



HOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
ENGLISH POLICY

JULY 2025

English Policy

Intent

At Hopton Primary we strive to help our children develop into articulate and imaginative communicators, who are well-equipped with the basic skills they need to become life-long learners; English phonics, reading and writing learning is key in helping them to achieve this. We aim to ensure all of our children develop a genuine love of reading and writing, through a text-based approach and much of our writing is centred around our core texts for each year group. This links closely to the way we teach reading, as the text that we use in writing lessons, where possible, is the same text as the one that we use for developing fluency and comprehensive skills in lessons. Where possible, writing and core texts are linked to our topic areas to help secure cross curricular learning opportunities.

Evidence shows that a pre-requisite for children writing fluently is the ability to speak about their ideas naturally and as such, at Hopton, we actively encourage opportunities for children to talk about their ideas before writing them.

- Our intentions in reading are for children to:
- Value the importance of being able to read
- Read for both purpose and enjoyment
- Be independent and adventurous readers that use their skills to support others
- Understand the author's intention and the different formalities of language required.

Our intentions in writing are for children to:

- Write for a purpose and for enjoyment
- Be fearless in developing their 'inner author'
- Understand the nature of different audiences and the different formalities of language required.
- Take pride in the creative process and ownership of their work

Implementation and Impact

Phonics

Most children's learning journey starts with a solid grasp of phonics. At Hopton Primary, phonics is taught through 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.' There is a substantial body of evidence which demonstrates that systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective method for teaching all children to read. Phonics teaches children how to recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes, identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make, and blend these sounds together to make a word. Children can then use this knowledge to decode new words that they see. This is the first important step in learning to read. It focuses on building a child's understanding of the alphabetic code, which is the relationship between sounds and letters, and then applying that knowledge to read and spell. It was chosen for the following benefits.

Systematic and Synthetic:

Little Wandle teaches phonics in a structured way, starting with basic sounds and gradually introducing more complex combinations. This contrasts with some other approaches that may include a lot of sight words before teaching phonics.

Effective for Decoding:

The program's focus on decoding means that children learn to sound out new words they encounter, rather than relying on memorising them. This is particularly important for children who might struggle with memorisation.

Linked to Decodable Reading Books:

Little Wandle is used with decodable reading books that match the phonics sounds and combinations being taught. This ensures that children are reading words they can already decode, fostering confidence and fluency.

Focus on Early Reading:

Little Wandle emphasises the importance of early reading and provides tools and resources for teachers to support this.

Ongoing Assessment:

The program includes ongoing assessments to monitor progress, identify areas where children need extra support, and adjust teaching accordingly.

Support for All Learners:

Little Wandle provides pathways and support for students with complex needs, ensuring that all children can benefit from the program.

Positive Impact on Reading Development:

Many schools that use Little Wandle report positive results, including increased reading fluency, a love of reading, and improved literacy skills.

The SSP draws on the latest research into how children learn best; how to ensure learning stays in children's long-term memory and how best to enable children to apply their learning to become highly competent readers. To learn more about the programme, please see the link below

: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/about-us/>

Reading

In F1, our reading focus is fostering a love of books. Books are read every day, both as an adult choice and those selected by the children. Books are available throughout the session, for children to explore themselves or for them to invite an adult to read.

There is a conscious effort to connect with others during reading books, staff will lay on the floor, or rest on beanbags alongside children. Reading is very much a shared experience. The book case has books that remain available throughout the year, to enable children to revisit them. This encourages lots of discussion about favourite texts and characters. At whole class group times, children are taught specific book language such as page, title, blurb, author, illustrator and character.

In F2, reading practice starts as soon as the children begin their phonics instruction. Initially, children read wordless books.

Children are taught 'ready to read' routines that establish book behaviours. These include, laying books flat on the table, turning pages one by one, and identifying key features, such as the title of book, or information within the picture.

