



English Curriculum Intent

At Birklands Primary School, we believe that developing:

- Independent learners
- Creative thinkers
- Socially confident and responsible citizens
- Cultural knowledge

will provide our pupils with the positive powers to make a difference in their lives and break the cycle of deprivation.

It is our intention, when teaching the English curriculum, that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. We strive to ensure that all of our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading, writing, speaking and listening, which will equip them with the fundamental literacy skills required to achieve at our school and beyond.

Due to the limited language skills that our children possess when entering our school, the acquisition of these is of the utmost importance to us, and therefore, the teaching of all aspects of English is given a high priority across all subject areas. Developing confidence in basic language skills enables our children to communicate creatively and imaginatively, preparing them for their future learning journey. We provide our pupils with a 'language rich' environment by exploring ambitious vocabulary not only within English lessons, but also across the wider curriculum. This provides our pupils with a broad bank of words and phrases to draw from and helps to develop them as socially confident individuals.

The quality of our early reading provision is a high priority for us: through the teaching of synthetic, systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1. Our reading books are carefully matched to each phonic phase, which enables pupils to practise and apply their knowledge; to thrive on the feeling of success and ultimately become an independent learner. Phonics is taught daily to all children within Foundation stage, Year 1 and Year 2.

Staff systematically teach pupils the relationships between sounds and the written spelling patterns or the graphemes which represent them. We follow the Rocket Phonics story-based Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) programme from Reading Planet. This programme is based on the progression of Letters and Sounds (2007) and provides a rigorous approach that combines engaging stories with in-depth phonics knowledge and skills. The programme ensures pupils keep up rather than catch up.

In key stage 2, we follow the *Sounds and Syllables* spelling programme which provides a comprehensive approach to the teaching of spelling. This programme continues to develop our children's phonemic understanding as they learn to spell more demanding words.

Our school values are at the heart of our English curriculum: pupils are expected to follow all aspects outlined in our School Charter. High expectations are placed upon our pupils, who are encouraged to develop the resilience to rise to these whilst becoming

increasingly independent learners as they progress through school. Handwriting and presentation have a high profile at our school – pupils have daily, explicit teaching of handwriting during which time they are encouraged to perfect letter formation, letter joins and their own handwriting style.

Our pupils are encouraged to read widely to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, in turn helping to develop their social, emotional and cultural awareness. They are taught that reading is a skill essential for life; we also want them to leave school with a love of reading. Through our '*100 books to read before you leave*' initiative, we hope to achieve this. One hundred books have been carefully selected for each of our phases; a wide variety of authors, genres, themes, time periods and cultures are represented within each set. Exposure to these texts will help to develop our pupils culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We recognise that reading widely and often also increases pupils' vocabulary, reading fluency, reading stamina and overall understanding of a text. It is essential that, by the end of their time with us, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence and understanding, in any subject or situation.

We have designed a creative and innovative English curriculum which aims to develop literate individuals, who can communicate in all aspects of their lives. As a school, we want our pupils to recognise that a good understanding of English is essential, whilst developing a love for this subject. Through our curriculum, we aim to immerse children in new knowledge and experiences that raise aspirations, increase their cultural capital and enable them to be effective communicators. English teaching sequences are planned and delivered through our 'Book Journal' approach, whereby pupils are fully immersed in a particular text. These texts are carefully selected to maximise thematic learning, whilst providing high-quality models of language and grammatical structures.

Our approach is delivered from EYFS all the way through to Year 6. This ensures consistency and a clear teaching approach in which reading skills can be developed and refined. Children create book journals - a collection of activities which support their engagement with texts - for each of the core books studied. These provide a range of formats for recording ideas and discussion about important elements of a text. Together the completed activities add up to a significant body of work, which helps bridge the gap between oral understanding and written answers and gives strong evidence of children's developing understanding.

Our Word of The Day initiative exposes pupils to new vocabulary daily. Pupils are expected to generate a definition for a given word, put the word in context and identify the word class it belongs to. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop this approach further by generating synonyms and antonyms and modifications for the given word.

All writing opportunities are linked to the core text or chosen stimulus for each curriculum topic. Rather than teaching children lots of different genres or text types, our approach focuses on what those different text types have in common: the purpose for writing (to entertain, to inform, to persuade and to discuss). We ensure that pupils are given real reasons for writing, thinking carefully about the audience and purpose. Pupils develop an understanding of the key language and organisational features of each writing style and this knowledge is built upon both during the course of the year and year-on-year through our spiral curriculum approach.



Pupils are expected to produce at least one piece of written work, linked to the given purpose, each half-term. Key Stage 1 focus on the purposes to Entertain and Inform. Year 3 and 4 focus on the purposes to Inform, Entertain and Persuade. Year 5 and 6 cover all four purposes. Staff are welcome to move the order of purposes around as long as the weightings remain the same. They also choose which text types they wish to cover within the purpose. However, they must focus on the same purpose for writing within a half-term in order for the children to master the skills which are being taught. Rosenshine's Principles of instruction are woven through our teaching sequences as pupils undertake the writing process.

When planning the units of work, we think carefully about which grammar and punctuation objectives from the National Curriculum match each purpose. We then chose five or six key objectives to embed within the unit. This means that in lessons leading up to writing a final piece, we are able to fully embed the relevant grammar and punctuation skills; spend time investigating vocabulary appropriate to the piece; unpick high quality examples; create plans and write collaboratively with peers. When creating writing success criteria, we ensure that we give children opportunities to embed their skills by using the grammar and punctuation in a different context. This approach is designed to enable our pupils in become increasingly independent learners.