



## **ENGLISH POLICY**

This policy describes our practice in the teaching of English: reading, writing, phonics, spelling and speaking and listening.

At Aston Rowant our approach to teaching of English incorporates speaking & listening, drama, real contexts and good quality literature. In our school, there is a determination that every child will learn to read, initially with a step-by-step approach to teaching reading, writing and spelling systematically through phonics. Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and we strive to develop children in their journey from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'.

We aim for all children to leave Aston Rowant confident readers with a lifelong love of reading and we believe this has a significant impact on the quality of their writing. Teachers plan creative and relevant links to their class topics as a vehicle for writing.

### **Aims for our policy**

- To develop in pupils a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment.
- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts.
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To teach the basic tools for writing – spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation.
- To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- To show the purpose of reading and writing.
- To promote a wide use of Information and Communication Technology as a medium for the further development of language both in English and across the curriculum.
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

### **Learning and Teaching Strategies**

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National Curriculum, our Skills Progression Document and HIAS Learning Journey Guidance. Teachers use the HIAS Learning Journeys to work towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. Cross curricular writing opportunities are planned for through the termly whole school topic. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and an emphasis on whole texts.

Teaching and learning styles will reflect and support the overall development of English with a great emphasis on modelled, shared and guided writing. Children will be given a chance to work within a

variety of learning situations including: whole class, guided work, independent work, group work, paired work, problem solving, hot seating and discussion.

## **Speaking and Listening**

At Aston Rowant, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

What does this look like at Aston Rowant?

- Confidence to question language
- Reciting and reading aloud
- Re-telling, role-play and drama opportunities
- Presenting to an audience
- Listening to and participating in stories, poems and songs
- Talk for writing/HIAS Learning journeys– opportunities to verbalise and learn texts □  
Collaborative work
- Having a sense of wonder – asking questions across the curriculum (I wonder why...? I wonder how...? etc)

## **Reading**

Reading is the heart of all teaching at Aston Rowant. We aim to teach the skills of reading while developing a love of reading, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. Early reading skills are consistently and rigorously taught. We focus on decoding, primarily through phonics, investigating the complex connections between sounds and letters. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as retelling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature. Teachers read to their class at the end of each day from a selection of high-quality literature suited to each age group.

Our 'Reading - Intent, Implementation and Impact' document details what reading looks like at Aston Rowant.

## **Writing**

At Aston Rowant, we strive to create a print rich environment that will promote both reading and writing. Teachers carefully plan writing ensuring that there is a purposeful outcome to each piece of writing. Writing takes place daily within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all appropriate times.

Our 'Writing - Intent, Implementation and Impact' document details what writing looks like at Aston Rowant.

## **Phonics**

Children in EYFS and KSI have daily 20-minute, focused phonics sessions which build slowly from learning single letter sounds, to digraphs (two letter sounds such as 'sh' and 'oa', trigraphs (three letter sounds such as 'igh') and split digraphs. We use the Rocket Phonics scheme which we follow faithfully. The knowledge that children build through their phonics teaching is applied in their reading

and writing. Children learn sounds and letters through games and activities which support sounding out, segmenting and blending.

What does this look like at Aston Rowant?

- Foundation and Key Stage 1 classrooms have relevant phonic displays (from Rocket Phonics) which are added to as the children build up their knowledge of sounds.
- A sound table is provided in EYFS and children are given the opportunity to explore and add items with their new sound.
- Whole class and group teaching follows a familiar 'my turn, our turn, your turn' pattern where children revise previously taught phonemes before moving on to a new phoneme.
- The Teaching Big Books allow children to read words containing the new phoneme within the context of an on-going story,
- Children use their Phonics practice books to read words containing the new phoneme on day 1 and then write words containing the new phoneme on day two.
- Children apply phonic knowledge to read real and 'alien' words within group and whole class teaching.

