Oldswinford Church of England Primary School

English Policy

September 2026

Review: September 2029

CONTENTS

SECTION 1:	Page
Context	3
Vision, Values & Ethos	3
Rationale	3
Purpose & Principles	4
Aims of the Policy	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	5
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Review	5
SECTION 2:	5
Spoken Language	5
Reading	6
Comprehension Crusher – whole class reading	7
Individual Reading	10
Colourful Semantics	10
Writing	10
Spelling / Phonics	11
Handwriting	12
SEND	12
Expectations	12
Assessment / statutory assessments	12 / 13
Appendix 1: Sentence Checkers	14 - 17

God is Love and at Oldswinford Church of England Primary School we believe that this love inspires us all to believe, achieve and shine brighter together.

We believe that there is a light which shines within each of us – a light of love that has been given to us by God, which we should use to help us achieve great things. We believe it is our job to help that light to shine in all that we do and all that we try to do.

The theology that underpins our vision is interlinked as we know we cannot achieve one without the other. With this guidance and belief in ourselves and God, we can and will achieve. At Oldswinford, we know we are not alone and by enabling our own lights to shine we empower others to do the same.

Believe

'Everything is possible for one who believes'

Mark 9:23

As a Church of England school we offer all children an invitation into the Christian faith, a chance for them to develop spiritually as well as intellectually, socially and morally. We want everyone at Oldswinford to believe in their own abilities, the abilities of others and to persevere when things are tough. We encourage them to aim high and follow their dreams. We want them to have the confidence to stand up to injustices, be respectful and to make wise choices.

Achieve

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart' Colossians 3:23

We have high aspirations for all our learners and believe that every child should have the chance to reach their potential. We recognise that achievements come in many guises and we are passionate about celebrating each child's individual talents. We want to ensure our children are resilient and prepared for the next steps in their learning journey and that they become well-rounded and respectful citizens who have all the skills and values they need to flourish and be happy.

Shine brighter together

'Let your light shine for others, so they may see your good works'

Matthew 5:16

We believe that we all belong to one inclusive family and each of us has an important part to play. We understand the need for our children to be courageous advocates especially when caring about our world and the communities around us. As individuals we are diverse, unique and special but together, with God, we can be exceptional.

Our vision and 7 key Christian values of love, respect, trust, courage, forgiveness, generosity and joy enable us to 'believe, achieve and shine brighter together'.

Rationale:

At Oldswinford, we believe the most important skill any child can leave primary school with is the ability to read independently, extensively, and effectively for meaning. **It is our intent for all our pupils to read fluently and confidently in any subject by the time they are ready to move to secondary school and to become adept at talking deeply about books.** Through our enriched curriculum, reading encompasses all areas of learning. We promote a culture of reading, not simply as a life skill, but to also develop a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also enrich their lives, improve their wellbeing and feed into lifelong learning. We want our children to develop a love for literature

and to become responsible readers, appreciating and understanding diversity in our world through varied and frequent reading. English sits at the heart of the primary curriculum and at Oldswinford we value our children's right to be literate and to enjoy literature.

The writing curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all children. It provides opportunities for children to develop as independent, confident and successful writers, with high aspirations, who know how to make a positive contribution to their community and the wider society. **It is our intent for all pupils – irrespective of their needs, abilities or background – to learn to write fluently, developing their own writer's voice.** We aim to meet, and where possible exceed, the expectations laid out in the Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum, with pupils progressing appropriately across school. We recognise that spoken language underpins the development of writing. The quality of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding of writing. We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge-base in Literacy, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. We believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society. We cultivate a love of writing and communicating through vocabulary rich and high- quality literature, using **Ready Steady Write** by Literacy Counts. By inspiring and developing an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and providing meaningful and exciting provocations to write, we develop a habit of writing widely and often. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing; can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts.

Purpose & Principles:

This policy document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English developed our school. English contributes to the school curriculum by developing pupils' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It is our view, in line with our school ethos, that pupils in the school should be taught in a caring, safe, secure and stimulating environment enabling them all to achieve their potential in the areas of English regardless of their gender or ethnic background.

