



English Policy

Statement and Rationale

This policy reflects Rowena 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 a 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 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.

This policy supports our school vision statement of 'hand in hand together we can'. It also supports our whole school ethos of developing a Rowena Person.



English Curriculum Intent

It is our intent at Rowena Academy to provide a high-quality education in English that will teach our pupils to speak, read and write fluently so that they can communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings to others effectively. We aim to offer a comprehensive and stimulating curriculum that provides pupils with opportunities to thrive and instil a thirst for learning.

We intend our English curriculum will equip pupils with the fundamental tools to achieve in our Academy and throughout their educational journey. We strive to ensure that all our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners. We have high ambition for all our pupils and we ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND receive the full curriculum offer.

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and it is essential for educational and social progress. The acquisition of language skills is of the utmost importance to us here at Rowena and therefore the teaching of all aspects of English is given a high profile within school.

Reading Curriculum Intent

Reading is one of our school's main priorities and our curriculum reflects a sharp focus upon early reading from the very start of school, as it is the ability to read and understand that opens up learning for children. It is our intention to immerse pupils in a wide range of quality texts across both fiction and non-fiction, to instil in them a desire to learn through books and a love of reading, to develop their comprehension skills and explore their own imagination through books and stories. It is our aim to ensure that, by the end of their time at Rowena, all pupils are able to read with fluency and confidence.

Reading Curriculum Implementation

At Rowena we have created a book rich environment where books are at the heart of the curriculum. Topics are inspired by texts, authors are invited into school to share their stories and work with our children, plays are performed for all our children by visiting theatre companies, and staff throughout the Academy read a story book aloud to the children every day to further promote a love for reading.

All classrooms have reading areas stocked with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Books are also displayed around classrooms to support topics and in small world and role play areas. Children also have access to other reading areas around school where there is a range of books including British values and PSHE themed texts.

Children are taught reading skills and techniques through individual reading, guided reading, and whole class reading. In Key Stage 1 children become 'Reading Detectives', studying a high quality text each term. Children are taught to develop an understanding of the texts through reading comprehension, and they explore the key themes, events and plot of the story. At target points throughout Key Stage 1, children attend a lunchtime or afterschool reading club. This provides the children with the opportunity to read books at their level, practice reading skills and read individually to an adult each day.

The school uses appropriate quality texts for children to read covering all genres. Books are banded in order to ensure progression and challenge. The children's abilities to recognise graphemes and harder to read and spell words and their ability to blend and segment are all assessed and tracked. Our more fluent and independent readers are assessed using PM Benchmarking.

In the Foundation Stage our children embark on a 'Reading Adventure', which starts in Nursery when they are given a book bag containing letter and grapheme cards, along with their first free book. Throughout their time in the Foundation Stage, they are given more books to add to their collection, to inspire the child's love of reading and to ensure we share the importance of reading with our parents and carers at home.

Children throughout school are given the opportunity to take home books, children also have access to Oxford Owl, an online eBook library. Teachers allocate children with books at the appropriate level for each child, these can be accessed at home and at school. We also sell heavily discounted books to our parents at parents evening. Our families are key partners in developing their children's knowledge and we are grateful to all our parents and carers who support their child's learning.

Phonics Curriculum Implementation

At Rowena the teaching of early reading and phonics has a high priority throughout school and phonics is taught daily. Children are systematically taught the relationship between sounds and the written spelling patterns that represent them. Phonics is largely delivered in a whole class format, through the Essential Letters and Sound (ELS) systematic, synthetic phonics programme (SSP). Intervention is planned for those children who are working below expected levels. In Phonics sessions children have the opportunity to review, learn, practise and apply their learning. Teachers use technical terminology when teaching phonics such as “phoneme”, “grapheme”, “digraph” and “trigraph”. The terms are used consistently throughout school.

In Nursery phonics teaching is focused on Phase 1 of Letter and Sounds, developing children's speaking and listening skills with an emphasis on getting children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills. Children do this through listening for environmental and instrumental sounds, alliteration, rhyme and voice sounds. These activities will develop children's ability to segment words into sounds and to blend sounds into words (oral blending and segmenting) vital prerequisite skills for spelling and reading. After the first term children begin to learn the sounds (phonemes) and the letters which make these sounds (graphemes). Teachers use the Essential Letters and Sound (ELS) materials when introducing the 26 letters of the alphabet to children. 'Squiggle While You Wiggle' sessions develop children's gross and fine motor skills in preparation for writing, through a range of differentiated activities.

Staff use the Launchpad to Literacy materials to help children develop the skill they need to be successful in phonics and early reading. There are key skills in the Launchpad approach that significantly impact pupil's phonic development, these include developing a child's Visual Memory, their ability to identify and remember things and their Sequential Auditory Memory, their ability to remember things in the correct order. Staff also support children in developing their Auditory Blending skills by teaching children to blend compound words (e.g. toothbrush) and words with more than one syllable (e.g. elephant) as a prerequisite to blending sounds together to read words.

