



Parkside Primary School

English Policy

Reviewed September 2026

Introduction

The development of effective English skills—speaking, listening, reading and writing—is fundamental to children's achievement, wellbeing and future success. These skills enable children to communicate effectively, make sense of the world around them and access learning across the curriculum. The stronger children's English skills become, the more confidently and independently they can participate in learning and everyday life.

At Parkside Primary School, we recognise that English develops through opportunities to practise, refine and master essential skills. High-quality English provision can have a positive impact on children's motivation, behaviour, wellbeing and attainment. It empowers children to become independent learners and take increasing ownership of their learning journey.

We aim for children to become enthusiastic, confident and critical readers of a wide range of literature, including stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction. We carefully select texts to provide rich, inspiring and creative experiences while broadening children's knowledge of the world. Through the study of language, children develop an understanding of vocabulary, patterns, structures and the origins of words. They learn to select and adapt language appropriately for different purposes, audiences and situations.

Aims

At Parkside Primary School, we aim to:

- deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum and EYFS Framework for English in an innovative and, where appropriate, cross-curricular way;
- recognise that language is central to children's identity, belonging and personal development;
- ensure every child develops the essential English skills required to learn and access the wider curriculum;
- provide a broad, balanced and ambitious English curriculum that develops creativity and critical thinking;
- provide appropriate challenge and support for all children, regardless of starting point or ability;
- develop children's confidence as communicators, readers and writers;
- develop children's ability to think critically, challenge assumptions and question stereotypical thinking and mindsets;
- provide opportunities for children to develop vocabulary and subject knowledge through high-quality texts and experiences;
- support staff in delivering effective English provision across the school and in other areas of the curriculum.

The Structure of the English Curriculum

At Parkside Primary School, our English curriculum is designed to develop confident, fluent and purposeful readers, speakers and writers. The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that children build secure knowledge and skills over time and have regular opportunities to revisit, practise and apply their learning.

Writing

Our aim is for children to communicate meaningfully and effectively through writing for a range of purposes and audiences. We recognise that successful writing requires the development and coordination of a range of knowledge and skills, including sentence construction, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling, handwriting, planning and composition. The National Curriculum identifies two key elements of writing:

- **Transcription:** spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting;
- **Composition:** articulating ideas and structuring them effectively in speech and writing.

The National Curriculum expects pupils to:

- **use accurate spelling and punctuation;**
- **write using grammatically accurate sentences;**
- **write for a range of purposes and audiences, including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations;**
- **use writing to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard, read and learned.**

Writing in EYFS

At Parkside Primary School, our EYFS English provision follows the I am a Clever Writer approach, providing a systematic and progressive approach to developing the foundations of writing. There is a particular focus on pre-writing skills, ensuring children develop the physical skills needed to write with increasing control and fluency. This includes developing fine-motor strength and control, hand-eye coordination, pencil grip, posture and letter formation, with skills taught sequentially and built upon over time. Alongside this, children develop the oracy, vocabulary and comprehension needed to express their ideas and communicate effectively. High-quality texts and rich language experiences provide children with the vocabulary and understanding they need to become confident writers.

The approach follows three clear stages:

1. **Delve** – children explore and immerse themselves in a high-quality picture book, carefully selected from recommended *Power of Reading* texts. Through rich book talk, storytelling, props and images, children develop oracy, vocabulary and comprehension, building the language they need to become writers.
2. **Demonstrate** – teachers explicitly model the skills children need, breaking writing down into small, manageable steps, from fine-motor and mark-making skills through to letter formation and writing CVC words and overtime full sentences.
3. **Do** – children practise and apply these skills in focused writing groups, receiving adequate practice, repetition and rigorous teaching until skills become secure. This deliberate progression from *Delve*, *Demonstrate* and *Do* ensures that writing is taught explicitly rather than left to chance, whilst maintaining the creativity, language-rich experiences and play-based learning that are central to EYFS.

Sentence Knowledge Curriculum

At Parkside Primary School, the delivery of the 'Sentence Knowledge Curriculum' underpins the development of writing from Year 1 – 6. This curriculum ensures that sentence and paragraph construction is taught progressively in small, manageable steps, with children given extensive opportunities to practise new knowledge before applying it independently.

The curriculum recognises that children need to become fluent and accurate in sentence construction before they can consistently produce successful extended writing. Children therefore receive explicit teaching and extensive, deliberate practice of sentence-level knowledge before being expected to apply that knowledge independently.

The curriculum provides a clear progression of knowledge from one year group to the next. Teachers build on prior learning, revisit key concepts and use assessment for learning to identify and address gaps or misconceptions.

