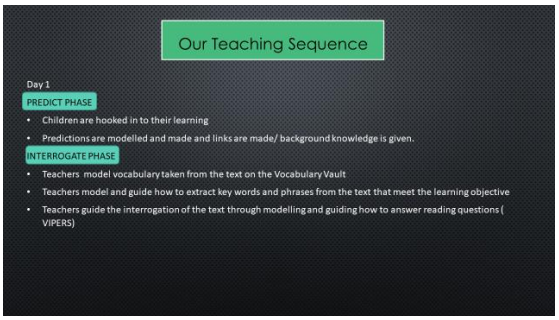


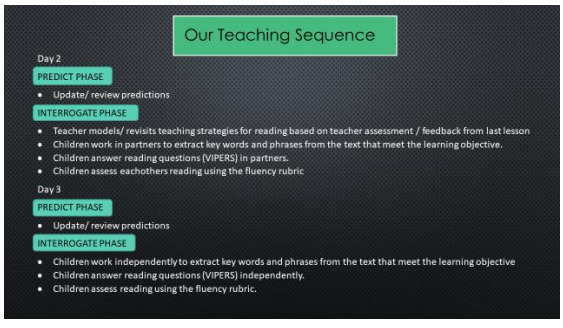


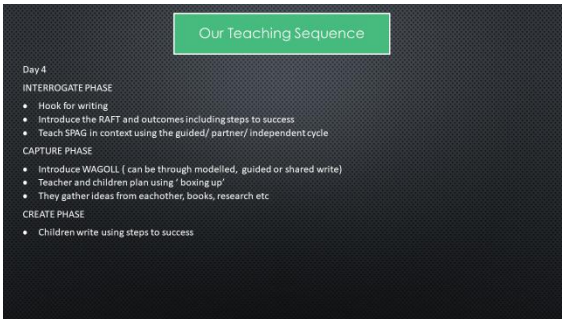


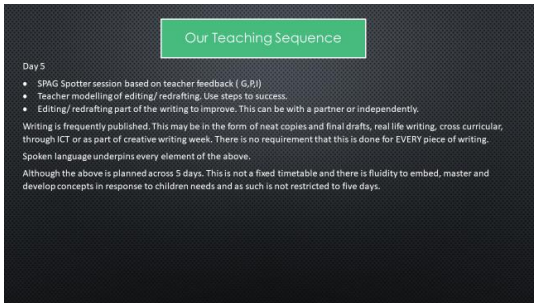












(for further information see Writing and Reading at Willowpark pdfs on website)

Handwriting

Handwriting sessions are taught regularly to the children. We do not teach pre- cursive. Children are taught to join once they can form letters correctly and are ready to do s from Year 2 onwards. The children have separate handwriting books and are expected to apply this cursive script into their daily writing.

Teaching writing is a main focus at Willowpark Primary Academy. Pupils are encouraged to:

- Become independent writers
- Become familiar with a range of writing to suit audience and purpose
- Reflect on their own individuality and creativity

In order to maintain a positive climate for writing, teacher should:

- Ensure that extended writing time is frequently and regularly available
- Provide access to a wide range of quality reading resources including non-fiction, stories, and poetry and play scripts in various formats
- Create frequent opportunities to share and publish writing
- Share their own favourite writing and texts with the children
- Allow opportunities to read whole texts as well as extracts
- Expose children to a wide range of authors, poets and storytellers, planning opportunities for children to encounter good examples of writing and investigate an author's craft
- Use demonstration as well as shared and supported composition on a regular basis.

Handwriting

Aims are:

- To develop a legible, fluent and comfortable style
- To appreciate the aesthetic qualities of handwriting
- To gain pleasure from presentation
- To ensure that a good standard of handwriting is used and maintained in all areas of the curriculum.

Children are taught handwriting from Foundation Stage to KS2 and discrete handwriting

sessions then help children to progress through three stages:

- Stage 1 – developing correct letter formation, posture and pencil grip
- Stage 2 – learning to join letters and developing a cursive style
- Stage 3 – to be increasingly able to make their first draft their best copy

Teachers are expected to set a good example by writing neatly and in the style agreed when marking children's work or writing on the board.

Spelling

Children are taught strategies enabling them to:

- Spell accurately and identify reasons for mis-spellings
- Proof-read their spelling
- Recognise and use word origins, families and roots to build their skills
- Use dictionaries, thesauruses and spell-checks.

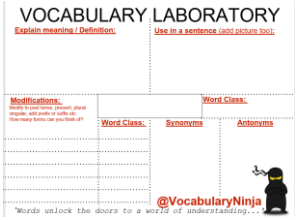
The majority of children will be able to spell words specified in the appendices of the National Curriculum 2014 at the end of each school year and/or key stage.

Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary

Teachers should understand, teach and demonstrate in their everyday practice the formal conventions of Standard English language.

They should emphasise their importance to meaning and effect. Teaching in all areas forms part of everyday English lessons, whether discrete or in active context, and should be developed across all areas of the wider curriculum.

Vocabulary is explicitly taught in English lessons and across the curriculum. We use Word Aware and Vocabulary Ninja as resources.



Impact

Teachers use assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and link it clearly to learning objectives. They record and track each child's progress, showing analysis of achievement in relation to learning objectives and using this to set future targets.

They use a variety of formative assessment methods and constructive marking strategies, involving children in their own assessment through explicit understanding of learning objectives and target-setting for personal improvement.

Assessment for learning strategies are used on a daily basis. These will allow a picture to be built up of the pupils' progress, any areas of strength or weakness which can then be addressed in teachers' planning.

Assessment of learning is completed termly. Children complete independent writing pieces within a unit of work, which are assessed against our writing criteria. Teachers will have at least 6 pieces of work through the academic year. Analysis of the data impacts upon teachers planning so pupils' needs can be addressed. Moderation of teacher assessment is also completed in order to ensure that judgements are accurate.

At the end of KS1 and KS2 teachers use the Teacher Assessment Framework to report Teacher assessment.

Leadership and Management

The subject leader's role is to empower colleagues to teach Reading and Writing to a high standard and support staff in the following ways:

- By keeping up to date on current issues; disseminating relevant information and providing training for staff members (either directly or through other professionals)
- Leading by example by modelling lessons or styles of teaching
- Having a knowledge of the quality of writing provision across the school and using this to provide a coaching and mentoring role
- Identifying and acting on development needs of staff members
- Monitoring expectations, provision and attainment across the school and providing feedback to develop practice further in order to raise standards

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored as part of the appraisal process through lesson observations and through the progress and attainment documents. In addition, continuity and progression across the school is monitored by the subject leader as is the implementation and impact of Assessment for Learning. The subject action plan and external advisors identify actions intended to raise standards.

The English Subject Leader will also provide an annual summary report to the Headteacher in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in writing and indicates areas for further improvement.

A named member of the governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching and learning of English. The link governor meets, at least termly, with the subject leader to review progress.

Partnerships with parents

Parents are kept informed of topics that are being covered through a newsletter sent half-termly. During Parents' Evenings curricular targets are shared and a written report is completed annually in the Summer Term. Homework consists of readily daily and we expect parents to sign diaries daily. We use Seesaw as a platform to communicate with parents, showcase work and upload hints and tips and videos to help children reading. Spellings also go home weekly.

Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) / Pupil Premium / Higher Attainers

All children will have Quality First Teaching. Any children with identified SEND or in receipt of pupil premium funding may have work additional to and different from their peers in order to access the curriculum dependent upon their needs. As well as this, our school offers a demanding and varied curriculum, providing children with a range of opportunities in order for them to reach their full potential and consistently achieve highly from their starting points.