In Reception teachers use the Essential Letters and Sound (ELS) programme when introducing the graphemes to children. There are 44 sounds in all, some are made with two letters (digraph) and some are made with three letters (trigraphs). In Phase 2, children focus on learning the most common graphemes and by the end of Phase 2 children should be able to read some vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, and spell them out. They also learn some 'Harder to Read and Spell' (HRS) words.

In Phase 3 children are introduced to phonemes mainly made up of two letters such as /ch/, /ar/, /ow/ and /ee/. Alongside this, children are taught to recognise more 'Harder to Read and Spell' (HRS) words. They learn the names of the letters, as well as the sounds they make. By the end of Phase 3, they should be able to say the sound made by most, or all, Phase 2 and 3 graphemes, blend and read words made up of these graphemes and read simple sentences containing them.

After Easter Reception children look at Phase 4, which teaches them to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants. Adjacent consonants are two or more consonants that are next to each other in a word. For example, in the word 'lost' the 's' and 't' are adjacent consonants.

Children in Reception finish the year by learning 20 new Phase 5 graphemes and more HRS words. Children's progress is assessed and tracked carefully throughout their time in Reception and teachers use the Launchpad to Literacy materials to help those children who may need it.

In Year 1 children will revisit Phases 2, 3, 4 and 5 taught in Reception, where appropriate, and concentrate on consolidating and refining their knowledge, allowing them to become more confident

with their reading and spelling. Teachers use the Phonics Assessment Materials to identify pupil's gaps in learning and to inform their planning and teaching. This enables the teacher to monitor and identify which pupils are 'keeping up' with the pace of teaching and ensure additional support is given to those pupils who require it. Gaps in learning are targeted through quality-first teaching, group or 1:1 intervention. Where appropriate teachers use the Launchpad to Literacy materials to support pupil's gaps in learning.

Children will then continue with Phase 5, learning the alternative spellings for the previously taught sounds for example, learning that the sound /air/in the word 'care' is spelt <are>. They will also learn more HRS words and develop their ability to use and apply their knowledge in their reading and writing.

In school nonsense/pseudo words are also described as alien words (words that are not real). These are primarily used to assess and ensure phonic knowledge is secure and children are taught to be able to differentiate between a real and not real word. Towards the end of Year 1 pupils will be assessed using the Phonics Screening Check, which assesses their ability to use their phonic knowledge to read real and pseudo words.

In Year 2 children revisit previous phases of phonics teaching as appropriate. Those pupils who did not pass the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1 will continue to receive daily phonics lessons and targeted intervention. Phase 6 phonics takes place throughout Year 2, with the aim of children becoming fluent readers and accurate spellers. Teachers use ELS Spelling to deliver the Phase 6 content. Children will learn how to use prefixes, suffixes, about past tense, new spelling rules and when to use apostrophes etc.

Writing Curriculum Intent

Writing is an integral part of our curriculum and all children from the Foundation Stage to Year 2 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. It is our intention that pupils foster the enjoyment of writing for a wide range of purposes, recognise the value of writing and develop a clear understanding of the writing process in order to establish themselves as an author in their own right. Our book-led approach to literacy fosters pupils' interest in writing, stimulates creativity and offers a reason and a context that enables the children to write for purpose and audience.

We aim to provide our pupils with a wide range of opportunities for the development of a rich vocabulary, to support their understanding of the systems and structures of English grammar and the effective use of Standard English. We foster the application of accurate spelling strategies in our pupils and the development of capable cursive handwriting skills. We intend to develop our pupils' knowledge of the structure and features of different genres, to develop their skills in planning, evaluating and editing their writing and encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction.

Writing Curriculum Implementation

At Rowena we believe in the importance of providing a purpose and a context to our writing and that writing is enhanced when pupils possess a love for reading. In English lessons and Reading Detectives, pupils study a range of high-quality text including non-fiction, stories, poetry and play scripts in various formats. These texts are used to support the development of comprehension skills, grammar and punctuation knowledge, writing structure and the key features of different genre. Writing

opportunities are derived from this and children are supported in transferring the features of a studied text into their own writing.

At Rowena Academy, we strive to enrich the curriculum wherever possible and first-hand experiences are used to inspire our pupils and provide the necessary purpose for writing. In Reception pupils write a home school diary detailing Barnaby Bear's weekend activity. Regular out of school visits are organised throughout school, various visitors are invited into school along with published authors, as we at Rowena believe that pupils who are provided with a reason for writing demonstrate flair and effective writing composition, leading to high quality outcomes.