Aims of the Policy:

- The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:
- read easily, fluently and with good understanding;
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information;
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary;
- foster an interest in words and their meanings, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading and develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;
- enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;
- develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy;
- use grammar and punctuation accurately;
- understand spelling conventions;
- produce effective, well-presented written work.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:

We believe:

- that the broad principles in this policy should be applied equally to all pupils, regardless of ability, gender, race or culture, including those with special educational needs;
- that pupils with difficulties in basic skills are given extra support, either daily or on a regular basis by teachers. The SENCo will liaise with the English Leader and class teachers to ensure that the individual needs of pupils with special needs are met and that appropriate targets are set and regularly reviewed. Outside agencies may be consulted where appropriate.
- that disadvantaged/vulnerable children (including LAC) are given support at the point of need by the class teacher upon liaison with the SENCo or/and DSLs.
- That all children are individuals and that this policy can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children to enable accessibility.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body holds the school to account and critically evaluates the policy and procedures.

The Head Teacher has ultimate responsibility for standards in English and ensuring that standards in English are met throughout the school. Through monitoring and review of classroom practice and pupil progress meetings as well as the appraisal of the English Co-ordinator, the Head Teacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of English provision in the school.

Sarah Dunn, Assistant Head Teacher, as English Co-ordinator, leads English throughout the school. Alongside the Head Teacher, she analyses and monitors English provision and is responsible for disseminating this and its implications to staff and governors. She ensures that staff are trained appropriately with regards to teaching and learning strategies and procedures in English.

Teachers are responsible for delivering school expectations in English to the children they teach in accordance with this policy and guidelines. Teachers are also responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the English policy and feeding back to the English Co-ordinator.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the English Leader.

SECTION 2

Spoken Language

Our approach to English recognises the importance of spoken language as a foundation for developing reading and writing skills. We understand that effective communication, through speaking and listening, plays a vital role in pupils' cognitive, social and emotional development. The National Curriculum for English highlights the importance of spoken language across the whole curriculum, recognising that the quality and variety of language pupils hear and use are essential in developing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and the ability to communicate effectively.

At Oldswinford, we place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' oracy skills. We believe that confident and articulate speakers are better equipped to express their ideas, reason effectively, collaborate with others and engage fully with their learning. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language and listening skills through purposeful talk, including drama, discussion, debate, presentation and collaborative activities.

Spoken language is used as a tool to support thinking and learning. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their ideas, explain their understanding of texts and rehearse their thoughts before writing. Through carefully planned opportunities for talk, pupils develop their vocabulary, refine their ideas and make their thinking clear to themselves and others. Assessment for Learning strategies are used to identify and address misconceptions, enabling pupils to strengthen their understanding through discussion.

At Oldswinford, we recognise that a strong commitment to speaking and listening, and the development of oracy across the curriculum, supports all children, particularly those with limited language experiences, by providing them with the skills and confidence needed to access the curriculum, make progress and participate fully in their learning.

Children need to be able to:

- Communicate effectively, speaking with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency;
- Participate in discussions and debate in a variety of contexts;
- Listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest;
- Articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary recognising audience;
- Respond to questions and opinions appropriately;
- Retell stories and poems which are known by heart;
- Ask questions with increasing relevance and insight.

Reading

At Oldswinford, we aim to develop a strong community of readers amongst both the children and staff. We highly value the importance of books and literature in enabling children to become confident, happy and enthusiastic readers and writers. We strive to ensure that children experience high-quality literature, both reading and listening to a wide range of ambitious and challenging language and this is promoted through our daily phonics lessons, reading for pleasure sessions, Comprehension Crusher whole class reading scheme and our rich selection of texts used in English lessons. Together these sessions provide regular opportunities for the children to listen to and read texts from a range of genres.

Children learn to read through a variety of different reading opportunities. These include individual, group, whole class, teacher modelled and shared reading sessions. We actively encourage and celebrate a love of reading through assemblies, World Book Day celebration, book fairs and activities, book recommendations and our daily reading for pleasure sessions. Children enjoy listening to a range of books read aloud to them daily by the class teacher. In this way, we aim to ensure that children experience high-quality literature and hear a wide range of ambitious and challenging language. Texts are read aloud to model what good reading