Sentence-Level Teaching

Sentence-level teaching focuses on a specific and carefully selected subset of sentence construction knowledge. Teachers explicitly model the knowledge and provide children with repeated opportunities to practise and apply it. The children participate in the 'I do, we do, you do cycle', enabling them to observe, rehearse and apply the teacher's modelling before producing their own writing.

A range of activities may be used, including:

- **explicit modelling;**
- **examples and non-examples;**
- **missing words;**
- **dictation;**
- **fixing errors;**
- **sentence jumbles;**
- **completing sentences;**
- **sentence expansion;**
- **sentence combining;**
- **applying new vocabulary;**
- **picture prompts;**
- **constructing subject-knowledge sentences.**

These activities are rooted in an underlying stimulus, such as a high-quality text or an area of learning from the wider curriculum. For example, when working from a text, children may develop their knowledge of vocabulary, plot, setting and characters alongside their sentence construction knowledge.

Modelling and Scaffolding

Teachers use explicit modelling to demonstrate how sentence-level knowledge can be applied in increasingly complex writing. During the scaffolded writing phase, the teacher creates a model piece of writing which demonstrates how the sentence-level learning from the preceding teaching can be applied in context.

Scaffolding is used to ensure that all children can experience success. As children's knowledge, confidence and independence develop, scaffolds are gradually removed. This approach allows less confident writers to secure the necessary knowledge and skills while providing opportunities for more confident and able writers to add detail, develop ideas and extend their writing.

Independent Application

Children are given increasing opportunities to apply their sentence knowledge independently. They use the structures, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and subject knowledge developed through teaching and practice to produce their own writing. Teachers continue to use assessment for learning throughout this process, identifying misconceptions and gaps in knowledge and adapting teaching accordingly. The intention is that children move from knowing how sentences are constructed, to using this knowledge accurately and fluently and ultimately to deploying it effectively when writing for different purposes and audiences.

Literary and Expository Writing

Children have regular opportunities to apply their sentence-level knowledge within both literary and expository writing.

Literary writing provides opportunities for children to create, develop and respond to stories, characters, settings and ideas. Expository writing enables children to communicate information, explain ideas and demonstrate knowledge across a range of subjects. In both contexts, children draw upon the vocabulary, sentence structures, grammatical knowledge and domain knowledge developed throughout the teaching sequence.

This approach supports children in understanding that accurate sentence construction is not an end in itself, but a tool that enables them to communicate increasingly sophisticated ideas clearly and effectively.

Assessment in Writing

Assessment for learning is embedded throughout the writing process. Teachers continually review children's understanding through questioning, discussion, observation and analysis of written work.

Assessment information is used to:

- **identify strengths and misconceptions;**
- **address gaps in sentence construction knowledge;**
- **determine whether children are ready to progress to the next step;**
- **provide appropriate scaffolding and challenge;**
- **inform future planning;**
- **support continuity and progression between year groups.**

The systematic progression provided by the Sentence Knowledge Curriculum enables teachers to identify what children know, what they need to learn next and where additional practice is required.

Writing is therefore developed as a cumulative process. Children build secure sentence-level knowledge, practise it extensively and then apply it in increasingly independent and purposeful writing.

Reading

Our aim is for children to become confident, fluent and independent readers who gain both enjoyment and insight from the texts they encounter. We develop reading stamina alongside a genuine love of reading and aim for every child to leave Parkside as a lifelong reader and learner.

The National Curriculum identifies two key elements of reading:

- **word reading and decoding;**
- **comprehension**

We recognise that both are essential to reading success. These skills are developed alongside speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Reading is a developmental and lifelong process, and children are encouraged and celebrated at every stage of their reading journey.

A range of reading strategies and experiences are used across the school, including:

- **paired reading with peers or adults to support reading aloud;**
- **systematic phonics teaching through Read Write Inc.;**
- **language experience and discussion;**
- **explicit modelling of reading strategies;**
- **choral reading**
- **shared reading using enlarged texts and visualisers;**
- **author visits and visits to the local library;**
- **group novel studies;**
- **a class reader selected by the teacher and shared during storytelling sessions.**

Across Key Stages 1 and 2, children develop a range of comprehension skills, including:

- **prediction;**
- **retrieval;**
- **vocabulary development;**
- **inference;**
- **summarising;**
- **explanation and evaluation.**

Vocabulary Development

We recognise that vocabulary is fundamental to children's ability to understand and communicate effectively across the curriculum. Throughout primary school, children are supported to acquire, understand and apply increasingly sophisticated vocabulary.

We use the three-tier model of vocabulary:

- **Tier 1:** common words frequently used in everyday spoken language;
- **Tier 2:** high-frequency words that occur across a range of contexts and subject areas and may have different meanings;
- **Tier 3:** subject-specific and academic vocabulary.