We develop writing skills so that our pupils have the stamina and ability to write at the age expected standard. To support children in moving towards independent writing we use a variety of teaching and learning approaches including modelled, shared and guided writing, independent writing, peer editing and discussion. We use talk to encourage pupils to express their thoughts, exchange ideas and to develop more sophisticated vocabulary. Our children are taught in classes, with some small groups or individual activities, according to their needs, within the framework of the National Curriculum.

Children are supported with a variety of resources to aid their independence when writing, such as word banks, phonic resources, dictionaries and thesauruses. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, such as using the internet for research. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum, and will often use incidental opportunities to teach and reinforce writing skills in other subject areas.

The importance of good handwriting and correctly formed letters is instilled in our children throughout school, starting in Nursery with the development of fine motor skills through the 'Squiggle While you Wiggle' programme. Discrete handwriting sessions in Key stage 1 help children to progress towards the development of a cursive style.

Oracy Curriculum Intent

At Rowena we believe spoken language to be fundamental to the achievement of our pupils. We understand that communication and language are the roots underpinning success in reading and writing and that good communication skills can enhance every type of learning. This is why we ensure that all our children have many opportunities to fully explore their communication and language skills.

Oracy underpins our work across the curriculum as pupils develop the skills to reason, discuss, debate and present their learning in a variety of contexts with increasing skill and confidence. Our pupils are encouraged to explore ideas through discussion, to format their own reasoned arguments, to challenge each other's opinions, to develop critical thinking skills as well as talk in full sentences with a clear and confident voice. It is our intention to provide an environment that is rich in talk and ensure that, by the time they leave Rowena, all our pupils are able to communicate effectively and confidently in a range of different situations, for a variety of different audiences.

Oracy Curriculum Implementation

When teaching oracy at Rowena, teachers address the four key strands of the oracy skills framework:

- **Physical aspects** – how we use our voice and body to communicate.
- **Linguistic aspects** – how we structure what we say and choose appropriate vocabulary.
- **Cognitive aspects** – staying focused whilst speaking and when listening to others, asking appropriate questions and explaining opinions using reasons.

- **Social and emotional aspects** – working with others, listening and responding and increasing confidence.

Teachers plan for talk across the curriculum and to elevate speaking beyond the classroom. Pupils have a range of planned oracy experiences across all curriculum areas, which include drama and role play opportunities, presentation of learning, talk partners, paired/collaborative work, giving and receiving instructions, asking and responding to questions, listening to stories and visiting speakers, sharing experiences and ideas, explaining their reasoning, and experimenting with words and vocabulary. Not only do we strive to develop spoken language skills through the taught curriculum, but there are many opportunities for children to develop their oracy skills outside of the curriculum, including class and whole school assemblies, Academy Council meetings and other pupil voice activities, playtimes, lunchtimes, school productions and extra-curricular activities.

Respectful and productive relationships between all who form part of the school community are crucial aspects of the school's ethos. As a staff, we therefore foster good communication amongst ourselves and with our pupils, parents, carers, and with the wider community.

Our oracy curriculum enables children to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency, while adapting their use of language for a range of different purposes and audiences, including the use of Standard English. It emphasises the value of listening and the ability to concentrate on, interpret and respond appropriately to a wide range of listening experiences. Our curriculum teaches children to value their own opinions and be able to express them to others, sustaining a logical argument, while also being open minded and taking account of the views of other, valuing their contributions and respond to them appropriately. It develops in children the necessary skills to present their ideas and share their learning in an engaging, informative way through formal presentations. At Rowena we believe that the ability to do all these things is a vital skill that supports success in learning and in life generally.

Curriculum Impact

As a result of the English teaching at Rowena, we have a community of enthusiastic speakers, readers and writers who enjoy showcasing their developing literacy knowledge and skills. They are confident to take risks in their reading and writing and love to discuss and share their ideas. Our attainment at the end of EYFS and KS1 is above that of Doncaster and the national average. We intend the impact of our English curriculum will ensure our pupils are academically prepared for life after Rowena Academy and throughout their educational journey.

The impact of this policy will be evidenced through the monitoring of attainment and progress of all children by class teachers. The English Co-ordinator, the Senior Leadership Team and the Head of Academy will be responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy and standards of English across the school, through work scrutiny, planning scrutiny, learning walks and lesson observations and any other relevant monitoring activities.

English Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use a broad range of resources, books and websites, as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the Programme of Study for English as stated in the National Curriculum.

We carry out curriculum planning in English in three phases (long term, medium term and short term). The National Curriculum details long term teaching objectives and our English curriculum coverage grids highlight when these objectives are taught. Our medium term English plans give details of the

genre, the focus and the texts covered in each term. These have been developed by the English Co-ordinator in liaison with each year group teaching team. These plans ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. All these plans can be found in the English curriculum coverage document.

