



West Byfleet Infant School
We Belong, Inspire, Succeed

English Policy

Context of Policy to our School vision and Values

At West Byfleet Infant School, our vision - "We Belong, Inspire, succeed" - guides everything we do. It reminds us each day that children thrive when they feel safe, valued, and connected within our school community. We aim to spark their curiosity, nurture a love of learning, and support every child in achieving personal success.

We believe that a high-quality English curriculum lays the foundation for a rich and fulfilling life. It empowers pupils with the essential skills to communicate confidently and effectively, both in speech and writing. Through the English National Curriculum and our carefully designed teaching sequences, we help children build the knowledge and creativity needed to express themselves with clarity and imagination.

At the heart of our approach is a commitment to fostering lifelong learners who appreciate and enjoy the richness of literature every day. We want every child to discover the power and beauty of language—and to carry that love with them wherever they go.



Member of staff responsible	Annie Menzies
Date Policy Produced	Spring 2024
Policy agreed/last reviewed	Autumn 2025
Next review date	Autumn 2026
Other Related Policies	n/a
Is it a Statutory Policy?	no
Does it need Governor approval?	no

Principles of our English policy

We follow a bespoke writing journey that enables children to explore a wide range of written forms in a meaningful and engaging way. This journey includes opportunities for text immersion, language exploration, skills practice, planning, writing, and editing. Each stage is designed to build confidence, develop creativity, and deepen understanding of the writing process.

Our English curriculum is underpinned by five core aims:

- ❖ To develop a curriculum that is fun and engaging for all children - ensuring that every learner finds joy and purpose in their English learning.
- ❖ To promote a shared love and understanding of English and reading - nurturing a lifelong appreciation for literature and effective communication.
- ❖ To establish equal entitlement for all pupils - providing every child with access to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities.
- ❖ To set high expectations for both teachers and pupils - encouraging ambition, effort, and continuous improvement.
- ❖ To promote continuity and coherence across the school - creating a consistent, joined-up approach to English learning from class to class and year to year.

At West Byfleet Infant School, we aim to ensure that all children:

- ❖ Become effective, confident communicators and attentive listeners.
- ❖ Can express opinions, articulate feelings, and respond thoughtfully to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts using appropriate technical vocabulary.
- ❖ Apply their phonetic knowledge to decode words, while also using sight recognition and comprehension strategies to support fluent reading.
- ❖ Develop a curiosity about language, building a rich and varied vocabulary in both spoken and written forms.
- ❖ Enjoy, engage with, and understand a wide range of text types and genres.
- ❖ Cultivate imagination, creativity, and critical thinking across all areas of English.
- ❖ Understand and apply common spelling conventions.
- ❖ Produce clear, effective, and well-presented written work.

Curriculum Organisation

In Key Stage 1, English is taught both as a discrete subject and through cross-curricular activities. Engaging, well-planned lessons help children develop reading and writing skills in meaningful contexts. Systematic teaching of phonics, grammar, and spelling ensures children build a strong foundation in language. Our curriculum is based on Development Matters, the National Curriculum, and our bespoke teaching sequence. A balance of whole-class, group, and individual teaching is used to meet pupils' needs. Children are made aware of learning objectives and success criteria, and regular time is set aside for independent reading, guided reading, and extended writing.

Phonics

In the Foundation Stage, early phonetic awareness is nurtured through daily routines and engaging activities such as listening games, singing, shared reading, and interactive play. Children are encouraged to recognise letters in their names, identify familiar words, listen for sounds, and begin to recall them with accuracy. From Reception through Key Stage 1, phonics is taught daily using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised scheme. Children learn to segment and blend sounds, decode regular and tricky words, and apply these skills in their reading and writing. A variety of activities are used to support fluent word recognition and phonemic mastery. Phonics progress is assessed at the end of each half term. Any gaps are identified and addressed promptly through targeted support. In Year 1, all pupils take the Phonics Screening Check. Those who do not meet the expected standard will receive additional support and retake the check in Year 2.

To Develop our writers, we:

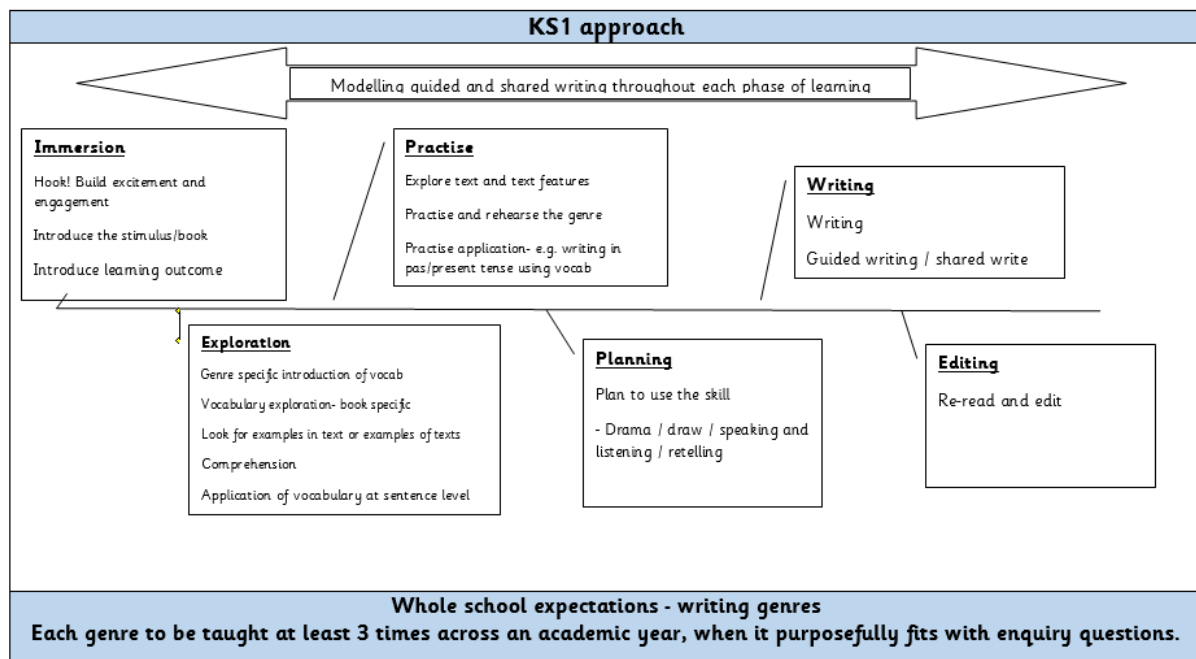
Teachers actively inspire and motivate pupils to see themselves as confident writers. They clearly establish the purpose, audience, and learning objectives for each writing task, helping children understand the reasons behind their work and expected outcomes.