Particular emphasis is placed on the explicit teaching and application of Tier 2 vocabulary, while Tier 3 vocabulary is taught within relevant curriculum contexts.

Children are provided with opportunities throughout the school day to encounter, discuss, practise and apply new vocabulary. Vocabulary development is therefore embedded within English teaching and the wider curriculum.

Phonics

At Parkside, phonics is at the heart of early reading. We recognise that secure phonics knowledge enables children to become fluent and confident readers and provides the foundation for accessing the wider curriculum.

Phonics is taught using the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme. Phonics lessons are delivered from Nursery to Year 2. Introducing RWI in Nursery provides children with early exposure to pre-reading skills and initial sounds, preparing them for the full programme in Reception.

The programme progresses from the teaching of individual sounds to blending, the introduction of multi-letter sounds and the reading of words and sentences. As children's knowledge develops, they apply phoneme-grapheme correspondences and alternative spellings to decode, blend, segment and spell words and to construct simple sentences. RWI phonics is taught discretely for 40 minutes each day in tailored groups. Regular assessment enables children to move between groups as appropriate and ensures that teaching is closely matched to individual need. Children joining the school in EYFS, Year 1 or Year 2 are assessed on entry and grouped according to their current phonics knowledge.

Alongside discrete phonics teaching, children receive daily English lessons in which they encounter high-quality texts and apply their developing reading and writing skills. This allows transcription skills to be practised without becoming the sole focus of English lessons, where composition and meaning remain central.

Children are regularly exposed to pseudo-words, or 'alien words', to develop their ability to apply phonics knowledge when decoding unfamiliar words. This also supports preparation for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

We recognise that key phonics skills should continue to be reinforced beyond Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, classrooms have complex speed sound charts which teachers refer to when appropriate, providing children with continued opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge to reading and spelling.

Home Reading

In EYFS and Year 1, the emphasis is on developing secure decoding and blending skills through phonics. Children take home books closely matched to their current phonics knowledge. RWI assessments inform the allocation of RWI Book Bag Books, which are monitored by class teachers and support staff. In addition to their phonics-matched reading book, all children take home a reading-for-pleasure book. This is selected independently by the child and may come from the classroom book corner or the school Library Bus.

From Year 2 onwards, Parkside uses Accelerated Reader to support home reading. The programme provides teachers with information about children's reading practice, including the amount and complexity of reading and their understanding of texts. Regular Star Reading assessments identify each child's current reading level and provide a recommended range of book levels. This information, alongside individual targets,

enables teachers to personalise children's reading experiences and monitor progress. Star Reading also provides an estimated reading age. Teachers can monitor individual and class data and analyse progress for different groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. This information supports targeted intervention and ensures that all children are appropriately supported.

Successful use of Accelerated Reader aims to support children to:

- **enjoy reading;**
- **develop preferences and identify favourite books;**
- **discuss and recommend books;**
- **recognise the benefits of reading;**
- **read regularly beyond the classroom;**
- **develop positive attitudes towards reading;**
- **understand the importance of comprehension.**

Every child from Reception to Year 6 has an opportunity to read with an adult each week, supported by teaching assistants where appropriate. Parents and carers are expected to sign their child's reading record at least once a week in accordance with the Home School Reading Agreement. Teaching assistants record comments and observations to communicate children's reading progress with parents and carers.

The School Library and Access to Reading Books

The school library is located in our purpose-built Library Bus on the Key Stage 1 playground. All year groups have access to the Library Bus and are encouraged to use it to develop a love of reading in an engaging environment.

Each classroom also has an age-appropriate book corner containing a range of texts to encourage independent reading and book discussion.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are fundamental to children's educational development. Through developing oral skills, children learn to communicate ideas, develop vocabulary, articulate their thinking and refine their understanding. Our aim is for children to become reflective and effective communicators who speak with confidence and clarity. Effective communication requires careful listening, meaningful talk and an awareness of audience and purpose.

The National Curriculum requires pupils to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English. Across the curriculum, children are supported to:

- justify ideas using reasons and evidence;
- ask questions to check understanding;
- develop vocabulary and build knowledge;
- negotiate and resolve differences;
- evaluate and build on the ideas of others;
- select an appropriate register for effective communication;
- give well-structured descriptions and explanations;
- speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas;
- organise and rehearse ideas before writing.

Collaborative approaches within English lessons provide regular opportunities for children to develop these skills through discussion, questioning, paired and group work, oral rehearsal and teacher modelling.

Retention of Key English Skills

We recognise that the National Curriculum contains a substantial body of knowledge and that children need repeated opportunities to revisit and apply important concepts if they are to move beyond surface-level learning towards genuine mastery.

Our curriculum therefore provides opportunities for repetition and retrieval without causing unnecessary cognitive overload.