Children are taught a rhyme to help tune them into being ready to read. During these sessions, taking focuses on developing children's phonological awareness, oral blending, phonemic awareness, their vocabulary and developing confidence to share their ideas.

These sessions involve small groups of up to 6 children. Each child has their own copy of the text. At Hopton we use Big Cat Collins picture books that work in partnership with the Little Wandle programme.

Children read the same text 3 times across the week to establish their confidence. Each session lasts up to 10 minutes.

As children move through the Little Wandle phonics programme, reading practice sessions change in focus to practice decoding. Once the children can orally blend. Non blenders continue to use wordless picture books, until they are able to blend.

Reading practice sessions continue to focus on 1 text per week, in small groups with 3 sessions. Again, Big Cat for Little Wandle books are used, to ensure books are matched to children's score phonic knowledge. The first session focuses on decoding, the next session focusses on re-reading the text emphasising prosody. This needs to be carefully modelled by an adult so children can practice changing

the volume, rhythm, intonation and stress as they read aloud, whilst developing fluency.

The third session focuses on reading for meaning, using the same text children practice their comprehension skills identifying answers from what they have read and seen in the illustrations. Again, these sessions last up to 10 mins, but as children move through the scheme, sessions become longer in response to longer texts. Each reading session, also includes a review of target graphemes and focus tricky words.

At the end of the week, every child takes home a copy of the same text they have read in school for consolidation.

Alongside this, all children in EYFS, have core texts, that are read to them to develop a love of reading. These texts often have topics links and are chosen as they have strong rhythm, alliteration, rhyme or repetition.

In Y1, children focus on fluency of reading – developing their decoding skills. We ask recall questions orally. In Y2, children move to a written response to texts including character intention through what characters say and do. Children follow a reading scheme that ties in with the Little Wandle phonics so children complete individual reading and comprehensions focusing on words with sounds they have already learnt. The children use Big Cat Collins– this allows them to build their confidence with 95% fluency Greater Depth children will read books that are longer and more sophisticated and will be expected to justify their answers fully.

In Y1, children read on a carousel in 25 minute sessions with an adult. In Y2, children read several times a week with an adult. Y1 and 2 children read in a practice reading session group several times a week. Decoding, prosody and comprehensions sessions are recorded against learning outcomes.

In Y2, teachers have written comprehensions for the Big Cat Collins reading books based on the latest whole class reading recommendations (Reading Framework 2023) Greater depth readers are introduced to independent reading comprehensions earlier.

Core texts are read during milk sessions. Core texts are identified in the writing plan and activities to develop understanding are completed as a whole class. Meta vocabulary is stressed in KS1 e.g. author, illustrator etc. and a love of reading is fostered.

Every child takes reading books home that are changed weekly. This is the book that they have been reading in practise reading sessions in class. They can also take sharing books home – this means they can choose what they want to read.

SEND and LA children are listened to more frequently and parent volunteers work with these children.

Children that fail their Phonics Screening Assessment go through phase 3 and 5 sounds again in addition to the reading lesson in Year 2.

Children that fail their phonics go through phase 3 and 5 sounds again in addition to the reading lesson.

In KS2 children have the opportunity to read daily. Children read core texts as a whole class. These are often linked to the wider curriculum e.g. Goodnight Mister Tom when the classes are learning about WW2 in topic. Reading comprehensions have been written for the core texts and teachers ask questions to explore vocabulary and check understanding of the core texts as the texts are read aloud. Children do not just answer questions: they may be asked to contribute to word clouds or draw a scene from a book as part of their comprehension work.

KS2 has a library based on reading levels from the Accelerated Reading Scheme. Children's independent reading level is assessed each term using Star Reading Assessment and this allows teachers to monitor progress in reading fluency as well as comprehension and ensure that children are reading texts well-matched to their ability. Children are encouraged to read independently most days using these accelerated reading levels. At least once a week parents and carers are invited to come in and read with their children. Teachers listen to children read to monitor their reading ability; once a teacher feels confident that the children have good understanding and fluency at a level they will go up.

