

***Oldswinford
Church of England
Primary School***



English Policy

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‘Believe, achieve and shine brighter together’

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 in pupils 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. Exciting and engaging lessons are planned and delivered to inspire pupils to become enthusiastic readers and writers. Through the English curriculum, we endeavour to support children to develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. Our desire is for children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety. Our English curriculum enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. As literacy is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development, it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

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. She is responsible for writing, updating and revising the policy. 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 is heavily influenced by Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' and this demonstrates how effective it is to develop the three skills of English together. However, speaking and listening are important skills and their absence inhibits not only other learning, but also social and emotional development. The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils

develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write through a range of drama, presentation, conversation and discussion activities and assessed as part of continuous Assessment for Learning. They are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their English. At Oldswinford, we recognise that a strong commitment to speaking and listening skills within the whole curriculum supports all children, particularly those with impoverished language skills, so that they are able to access the curriculum and make progress.

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 Talk for Writing approaches. 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 fairs and activities, book recommendations and our beloved daily reading 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.

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, comments being written into the reading record book.
- Children who are on the Phonics pathway in EYFS and Year 1, also have a school-based reading book. These books are decodable and used in line with our Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme (Rocket Phonics) and 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

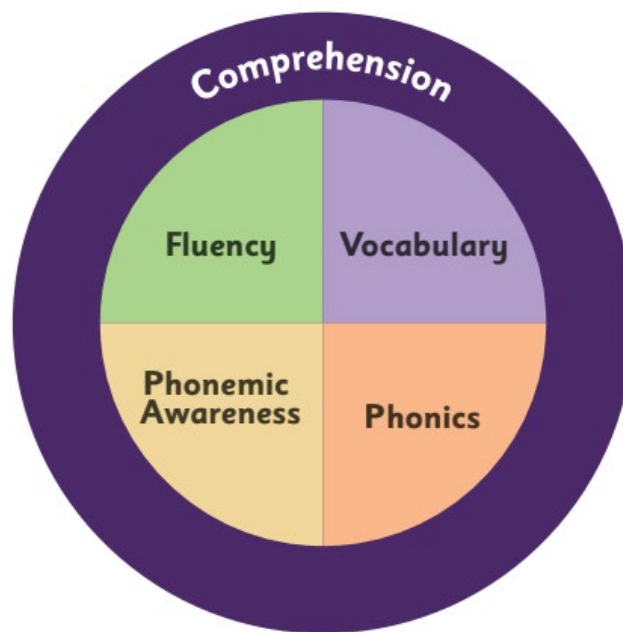
pictures, content or the first letters of a word or its shape. This ensures that our children feel a sense of achievement with their reading.

- 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 in EYFS, Y1, Y2 and Y3 who are at risk of falling behind are identified by class teachers for additional reading within school. This may be carried out by the class teacher and / or teaching assistant. 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.

Comprehension Crusher

Comprehension Crusher 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

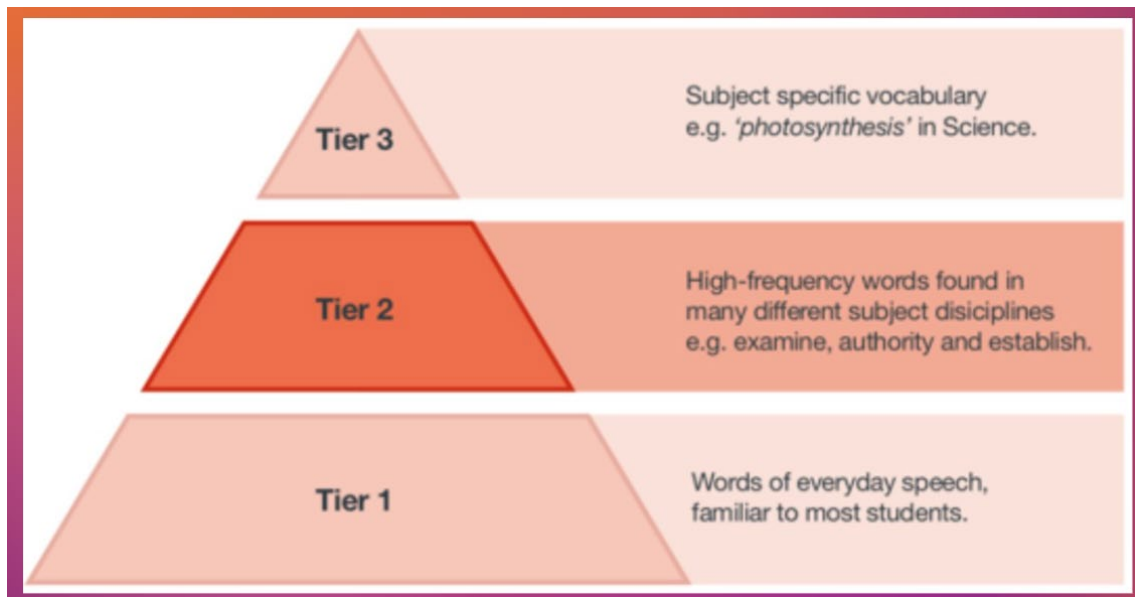
Essential components of reading



Each unit is run over a 3-week timetable. 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

Children have access to a systematic phonics programme (Rocket Phonics) and decodable books (Target Practice Books) that go alongside. Children use these books in EYFS and Y1 to practise their increasing knowledge of GPCs and their blending skills in meaningful contexts. All children also have an individual reading book matched to their reading level which they take home. Children start the reading scheme in Foundation Stage and continue until they become competent, independent readers. They can then choose from a wide variety of books from the KS2 library 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.

Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar (PVPG)

Children in Y1-Y6 complete a unit of work called the ‘Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar.’ The name “Place Value” is metaphorical: just as place value in maths is foundational, these units aim to lay foundations in grammar and punctuation that children build upon each year. The units map out the grammar and punctuation objectives from the National Curriculum so that all the required skills are explicitly addressed. Skills are introduced in stages or objectives (e.g. nouns → verbs → subject/verb agreement → building clauses etc.), with increasing complexity. Each year revisits and deepens previous learning. Pupils are expected not only to *identify* grammar and punctuation features (fluency) but to *reason about* them, apply them in context and in varied sentence structures. There are "application starters", "review starters", and "full unit review" resources available—tools intended to be used by staff to help pupils revisit skills regularly, ensuring they stick. Each unit provides a clear sequence, editable resources, challenge sheets etc., so that teachers have consistency in what is taught and when ensuring a whole-school alignment. By ensuring pupils have command over the key building blocks (grammar, punctuation, sentence structures), we believe they are better prepared to write well, independently and with precision. OCEPs use PVPG at the start of each year to “reset” or refresh these skills before moving into the Talk 4 Writing units. Year 1 begin their unit of PVPG in the second half of the autumn term. This is so they can have a heavy focus on transcription skills.

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

At Oldswinford, we have adopted Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' as a model to improve achievement in writing. 'Talk for Writing' advocates that children imitate the key language needed for a particular genre orally, before reading and analysing it. Through fun activities they rehearse retelling the text, then through shared and guided writing they are shown how to craft their writing in the same style. The approach includes imitation, innovation and independent application (invention).

1. Baseline assessment and planning

Each unit of work starts off with an initial assessment by the teacher of what the children can do independently, drawing on their prior learning. The class teacher uses their knowledge of the children and their most recent Star Writes (independent writing) to analyse current skills and areas for development. Staff are responsible for planning writing units that meet the needs of their class to enable the children to progress. This AfL enables teachers to personalise and plan specific learning opportunities for their classes to maximise progress.

2. The Imitation Stage

The teacher establishes a creative context for each 'Talk for Writing' unit with a 'hook' to draw the children in. Teachers then introduce children to a model text, supported visually by a text map. Actions are created to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece and reinforce the specific language patterns. Children interact with the text through drama activities and internalise the language patterns through sentence and word games based on the text. Classes identify the key writing ingredients and 'magpie' key words and phrases. Children will develop their understanding of the structure of the text with the use of story-mapping and/or the boxing-up technique and by analysing the key features.

3. The Innovation Stage

Once the children have internalised the text, they are then ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. During innovation, spelling, sentence games and drama activities continue to be incorporated so that children have a wealth of oral and written practice in the language features required to write.

The key activities in this stage are shared writing (which helps the children to create their own version by 'doing one together' first) and guided writing (small group writing with the teacher tailoring the writing session to the child's personalised learning target.) This begins with the children boxing-up their innovated version of the model text. Each stage of the writing process is modelled by the teacher.

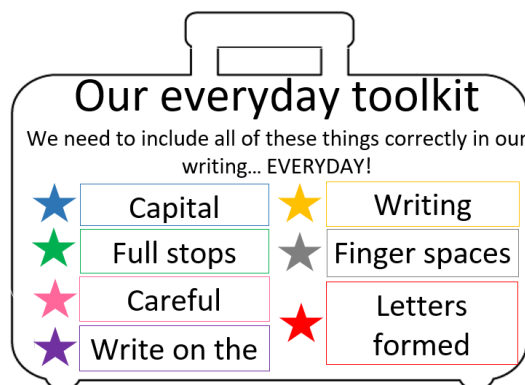
4. The Independent Application Stage – Star Writing

In the final stage, children move towards becoming independent writers. They may write the same text type or, as they become more proficient, they might consider innovating the original by changing the genre, perspective or time for example. Each child will complete a 'Star Write' activity which is an independent task. Children are also expected to reread and edit their work independently. Teachers will use these pieces of

writing to see how much progress the children have made. It is expected that staff can demonstrate how their planning is adapted to meet the needs of the children. This will be discussed at pupil progress meetings to ensure that staff are meeting the needs of their children and the same areas of focus are not continuing to appear.

Toolkit

Each classroom has an 'Everyday Toolkit'. These are displayed on the English working wall, and they set out the non-negotiables of writing at OCEPS. Teachers are expected to refer to these everyday and to ensure that pupils are aware of them and their responsibility to apply them in all their writing. EYFS use an adapted version whereby they use individual suitcases that will build up across the year as they learn new skills. By the end of EYFS the children will be using the full criteria.



Range of fiction and non-fiction genres

The long-term English plan outlines the fiction and non-fiction genres to be taught across the school as well as opportunities for poetry. 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 on a daily basis following the Rising Stars spelling scheme. Doodle Spell is used by class teachers (Y1-Y6) to send home weekly spellings.

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 and Year 1 work on basic letter formation which leads children onto practising basic joins when they are ready in Year 2. 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 for children in lower years and any child higher up the school who still need intervention. Children are expected to complete a short burst writing activity in each English lesson and staff should respond to these by following the marking policy and the expectations of the 'everyday toolkit'.

Success criteria should not be stuck into books. Instead, children should be involved in creating a menu of what they 'could' include in their star writing activity. Children need to be given ownership and creativity for their work and encouraged to use the features of writing that they feel will suit the audience and purpose.

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. Teachers ensure the children's next steps for learning form the basis of the model text to be used in the next 'Talk for Writing' unit. 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

In order to assess the progress children are making from 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.