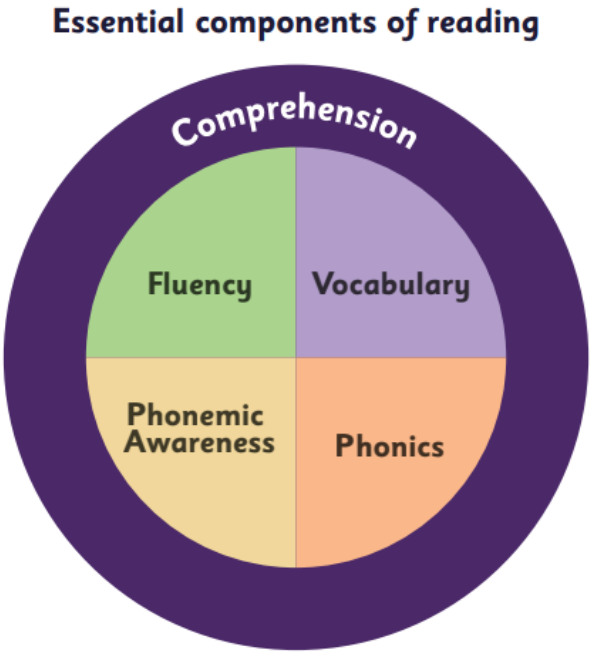
sounds like, with a focus on fluency and prosody. Children are also given opportunities to listen to, learn and recite classic and modern poetry. Teachers listen to pupils read regularly and work hard to develop a positive reading relationship between home and school. Classroom reading incentives are run in each classroom to encourage regular reading habits at home. In EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, the focus is on developing and embedding phonic skills and excellent early reading habits. From Year 2 to Year 6 we focus on developing fluency, vocabulary and deeper comprehension of challenging texts.

All children have access to a range of reading materials.

- They all have a home reading book which is carefully matched to their individual reading level / ability. The expectation is that all children will read to an adult at home every day and comments will be written into the reading record book.
- Children who are on the Phonics pathway in EYFS and Year 1, will also have a school-based reading book (in addition to their home reading book). These books are fully decodable and used in line with our Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (Rocket Phonics). They provide the children with opportunities to practise and apply the GPCs that they have been taught to date whereby if an adult is not present, they are not forced to guess from pictures, content or the first letters of a word or its shape. This ensures that our children feel a sense of achievement with their reading.
- Children are also invited to borrow a reading book for pleasure from their class reading area or the main school library. Children are encouraged by school staff to select books that are suitable for their age / ability but that also interest and intrigue them.
- Children who are at risk of falling behind with their reading are identified by class teachers for additional reading within school. This may be carried out by the class teacher and / or teaching assistant. Identified children may also be given further intervention after discussion with SENDCo. We also have a range of adult reading volunteers who visit school on a weekly basis to provide further support to all year groups and a team of enthusiastic reading buddies in Y5/Y6 who offer weekly reading sessions with younger readers who require further support.

Comprehension Crusher

We use Comprehension Crusher as our whole class reading provision from Y2-Y6. It has been designed to maximise opportunity for daily, weekly and monthly review to ensure new vocabulary, concepts, and knowledge are encoded into children's long-term memory. The Comprehension Crusher scheme is only accessed once pupils' phonemic awareness and phonics are strong enough. Each unit encompasses a range of fluency and vocabulary activities to improve reading comprehension