Writing

At Hopton, we aim to build confidence in the four types of writing, allowing the children to progress in their understanding of each style and skills to write independently for different purposes:

Descriptive writing - describes a character, an event, or a setting in great detail. It can be poetic when the author takes the time to be very specific in his or her descriptions.

Narrative writing – tells a story on a real or imagined events

Expository writing – gives information or explains something difficult to understand without the author stating their opinions.

Persuasive writing – gives an opinion and uses supportive evidence to convince the reader to agree with the author.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the early years emergent writing is encouraged through the use of different writing materials, including felt tipped pens, crayons, chalk, sand, magnetic letters, big

brushes, water, paint and computers, as well as writing in the role-play areas, such as postcards, menus, invitations, labels etc...

Alongside this, children take part in activities to encourage and develop gross and fine motor skills necessary to write in a legible script. A focus for such tasks includes the language of direction to support letter formations when this is introduced.

Emergent writing is underpinned by communication and language. For this reason, in Nursery our literacy focus is on developing children's language, leaving the more formal teaching of writing to F2. As Ofsted says: 'Formal teaching of writing or phonics at ever-younger ages may limit the amount of time available to develop children's communication and language: the bedrock of children's later reading comprehension and writing composition.' ([Best start in life part 3](#), 2024).

Therefore, in F1, we have a clear emphasis on encouraging children to make marks and to see their marks as meaningful, rather than on teaching letter formation. When children are ready, as indicated by their interest in letter formations, guidance is provided on forming the letters of children's names. All F1 children are encouraged to recognise and form the first letter of their name.

As children move into the F2 year, there remains an initial focus to celebrate and value children's early attempts at graphic representation – focusing on the meaning and content rather than letter formation.

Daily Little Wandle phonics lessons build children's phonic and spelling knowledge to enable them to sound out words and spell and read words correctly. A key feature of the programme being that children engage with phonics instruction every day, reinforcing their understanding of letter-sound relationships through repetition.

Children have daily opportunity to practice spelling words using grapheme cards moving to written spellings once all the letter formations have been introduced. This daily practice is essential for building fluency and confidence.

As children progress through Little Wandle, they are given many opportunities to write independently and to apply the skills they have learnt and practised in shared and guided writing. Based on their phonic knowledge, throughout the Autumn term, planned writing experiences involve children to write single words/labels.

In the Spring term, Little Wandle introduces the writing of sentences, using early writing strategies, such as hold a sentence and dictation. This is to ensure that they have the opportunity to practise transcriptional skills, before they move onto composition. From this point, writing outside of the phonics lesson progresses to sentence building made meaningful by being planned for a specific purpose or in response to a particular experience.

Children's writing is assessed both through the Little Wandle programme and using children's independent work. This consists of writing from their play, such as a shopping list, or a labelled map to writing produced as a result of a teaching

stimulus, for example, writing about their family. Children have constant access to their Little Wandle 'grow the code' grapheme card whenever they are writing.

Samples of children's writing are assessed every half term, referring to the EYFS curriculum guidance document 'Development Matters'. Where children are noted to require more support, intervention is provided using Little Wandle daily keep-up.

Key Stage 1

The children will usually do an independent piece of writing each half-term.

In KS1 the teachers will usually spend one or two weeks exploring a genre of writing. Firstly, identifying the features of the genre through looking at different examples of text. The teacher may model writing in the specific genre, then as a class or group they will usually complete a shared piece of writing, where children will contribute their ideas to create a whole class piece of writing or part of a piece of writing. Children are encouraged to look critically at model examples of writing to look at things that they could use in their own writing. They also look at 'non-examples' with errors, and they identify these together. In later lessons, the children will do some practice writing sessions in the lead up to their independent assessed writing. They are encouraged to use their own ideas, and creativity is celebrated and actively encouraged. Some children will choose to, or be encouraged to, think of a sentence in their head, then say it aloud to an adult or partner before writing it down.