Class teachers complete a weekly (short term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and their differentiated challenges. There is a copy of this planning displayed on the classroom wall and one is filed in the teacher's planning file. We plan the activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also ensure progression so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the Academy.

The Essential Letters and Sound (ELS) systematic, synthetic phonics programme (SSP) clearly provided teachers with long, medium and short term phonics plans and resources that staff follow with fidelity.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage, **Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)** is taught as an integral part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations. In particular, in the EYFS, **Communication and Language (Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking)** cannot be covered in isolation from the other six areas of learning. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills.

In Reception children have a daily Phonics and Literacy lesson, however, opportunities to practise literacy skills, for example, reading labels, responding to written instructions, mark-making and early writing as part of play-based learning are provided throughout the learning environment in the classroom and outdoor area.

Key Stage 1

The English programme of study, as detailed in the National Curriculum, is based on the following four areas of teaching and learning:

- **Spoken language**
- **Reading**
 - Word reading/decoding.
 - Comprehension.
 - Whole class reading.
- **Writing**
 - Transcription.
 - Handwriting and presentation.
 - Composition.
- **Spelling, grammar and punctuation**

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

Spoken Language

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 and presentations, sharing opinions and building on others' ideas.
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas.
- Ask questions to check understanding.
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge.
- Give well-structured 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 Academy Council and Class Council meetings, Jigsaw lessons, school performances and plays.

Reading

Teachers 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 leisure as well as study.
- Read a wide range, including media and ICT texts.
- Develop comprehension skills and the ability to understand layers of meaning.
- Learn to make critical responses to what they read.
- Explore meanings of text using drama.

In order to maintain a positive climate for reading, teachers should:

- Ensure the environment is rich with appropriate text.
- Continuously model reading in the learning environment.
- Teach children to value and care for books and to enjoy sharing them with each other.

Parents and carers have a key role to play in helping to promote a love of books and reading at home, and we regard sharing books and support for reading to be one of the most important aspects of 'home school learning' which parents can provide.

Writing

Teachers understand the skills and strategies involved in teaching writing and recognise that writing is essential to thinking and learning and to investigating and organising ideas. Writing should be seen as an enjoyable activity in itself.

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 develop and improve the content, style and accuracy of their work.

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, teachers should:

- Provide access to a wide range of quality reading resources including non-fiction, stories, poetry and play scripts in various formats.
- Create frequent opportunities to showcase their writing.
- Share their own favourite writing and texts with the children.
- Allow opportunities for reading 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 and discrete handwriting sessions then help children to progress through three stages:

- Stage 1 - developing correct letter formation, posture and pencil grip.
- Stage 2 - forming lowercase letters with 'lead-in' lines.
- Stage 3 - learning to join letters and developing a cursive style.

Spelling

Children are taught strategies enabling them to:

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

The children in Key Stag 1 learn to spell the words specified in the National Curriculum by progressing through the schools 'Spelling Challenge'.

Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary

Teachers understand, teach, and demonstrate in their everyday practice the formal conventions of Standard English language. They emphasise their importance to meaning and effect. Teaching in all areas forms part of everyday English lessons, whether discrete or in active context, and is developed across all areas of the wider curriculum.

Assessment

Pupils are assessed on an ongoing basis during every session. These short term assessments that teachers make help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short term assessments closely to the learning objectives and practice is adapted accordingly. Formal summative assessments of phonics, reading and writing are carried out, tracked and monitored at least termly. End of key stage assessments are carried out in accordance with legislation and results inform the Academy SEF, Academy Development Plan and Performance Management.

Parents are informed about their child's progress in English at open evenings and in the annual report sent home at the end of the academic year.

Monitoring and Review

The English curriculum is monitored to ensure breadth, balance and relevance to individual pupils. This will be achieved by continual assessment of pupils against the National Curriculum.

The delivery of the English curriculum is monitored by the consultation of yearly planning grids, which give an overall picture of curriculum coverage. In addition, the Head of Academy and English Co-ordinator, monitor the medium and weekly planning and observe and review English lessons to ensure consistency of teaching and learning throughout the Academy.

The Senior Leadership Team meet regularly to discuss:

- The progress of the subject within the Academy.
- Performance analysis in relation to the Academy Development Plan.
- Outcomes in relation to development priorities and their impact upon teaching and learning.
- Future developments in accordance with the Academy Development Plan.

Governors are also invited to monitor the effectiveness of the Academy through a variety of other activities including learning walks.

Staff are continuously developing their English subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice, keeping staff informed of current developments in English and making recommendations for staff training.

This policy was reviewed in September 2024 and will be reviewed again in September 2025.

Signed

T. Cowfishaw

Head of Academy