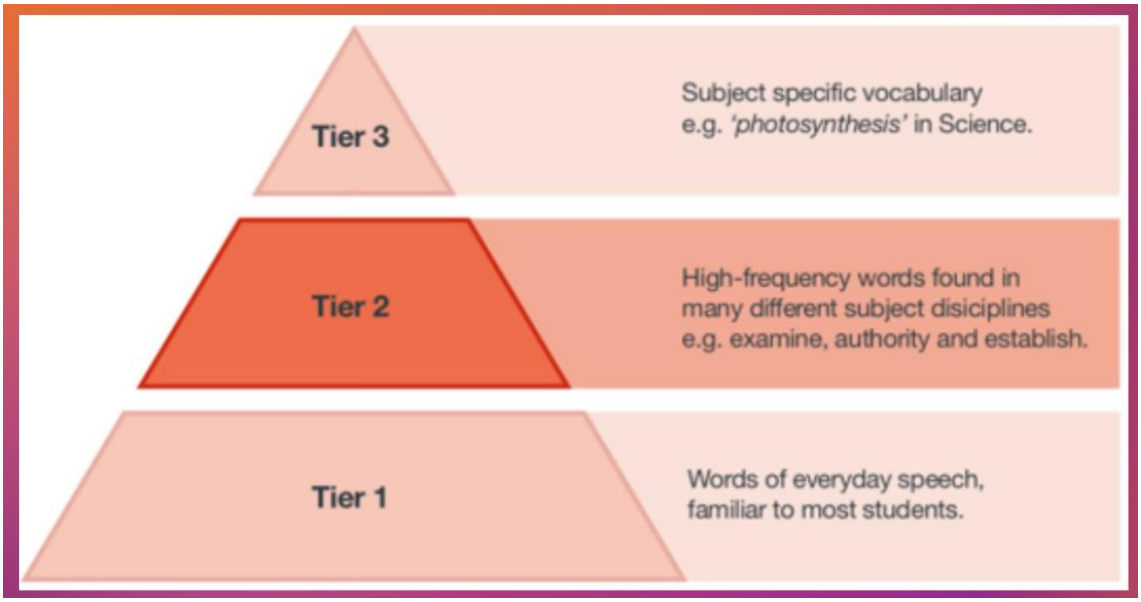
Each unit is run over a 3-week timetable.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 *Daily RfP*	Activate prior knowledge Teach tiered vocabulary Teacher modelled reading	Tiered vocabulary Fluency grid *Read and discuss words / meaning* Choral reading *Read text together*	Fluency grid *Can children remember the meanings of words from the grid?* Echo reading *Developing prosody (rhythm and sound)*	Fluency grid *Guess my word from my definition?* Echo reading *Developing prosody (rhythm and sound)* Timed reading *How close can the children get to the teacher's time?*	**One flexible day per week for RfP session (children reading own books) at the discretion of the teacher.*
Week 2 *Daily RfP*	Fluency grid *Give a definition for my word?* Echo reading *Developing prosody (rhythm and sound)* Timed reading *How close can the children get to the teacher's time?*	Domain Focus Questions (Modelled – Shared – Independent) • Scheme questions • Ninja Comprehensions	Domain Focus Questions (Modelled – Shared – Independent) • Scheme questions • Ninja Comprehensions	Domain Focus Questions (Modelled – Shared – Independent) • Scheme questions • Ninja Comprehensions	**One flexible day per week for RfP session session (children reading own books) at the discretion of the teacher.*
Week 3 *Daily RfP*	*Flexible reading – staff to use AfL to plan their own reading activities:* **1:2:1 readers* **Ninja tasks* ** SATs Smashers*				**One flexible day per week for RfP session (children reading own books) at the discretion of the teacher.*

The structure of each unit follows the same process:

- **Prior knowledge** is activated to ensure that children have the necessary background information required to read and decode the text.
- **Tiered vocabulary** is explicitly taught. While understanding tier 3 vocabulary is essential for mastering specific academic subjects, spending excessive time on these words can be less conducive to overall reading improvement compared to focusing on tier 2 words. Tier 2 words are high-frequency, versatile words that appear across various contexts and genres. They are crucial for

building a robust vocabulary foundation, improving reading comprehension, and enhancing overall language proficiency. Tier 2 words, such as “analyse,” “compare,” and “predict,” are more likely to be encountered in a wide range of texts, making them more relevant to everyday reading and learning experiences. By prioritising these words, students can improve their ability to understand and engage with diverse materials, thereby boosting their reading skills more effectively. In contrast, tier 3 words are domain-specific and rarely used outside their particular fields. Spending too much time on these specialised terms can limit students’ exposure to the broader vocabulary needed for general reading comprehension and language development. Therefore, balancing the teaching of tier 3 words with a stronger emphasis on tier 2 words is essential for fostering a well-rounded and effective reading improvement strategy



- **Modelled reading** is a powerful tool which provides a structured and engaging way for teachers to demonstrate the reading process to pupils. It helps pupils to understand the importance of reading, enhances their comprehension skills and introduces them to various text types. Modelled reading is crucial as it demonstrates accurate pronunciation, pace and expression.
- **Choral reading** is reading aloud in unison with a whole class or group of students. Choral reading helps build students’ fluency, self-confidence, and motivation. Because students are reading aloud together, students who may ordinarily feel self-conscious or nervous about reading aloud have built-in support.
- **Fluency grids** are then used to teach the children words they will encounter within their text which may cause them to stumble. Teachers should use the ‘My Turn Your Turn’ approach (MTYT). Focus will be on pronunciation, speed reading and drawing attention to any tricky parts within the word (e.g. splitting morphologically complex words into morphemes - in-visible or joy-ful-ly). The fluency grid helps the children to automatically decode words so that they are not stumbling blocks when reading the text.
- **Echo reading** is a reading strategy designed to help children develop expressive and fluent reading. In echo reading, the teacher will read a short part of the text, perhaps a sentence or paragraph, and the child will echo it back.