When story writing, for example, the class will read a story, such as 'The Three Little Pigs'; then explore it by talking about the beginning, middle and end, characters, setting and any problems that the characters had to overcome. They may also do some puppet work or acting to recreate/ retell the story. The children will spend the following lessons planning their own version of the story, choosing and describing their settings and main characters, and creating a story board to show the events of their story. They will then spend some lessons practising writing their own version of the story using their story board to help them.

The children have been taught to mark their own sentences, so after each sentence has been written, they will reread the sentence to check that it makes sense. Then tick their capital letter and full stop, circle their joining words/ conjunctions and draw a squiggly line underneath their adjectives. Therefore, when they are practising their writing they will be encouraged to mark and check each sentence after it has been written down. Less able children may simply tick their capital letter and full stop, especially if they are in year 1.

The children have been taught to mark their own sentences, so after each sentence has been written, they will reread the sentence to check that it makes sense. Then tick their capital letter and full stop, circle their joining words/ conjunctions and draw a squiggly line underneath their adjectives. This is in line with the school's redrafting policy. Therefore, when they are practising their writing, they will be encouraged to mark and check each sentence after it has been written down. Less able children may simply tick their capital letter and full stop, especially if they are in year 1.

On the day of the assessed writing the learning objectives and success criteria will be shared with the children, however, they will not be shown a modelled piece of writing or complete a shared piece of writing as a class. The children will have access to the storyboard that they independently created earlier in the week, which they may or may not choose to use.

There are displays/working walls around the classrooms which may have sentence openers, punctuation marks, adjectives/wow words, conjunctions/joining words, exclamations and questions. Children will also have access to 'helper sheets which will have the same information as the displays/working walls, which they can choose to use during their independent writing. The STA guidance (2017) states that *'writing is independent if it is produced by pupils who have independently drawn on classroom resources for support or ideas'*.

Children have access to success criteria which is not over-scaffolded or too explicit. The success criteria will be shared with the children at the beginning of the session, which may include:

I can use the features or framework of a report/story/description/letter/diary entry/recount/instructions.

I can use my phonics sounds and sound card to help me sound out.

I can think of a sentence in my head then write it down.

I can use punctuation.

I can use wider punctuation.

I can use conjunctions/joining words.

I can use adjectives/wow words.

I can do neat and careful joined-up handwriting.

The children will have access to a phonics sound card, which they may choose to use, and will be reminded of their success criteria periodically. Phrases relating to

the success criteria can be said aloud to the class or small groups of children throughout the lesson, to remind the children of their targets.

Possible phrases may include:

Have you marked and checked each sentence?

Have you checked that you have written a beginning, middle and an end?

Have you checked that you have used the features of a ?

Have you checked that you have used your phonics card to sound out?

Have you checked your punctuation?

Have you used some wider punctuation?

Have you used some conjunctions/joining words in your writing?

Have you used adjectives/wow words in your writing?

Have you used neat and careful/ joined-up handwriting?

The children are given encouragement throughout their writing task and there is no fixed time limit on how long they should spend on their writing. They may be asked to check that they have met their success criteria but will not be corrected on any mistakes they have made during the lesson.

Some children might be asked to write their work in best or they need to become more confident in joined up writing. They will be given an uncorrected version to do this.

All independent assessed writing is written in their English books but identified clearly as an assessed writing piece.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage Two, stages of teaching good writing will be used, ensuring a gradual release from teacher-directed to complete independence. The stages are: Immersion, Planning, Independent Writing and Editing.

Immersion Stage

Children will be presented with examples of the genre through reading comprehensions and class discussions. They will deconstruct a text through evaluating a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like) to identify the features and the success criteria for that particular genre. There is usually a grammar and, or punctuation focus, that relates to the genre, taught at this stage. The success criteria will be added to the English working wall which also identifies the purpose, genre and audience for the writing; teachers will refer to this to support children in the immersion stage.