We use the target practice books to carefully match children to a reading book which they will be able to decode. Each book shows clearly the phonemes that a child must know in order to read it successfully. Children are encouraged to re-read a book in order to gain fluency before being given a new one. Children are encouraged to read a range of books alongside an adult from the class and school libraries and from home.

## **Spelling**

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spelling plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 and 2 the National Curriculum spellings for the appropriate year group provide the weekly spelling homework. In class, new spelling rules or new letter sounds are introduced and relevant spellings are taught, e.g. through mnemonics, word sorting and spelling games.

What does this look like at Aston Rowant?

- 2014 National curriculum spellings and high frequency words (key stage one) for each year group are used as a guide to which spellings are taught.
- Spelling tests are completed and sent home weekly
- Spellings for KS2 are set for each half term and are on the website for parents and children to access.
- In Key Stage 2, handwriting is linked to weekly phonics, spelling or grammar focus.
- All children taught to read and check their work for spelling errors.
- Children practise common spelling corrections in their English books - chosen by their teacher as 'ones they should know' - as part of their response to marked work. Children in Key Stage 2 use dictionaries and spelling banks to check the spelling of words.

## **Handwriting**

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years, there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper

and lower case letters. As handwriting becomes an automatic skill, it allows children to devote more consideration to the content of their writing. We use Letterjoin which models correct cursive formation for the children on the interactive whiteboard. Children then practise in handwriting books.

What does this look like at Aston Rowant?

- Opportunities for mark making provided during learning both indoors and outside in foundation stage.
- Gross and fine motor skills are supported through well planned activities and in both adult and child initiated learning.
- Discrete 20-minute handwriting lesson in Key Stage One three times a week.
- In Key Stage 2, handwriting is taught daily.
- Children in reception and year one focus on letter formation and do not begin to join until this is correct
- We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly.



- We aim for all children to be using the joined cursive script by the end of Year Two.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants practice is always a model of our handwriting policy. Handwriting expectation is the same in all subject areas.
- Books are monitored through team scrutiny sessions and poor handwriting is then identified and support is given to improve.

### **Inclusion**

We aim for all children to participate in lessons within the classroom. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place for children with S.E.N as required and is demonstrated in teachers' planning. Careful planning and assessment ensure learning opportunities are pitched correctly to meet specific needs, considering any specified targets.

### **Assessment**

Formative assessment in Reading

- In foundation stage children are assessed using their Early Learning Goals.
- All children to focus on an objective during guided reading.

- Targeted higher ordered questions for most able children.
- Teacher feedback given during guided reading.

#### Summative Assessment in Reading

- Year 1 take the end of year Phonics Screening in June.
- Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take end of Key Stage national tests which examine a range of reading comprehension skills.
- Summative teacher assessment data is recorded on OTrack at the end of each term.

#### Formative Assessment in Writing

- Success criteria: For every piece of written work, children are given differentiated 'Steps to Success' which they can use to help them reflect on the structure and language features of their own writing.
- Pink and green marking: At the end of a piece of writing, the teacher marks each child's work, looking for where the child has achieved the objective from the lesson. The teacher highlights in green to point out where the child has been successful. The teacher then highlights in pink. This may identify where the child has partly achieved the objective, where they have become confused and need more assistance or where they need direction
- Regular verbal feedback is given
- Teachers use 'I wonder...?' questions to extend learning and to keep an enquiring mind
- All children are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their marked work and develop the independence to respond to teachers written next steps, with an aim to improve their writing.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader and the Head Teacher. Time is given to undertake lesson observations across the school and teacher's planning is scrutinised. Samples of the children's work are reviewed during staff meetings by all teaching staff.

The English Co-ordinator and English Governor meet regularly to monitor teaching and learning in school. This may take the form of lesson observations, looking at children's writing across school, listening to readers or discussing the children's views in Pupil Voice sessions. The English Coordinator sets out an English Action Plan for the academic year which is reviewed and reported to Governors at the end of the year.

The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The subject leader regularly meets with the head teacher to discuss the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.