- **Timed reading** is used to improve reading fluency. The goal of timed repeated readings is to increase reading speed, accuracy, and expression through repeated practice of a specific passage or text. Better fluency leads to improved comprehension.
- **Domain questions – modelled** – Teachers model how to answer the first question. They talk out loud and highlight relevant parts of the text and the strategies they are using to find the information.
- **Domain questions – shared** – Children are given the opportunity to practise the same domain style question with the support of the class teacher and their peers.
- **Domain questions** – **independent** - Once the modelled and shared questions have been completed, children then apply their learning by completing the independent question.
- **PIRA** assessments are then used at the end of each term to check for understanding. Children apply their learning through a series of unseen texts and questions based on a variety of domains.

Individual Reading

We use a systematic synthetic phonics programme - Rocket Phonics to teach early reading. The scheme uses decodable books (Target Practice Books) which are closely matched to the GPCs the children have learnt to date. Children use these books in EYFS and Y1 to practise their increasing knowledge of GPCs and their blending skills in meaningful contexts. Children across school also have an individual reading book matched to their personal reading level which they take home. Children start the reading scheme in Foundation Stage and continue until they become competent, independent readers where they move to becoming a 'free reader'. At this point, they can select books from a wide variety of sources such as the KS2 library, classroom book corners, book swap boxes or select books from home or public libraries to read and enjoy.

A home/school reading diary is used to record reading by all pupils. All children are encouraged to read daily at home to an adult and the adult then signs the reading diary and adds a comment if they wish. Reading effort at home is recognised and celebrated through a range of creative reading incentives that are run in each classroom.

There are many opportunities for children to practise and extend their reading experiences in other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority and sufficient time is set aside for this.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful Semantics is used across the school as a structured approach to support the development of writing skills, particularly for pupils who benefit from additional language and communication support. This approach uses colour-coded visual prompts to help students understand and construct sentences by identifying key components such as who (subject), what doing (verb), what (object), and where (place). By breaking down sentence structure in a clear and consistent way, Colourful Semantics supports pupils in developing grammar, vocabulary, and confidence in sentence formation. It is used as both a teaching tool and a scaffold to promote independence in writing, helping learners of all abilities to access and engage with the English curriculum.

Writing

We cultivate a love of writing and communicating through vocabulary rich and high-quality literature, using **Ready Steady Write** by Literacy Counts. By inspiring and developing an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and providing meaningful and exciting provocations to write, we develop a habit of writing widely and often. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing; can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts.

Our English curriculum is developed around a sequence of high-quality age-appropriate texts, using Literacy Count's **Ready Steady Write** units of learning. We use each book to create opportunities to:

• develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to use and apply across the wider curriculum, through sentence accuracy sessions;

• explore the writing structure and features of different genres, identifying the purpose and audience;

• plan and write an initial piece of writing with a clear context and purpose before evaluating the effectiveness of writing by editing and redrafting.

Building on this foundation, we teach literacy using a range of strategies which include:

• Group Discussion – Children discuss and interrogate new ideas in a small group or whole class setting. They listen to and value each other's ideas whilst taking on board feedback so as to improve their own explanations.

• Partner Talk – Children work in partners to discuss their ideas. They are able to explain their ideas about texts they have read and prepare their ideas before they write.

• Questioning – Teachers use a range of questioning strategies to establish children's current understanding and develop their learning.

• Modelled Writing – Teachers model writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the children to utilise in their own work. This happens daily, through sentence accuracy work.

• Shared Writing – Teachers use the ideas from the children to create shared pieces of writing. This enables the children to see the writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.

• Editing – All children are signposted to regular opportunities for reviewing and editing their own and the work of others.

• Working walls – Teachers and children regularly update working walls to ensure learning is documented within a unit of work.

Class teachers ensure that the writing process is clearly evident on working walls, with modelled examples being available to all pupils as the sequence of lessons develops.

For further information please see the Ready, Steady, Write Policy.

Sentence Checkers

Each classroom uses sentence checkers. These are displayed on the English working wall and also in Children's English books. The sentence checkers provide a clear set of non-negotiables of writing at OCEPS. Teachers and children are expected to refer to these every day and apply them in all their writing. There are adapted versions depending on the stage of the child / age of the class. (See appendix 1 for masters of each sentence checker).