Planning Stage

This is often delivered in a cyclical approach by breaking down texts into smaller chunks of work.

- **Modelled Writing**

This is the first step in teaching the genre of the writing to the children. A “think aloud about” strategies approach is used. The teacher is in front of the class writing and the children are watching and listening. Every step is described to the children along with the reason for writing it.

- **Shared Writing**

During shared writing, a teacher will scribe the words, but the children are now invited to contribute to the piece. Children contribute ideas while the teacher writes. This generates lots of discussion, questions and answers. A “think aloud about” strategy is still used. The classroom asking the children questions about their writing,

- **Guided Writing**

In guided writing, teachers continually provide feedback, redirection and expansion of ideas. The teacher utilises prompts and clues to help them develop ideas and organisation. Children work with the teacher/TA in either a small group or independently. Sentences are discussed orally. The teacher may walk around the classroom asking the children questions about their writing, reminding them about key points, asking them to read their work back and pinpointing areas they are struggling with. This is often completed on whiteboards. Oral discussion of sentences before writing may take place. The teacher may walk around the classroom stopping at various children and

asking them to read out what they are working on or what they might be struggling with.

Independent Writing Assessment Stage

Pupils' writing upon which teachers base their judgements must be produced independently. The key point about independence is that the children are making their own choices about how to apply the things they have been taught and the ideas discussed. They use ideas from everything they have learnt about the genre and from their own wider reading experiences to produce their independent writing work. Success criteria might have been generated as part of the teaching process and these can still be on show as children are writing. However, directly copying from a model would not be considered independent; neither would something that has been "heavily scaffolded".

Use of dictionaries, word banks and working walls is acceptable, as this is part of normal classroom practice and the child still has to make the decision to refer to the resource.

Writing is not independent if it has been

- modelled or heavily scaffolded
- copied or paraphrased
- edited as a result of direct intervention by a teacher or other adult, for example when the pupil has been directed to change specific words for greater impact, where incorrect or omitted punctuation has been indicated, or when incorrectly spelt words have been identified by an adult for the pupil to correct
- produced with the support of electronic aids that automatically provide correct spelling, synonyms, punctuation, or predictive text
- supported by detailed success criteria that specifically direct pupils as to what to include, or where to include it, in their writing, such as directing them to include *specific vocabulary, grammatical features, or punctuation*

The children will write independently on each genre that is taught in their year group. The success criteria for years 3 and 4 will be built on progression from Key Stage One for each genre. In years 5 and 6 children have access to success criteria which is not over-scaffolded or too explicit. The success criteria will be shared with the children at the beginning of the session.

Editing Stage

The improvement and redrafting process is crucial to enabling children to produce their best work. It provides an opportunity for children to use dictionaries to double-check their spellings, ensure that they haven't made any basic errors in punctuation or grammar, and check that the writing makes sense and is well structured.

This includes responding to feedback (teacher or peer) as long as it is not too direct. Suitable examples:

- Check the construction of your sentences
- Think about the "voice of the write"


- Have you checked your spelling?

However, change the word “said” to something more interesting would be too direct. (See next section for more details on whole-school editing at Hopton Primary.

Whole School Editing

An essential part of developing the children’s understanding of their own progression and targets in writing at Hopton is their independent editing of their work and this has been a core focus for the school. Children and staff follow a progression of editing codes from F2 to year 6. Following an independent write the children are encouraged to review their work, sentence by sentence using a range of editing codes for their year group which are accessible in their English books, on the wall or on laminated cards. Children mark their edits using either pencil (in KS1 and KS2 Y5/6) or purple-coloured pen if writing in pencil (KS2 Y3/4). As part of assessing writing, staff assess the individual child’s ability to edit independently. Progression of the editing codes are illustrated below.