Shared writing is used to model the writing process, while shared reading supports discussion and demonstration of grammar at word, sentence, and text levels. Differentiation is provided through writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative tasks, and adult or peer support. 'Talk for writing' is an integral part of the approach.

Planning is coordinated within year groups to ensure consistent opportunities and skill progression. Our bespoke writing journey includes text immersion, vocabulary development, whole-class writing, planning, drafting, and editing.

Writing skills are assessed through independent work and cross-curricular writing, with progress tracked against curriculum descriptors on the Pupil Asset platform.

Our writing journey:



To develop our pupils as readers we:

- ❖ We foster a lifelong love of reading by introducing diverse, high-quality books and highlighting reading as a key life skill. Our approach includes:
- ❖ Access to an outdoor lending library and regular visits to the local library.
- ❖ A phonics-first approach with reading materials matched to pupils' phonics levels.
- ❖ Teaching fluent, accurate reading and strong comprehension skills across genres.
- ❖ Encouraging reflection on language, vocabulary, and author choices.
- ❖ Using drama to engage with texts.
- ❖ Providing daily targeted reading support for those who need it.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions

We teach reading through daily practice sessions that:

- ❖ Are led by trained adults in small groups of about six children.
- ❖ Use books matched to each child's phonics level, based on Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book-matching grids.
- ❖ Are monitored by the class teacher, who regularly rotates between groups.
- ❖ Each session has a clear focus to avoid overloading children's working memory, targeting three key reading skills.

Key reading skills:

- ❖ Decoding
- ❖ prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- ❖ comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception, daily small-group blending practice begins in Week 4 for children who are not yet decoding, helping them quickly develop reading skills. In Years 1 and 2, this targeted support continues for any children needing extra practice with decodable books.

Each child receives a reading diary for staff and parents to record book titles, make comments, and offer reading tips. Home reading books are carefully matched to the child's current phonics phase to promote success and enjoyment. We encourage children to read at least three times a week with an adult at home.

Handwriting

It is essential that children are taught correct letter formation from the start of school. Once ready, they learn proper posture, the correct tripod pencil grip, and develop legible handwriting. Using the Nelson Handwriting Scheme alongside the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme, children experience whole-class, small-group, and individual teaching. In Reception and Year 1, letter formation is taught with 'lead outs,' reinforced by Nelson, Little Wandle rhymes, and a variety of early morning tasks designed to develop fine motor skills. In Year 2, children begin to join their writing in a cursive style. Handwriting practice occurs at least four times a week, including dedicated fine motor skill sessions. All staff are expected to model the school handwriting style consistently. By the end of Key Stage 1, most children should produce legible, effective cursive handwriting.

To develop our pupils as Speakers and Listeners we:

- ❖ Provide opportunities for children to express their ideas to diverse audiences.
- ❖ Encourage participation in group discussions and drama activities.
- ❖ Support attentive listening and appropriate responses, such as during 'chatterbox' sessions.
- ❖ Teach children to adapt their speech to different contexts.
- ❖ Encourage self-evaluation and reflection on their spoken language.
- ❖ Promote the use of standard English vocabulary and grammar when appropriate.
- ❖ Integrate speech and language sessions within English lessons as part of the writing journey to develop oracy skills.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Children in the Foundation Stage have their starting attainment assessed through observations and progress is tracked using Early Years Outcomes throughout Reception. The Foundation Stage Profile indicates if children meet expected levels by the end of Reception and supports transition into Key Stage 1. All assessments follow the school's assessment policy. Teachers use assessment for learning to inform planning and help pupils understand their next steps. Marking aligns with the school's marking and feedback policy.

Records are maintained to deliver a relevant curriculum tailored to pupils' prior attainment and needs. Assessment identifies children needing additional support promptly and is used:

Daily, to spot children requiring Keep-up support.

Weekly, during Review lessons, to assess gaps and secure fluency in GPCs, words, and spellings.

Summative assessment for all pupils is used:

We assess every six weeks. In reading, we use the Little Wandle assessment tracker to review the words and sounds children have been taught and check their retention. The tracker helps identify the next appropriate book level to challenge each child and highlights any gaps in their knowledge.

In writing, an independent piece is completed at the end of each two-week writing journey. This allows us to assess how well children apply the skills taught and identify any gaps to address through targeted teaching.

Reporting to parents

Parents receive formal updates on their child's progress twice yearly at Parents' Meetings and through the end-of-year report. Next steps are shared during these meetings and are accessible anytime in the children's books. Termly mini-reports are also sent home, with opportunities for parents to discuss any concerns. Staff remain available for informal conversations whenever needed.