Range of fiction and non-fiction genres

The long-term English plan outlines the texts to be taught across the school. This will ensure progression and the opportunity for children to experience a breadth of genres.

Spelling / Phonics

We follow Rocket Phonics (SSP) in Reception and Year 1. This is a program that aims to ensure every learner becomes a lifelong reader and writer. Rocket Phonics aims to make Phonics fun and effective for all children and is aligned to the Letters and Sounds framework. The program has a variety of resources including flashcards, online big books, interactive games and pupil workbooks. Rocket Phonics: Next Steps (SSP) is used in Y2 to consolidate phonics and develop literacy skills. Children in Year 1 are required to undertake a national phonics assessment in the summer term.

Pupils from Year 3 - Year 6 are taught spellings using Essential Spelling and Word Knowledge. This is a spelling programme that enables pupils to understand the patterns in the English language using a combination of morphology, etymology and application of phonological rules.

Writing across the Curriculum

Writing in other areas of the curriculum is a good way of seeing if children are applying the skills taught in English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Children are given varied and regular opportunities to write for a range of different purposes across the curriculum.

Handwriting

We follow Kinetic Letters for our handwriting provision. Foundation stage, Year 1 and Year 2 teach correct pencil grip and letter formation. Most children are ready to progress in Year 2 to practising basic joins. Teachers in Year 3 to Year 6 are expected to continue to teach the expectations of handwriting regularly and identify misconceptions early to ensure that all pupils write neatly and legibly. All teachers must expect high-quality presentation in all written work and ensure they are modelling these expectations through their own writing e.g. marking, working walls and board work.

SEND

At Oldswinford, we aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. English lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. A number of intervention strategies are used to develop children's specific learning needs in English. These include many programmes designed to support classroom learning, as well as specific programmes designed to meet children's specific difficulties, for example spelling. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment in liaison with the SENCo.

Expectations

- Teachers are expected to deliver 4 English lessons per week plus their 'Comprehension Crusher' reading sessions as well as either spelling or phonics lessons. Kinetic Letters should also be a priority across school.
- Teachers are expected to annotate daily planning and keep their English folders up-to-date.
- Teachers must adapt planning to suit the needs of their class.
- Children are expected to complete work to the best of their ability and teachers will respond by following our marking policy.
- Children are expected to respond to any editing / 'pink for think' that their teacher has highlighted.

Assessment

Throughout the writing process, teachers use formative assessment to plan the next step in their teaching (based on what the children need to know in order to improve). 'Assessment for Learning' clearly involves the child in thinking about what has worked well and points them towards what needs to be done to move

forward in their learning. Once teachers have evidence from a range of writing, they are able to moderate and make a teacher assessment about the standard of the work. They will assess the writing using the school's internal system for assessment and other tools. There are a few different ways in which we currently assess the children's attainment and progress within lessons and throughout different points of their school life. We ensure to carry out assessments of learning and assessments for learning, as explored below:

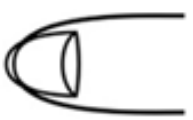
Statutory assessments

In line with Government expectations, children at Oldswinford Church of England Primary School complete SATs at the end of Year 6 as an assessment of their English learning. Children in Year 1 complete the statutory phonics screening check.

In-school assessments

To assess the progress children are making from term to term and year to year, children in Years 1-6 carry out additional progress tests and assessments. These opportunities are used to inform teachers' ongoing teacher assessments as well as giving the children a chance to get used to the formalities of testing. Termly moderations are then held between and across phases to moderate teacher judgements.

Appendix 1 – Sentence Checkers

		chop	
finger spaces	neat letters	sound out words	read it out

		chop	
finger spaces	neat letters	sound out words	read it out

Sentence Accuracy Checker

capital letters	finger spaces	neat letters	sound out words	full stops	read it out

capital letters	finger spaces	neat letters	sound out words	full stops	read it out

Sentence Accuracy Checker

correct letter size and shape	finger spaces	sound out words	punctuation	read aloud

correct letter size and shape	finger spaces	sound out words	punctuation	read aloud

Sentence Accuracy Checker

Finger spaces	Correct letter size and shape	Punctuation	Word choices	Read to an adult or partner

Finger spaces	Correct letter size and shape	Punctuation	Word choices	Read to an adult or partner