Progression of Editing Codes for Independent Writing		
Year Group	Feature identified	Editing Codes
EYFS	Finger spaces	Forward slash
	Orientation of letters	Dot above letters in pencil
	Tricky words highlighted	Underline in pencil
	Spelling	Underline in pencil
Year 1	Use the joining word (conjunction) <i>and</i>	Circle in pencil
	Use capital letters for start of sentences	Tick in pencil
	Use capital letters for ‘I’ – Proud ‘I’s	Tick in pencil
	Common exemption words	Underline in pencil
Year 2	Use capital letters for proper nouns in addition to start of sentences and proud ‘I’.	Tick in pencil
	Use coordinating conjunctions - or / and / but to join clauses	Circle in pencil
	Use some subordinating conjunctions – when/if/because/ to join clauses	Circle in pencil
	Clear ascenders and descenders in letters bdfghjklpqty	Dot above letters in pencil
	Use exclamation marks	Tick in pencil
	Use question marks	Tick in pencil

Year 3	Check Y3/4 statutory spellings	Y3/4
	Use ly adverbs	A
	Use prepositions to express time and place	P
	Use expanded noun phrases for description of setting or character	ENP
	Open a sentence with an adverb or preposition e.g. Quickly..... Quietly.....Once upon a time....Over the hill.....	
	Use subordinating conjunctions when/if/because/after/before/since/as	Circle in pencil
	Use commas in lists	P-C
Year 4	Check Y3/4 statutory spellings	Y3/4
	Use fronted adverbials with comma	FA
	Use all ISAWAWABUB subordinating conjunctions and FANBOYS coordinating conjunctions.	Circle in pencil
	Use apostrophes for contractions	P-A
	Use apostrophes for possession	P-A
	Use speech punctuation	P-S
Year 5	Use of relative clauses	R-C
	Use of parenthesis () - - , ,	HP-P
	Use of paragraphs	//
	Use of commas to aid reader understanding	P-C
Year 6	Use of semi-colons	HP - SC
	Use of colons	HP - C
	Use of hyphens	HP - H
	Use of the passive voice	PV
	Use of subjunctive form	SF

Handwriting

The DfE has stated that all SSP programmes should not be teaching cursive, but print. In foundation and year 1 children focus on forming their letters properly and much of their writing is practiced on whiteboards during weekly Little Wandle writing sessions. Children concentrate on writing on the line and developing the correct letter size with consistent ascenders and descenders. They also focus on knowing how to position capital letters consistently. Once the children have clear letter formation for each letter, children will follow our handwriting scheme: Letter-join.

From September 2025, most children in Y2 will be using Letter-join to develop simple letter joins in their writing.

In KS2 children are expected to write in cursive and handwriting is taught discreetly using the Letter-join scheme. Children practice handwriting most days after lunch. By the end of year 4, most children are expected to have earned their pen licence, allowing them to write in biro.

Spelling

In KS1 children are given weekly spellings.

In KS2, children follow Spelling Shed's long-term plan. Teachers set weekly work and homework in spellings based on year group and children are given a weekly spelling test at the end which is recorded in their spelling books.

Children with additional needs in spelling may be set spelling rules from a previous year to help build foundation skills.

Children are encouraged to practice their spellings both in school and at home using weekly interactive games on Spelling Shed set by the teacher. In addition, teachers may create 'Hives' which are timed online spelling tests for that week's words. Children are encouraged to compete against different classes to be awarded a coveted prize for the week (such as getting to sit on benches during assembly.)

Punctuation and Grammar

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed in the curriculum. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory glossary is provided for teachers in the writing progression document. Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching through:

- The systematic teaching of phonics in KS1 using the 'Little Wandle' scheme

- Developing an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar which are taught implicitly and explicitly from Year 1 through to Year 6 using the appendices in the new National Curriculum
- Subject-specific vocabulary referenced in the knowledge organisers and encouraged for use in the knowledge harvests
- Regular dictionary and thesaurus work.