Four key principles support effective retention:

- **Practice:** repeated use of knowledge and skills increases the likelihood that they will be retained.
- **Memory strategies:** strategies for processing information can support effective recall.
- **Organisation:** information is easier to retrieve when it is stored in meaningful and well-organised ways.
- **Understanding:** knowledge is more readily remembered when children understand it and can connect it to existing knowledge.

Handwriting

See Parkside's **Handwriting Policy**, which outlines the whole-school handwriting scheme, PenPals.

Spelling

See Parkside's **Spelling Policy** for further information.

English Homework

See Parkside's **Homework Policy** for further information.

Cultural Capital within English

Every child brings their own knowledge and experiences, shaped by their language, beliefs, traditions, cultural and family heritage, interests, travel and experiences.

At Parkside, we recognise the importance of valuing children's individual backgrounds while providing opportunities to broaden their knowledge and experiences. High-quality literature, including both classic and contemporary texts, plays an important role in developing children's cultural capital.

We aim to provide children with a broad and varied literary repertoire throughout their time at Parkside. This supports academic development while also broadening children's understanding of different people, cultures, experiences and perspectives.

Enrichment opportunities such as Writing Day, Picture Book Week, British Tales Week and whole-school peer reading further contribute to this provision.

Our curriculum is ambitious and aspirational for all children and aims to ensure that every child has opportunities to develop their knowledge, experiences and cultural understanding.

See Parkside's **Cultural Capital Policy** for further information

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and British Values

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is an integral part of education and contributes to children's understanding of themselves and the society in which they live.

Through English, children have opportunities to explore themes including identity, relationships, difference, equality, belonging, fairness and respect. High-quality texts provide opportunities to encounter and discuss a range of perspectives, experiences and beliefs.

We promote mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds and consider British Values when planning and teaching English.

See Parkside's **SMSC and British Values documentation** for further information.

Inclusion

The needs of all children are considered when planning, teaching and assessing English. Teachers adapt teaching, resources, scaffolding and expectations to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum and make progress. Where additional support is required, class teachers work with the SENDCo and other relevant staff to identify appropriate provision. The Sentence Knowledge Curriculum supports inclusion by breaking complex writing knowledge into manageable steps, providing opportunities for extensive practice and allowing scaffolds to be adapted according to individual need.

Equal Opportunities

Our planning ensures that all children have equal access to the English curriculum regardless of gender, religion, language, background or ability.

We value and support the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all children. Text choices promote positive representations of different cultures, races, genders, identities and experiences and include authors from a wide range of backgrounds.

Children are encouraged to make meaningful comparisons between their own experiences and those represented in the texts they encounter.

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice makes an important contribution to school improvement and can help shape wellbeing, learning experiences and future priorities. Children are encouraged to express their views about English and their learning experiences. At Parkside, there is a clear structure for gathering and responding to children's views. This may include opportunities for Year 6 pupils to gather the views of children from across the school on aspects of English provision. Children's views are used alongside other sources of evidence to inform curriculum development and improvement.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of English teaching at Parkside. Teachers and support staff work collaboratively to assess children's understanding during lessons and use this information to adapt teaching, provide challenge and identify where additional support or precision teaching is required.

Assessment arrangements include:

- Children in Reception are regularly observed and assessed against the relevant learning goals within the EYFS Framework.

- Phonics is regularly assessed in Reception and Key Stage 1 using the RWI assessment system. Assessment information is used to allocate children to appropriately matched phonics groups and support rapid progress.
- Children in Year 1, and some children in Year 2 where required, undertake word-reading assessments to support preparation for the Phonics Screening Check.
- Children in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are assessed through teacher assessment and the use of reading comprehension and spelling, grammar and punctuation assessments at the end of each term.
- Children's written work in Years 2 and 6 is assessed against the relevant Teacher Assessment Frameworks.
- Children's written work in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 is assessed using the Herts for Learning Teacher Assessment Frameworks, drawing on the National Curriculum and the relevant Year 2 and Year 6 Teacher Assessment Frameworks.
- Year 6 pupils are assessed through regular teacher assessment and the end-of-Key-Stage 2 statutory assessments.
- Regular Star Reading assessments support the Accelerated Reader programme from Year 2 onwards and provide an estimated reading age.
- Reading-rate assessments are used where additional intervention is required.
- Assessment data is used to track progress, identify gaps and inform future planning and intervention.
- Internal moderation is incorporated into the school's CPD programme to support teachers in making consistent and accurate assessment judgements.
- Regular pupil-progress meetings, led by the Senior Management Team, are used to review progress, validate teacher judgements and ensure assessment procedures are implemented consistently.

Assessment is used not simply to record attainment but to inform teaching and ensure that every child is supported to make sustained progress in English.

Policy by: L. Batley (English Coordinator)

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