

# Our English Curriculum

Newcomen Primary School

**"Never stop  
learning;  
for when we stop  
learning,  
we stop growing."**



**NEWCOMEN**

**scientia potentia est**

Newcomen Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

All children are provided with equal opportunities and equal access to the English curriculum. At Newcomen Primary, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or socio – economic background.

This document is a statement of our Intent for, and the Implementation and Impact of the teaching and learning of English skills and knowledge at Newcomen Primary School. At our school, we believe that language is the single most important tool for communication. It lies at the heart of understanding and is the foundation upon which effective communication is based. We believe that being able to read and write effectively are key life skills, which enable us to understand others and express ourselves confidently. We are passionately committed to helping children develop not only the technical skills of reading and writing, but also to inspire a love for literature and the different genres of writing.

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and a prerequisite for educational and social progress as it underpins the work in all areas of the curriculum. Our English curriculum is carefully sequenced to develop the acquisition of knowledge and skills in line with the National Curriculum expectations and provides opportunities for children to develop the cultural capital of the world. We aim to ensure our children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and confidently through spoken and written language and equip them to be lifelong learners. We share a passion for reading and actively nurture and promote the appreciation and love of literature and reading for pleasure to embed a whole school culture of reading.

Language enables pupils to both communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning. As language is central to children's intellectual, emotional, and social development, it plays an essential and fundamental role across the curriculum at Newcomen Primary School.

Across all areas of the curriculum, pupils are given opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and use of spoken and written English within our ambitious and broad knowledge-based curriculum. Opportunities are maximised for pupils to reinforce the English skills taught and to apply them in a range of contexts within the wider curriculum. Our intent is that our pupils have the requisite knowledge, skills and wider understanding to be successful, independent and motivated learners in readiness for their next stage of education.

# Intent

Newcomen Primary School has the highest of expectations of all our pupils. It is our intention to provide our pupils with a high quality ambitious education in English. By the time our children leave school, our aim is for them to communicate effectively through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding in a range of situations. We want every child to achieve their individual potential and to take pleasure in reading and writing across a range of genres. Our pupils are engaged and committed learners: they show commendable endeavour in their learning and we aim to promote a lifelong passion for oracy, reading and writing.

## Our Aims:

- To promote a shared love and understanding of English
- To promote and nurture a love of reading
- To promote an appreciation of language and the use of vocabulary
- To promote high standards of Literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English
- To increase the breadth of pupil's vocabulary enhancing a deeper understanding of the cultures of others
- To enjoy and embrace language and explicitly teach the language of books
- To teach knowledge about authors and books
- To expose children to a wide range of texts and genres
- To develop enhanced levels of text comprehension
- To develop increasing stamina in reading
- To further enhance meaningful links across the curriculum deepening the knowledge and understanding of our pupils
- To ensure an entitlement for all pupils
- To ensure the highest expectations for and from all
- To promote continuity, coherence and challenge across school
- To promote a passion for lifelong learning.

## Through our study of English, our intent is for our children to:

- Be effective, competent and confident communicators and good listeners
- Read a range of quality texts, both fiction and non-fiction, and to express opinions and formulate responses to texts studied
- Foster a curiosity and interest in words, their roots and meanings and to actively develop an increasing vocabulary in both written and spoken form
- Enjoy and engage with a range of genres whilst developing one's individual reading preferences
- Be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing an increasing awareness of audience and purpose

- Develop powers of imagination and critical awareness across the different areas of English
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately showing deep understanding and skilful application across the curriculum of sentence structure and punctuation
- Develop procedural and semantic knowledge, providing a deeper and more sustainable understanding of the English curriculum where children are able to make connections to knowledge in other subjects and developing their cultural capital.
- Understand spelling rules and conventions whilst being aware of exceptions to the rules
- Actively engage with the school's homework policy in the learning of weekly spellings, reading on a daily basis and learning their English Knowledge Facts
- Produce writing that is joined, legible and neat whilst forming letters correctly and accurately thus promoting pride and self-esteem.
- Master the mechanics of both reading and writing and develop a passion for English and language to enable them to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions effectively.

## Cultural Capital

Children will develop an understanding about other cultures, races and backgrounds around the world; they will learn about different time periods and further develop cultural capital by learning about the lives and experiences of others through the varied and language rich progressive texts that are used within school.

## Early Years

In Early Years, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon developing children's early speaking and listening skills. Staff model and encourage effective behaviour for listening during daily circle time and focused activities. EYFS staff place great importance on listening to, and identifying, rhythm to aid early language formation. Clapping, singing and listening to music and words helps pupils to identify syllables and break down words. Furthermore, carefully planned role play areas offer opportunities for children to be surrounded by rich language and vocabulary.

Emphasis is placed on developing children's phonological knowledge through the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. This complements our whole school reading scheme: Collins Big Cat which ensures children are reading decodable texts matched to their developing phonic level.

Priority is given both to developing an effective pencil grip in preparation for fluent writing and also to letter recognition and letter formation. Our children have endless opportunities to experiment with and apply Literacy skills through the use of static role play areas and child-initiated learning.

# Implementation

English skills are taught every morning and these skills are actively reinforced across the curriculum during the afternoon sessions where appropriate to ensure skills and knowledge are reinforced and built upon to promote understanding and application. Our teaching is based on Rosenshine's principles from evidence through cognitive science: learning is most effective with spaced repetition. Retrieval of previously learnt knowledge and skills is frequent and regular, which increases retrieval and storage strength and commits from working memory to long term semantic memory.

In addition to these principles, as a whole school, we understand the need for consistent high quality teaching, sufficient coverage and time with shared and guided modelling and independent practice. We have a rigorous timetable in place to ensure all aspects of the English curriculum are implemented effectively.

## Handwriting

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the beginning of their time in school. This starts in our EYFS with a specific programme regarding pencil control. As soon as the children are ready, they are taught to sit properly at a desk in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct tripod grip. Through school children develop a legible and when they are ready, joined handwriting style.

## Speaking and Listening

The skill of speaking articulately and with confidence is given high priority at Newcomen Primary School. Speaking with confidence is a key life skill in order to communicate effectively with others. Spoken language is planned for and interwoven into the teaching sequence of language learning. Rehearsal and spoken practice, alongside repetition and rephrasing, are crucial to develop children's skills in reading and writing.

Children are taught good listening skills and what it looks like to be a good listener. Opportunities for children to articulate their ideas and talk within a range of formal and informal situations are maximised within individual, partner, group and class contexts. Children are also encouraged to develop their oracy skills outside of the curriculum through: collective worship, School Council and year group assemblies, participation in local events, field trips and charity events. In addition, pupils are provided with opportunities to perform to larger audiences in annual class assemblies and productions and regular family events where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, governors and peers. These are a great cause of celebration.

Whilst we are proud of our origins and celebrate our different accents and dialects, we actively promote correctly spoken and written Standard English. This is consistently encouraged as part of our whole school everyday practice with repetition used to highlight Standard English. Staff model correct grammar at all times and correct children's spoken grammatical errors routinely. Staff GPS training is delivered annually by the HT and the English Team.

Our English and Reading Leads are: Mrs Cook (KS1 leader and SLE) Miss Mrozik (Y5 and ELE) Miss Pusztai (HT and NLE) and Mrs Rhodes (EYFS Lead).

## Writing

Writing is an integral part of our curriculum. All children from Foundation Stage to Y6 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across book-led curriculum; we offer a reason and context for writing which enables children to write for purpose and audience.

The key aspects of Language teaching are: familiarisation with and understanding of genre and text type; establishing an awareness of purpose and audience; capturing ideas; teacher demonstration; shared and guided work. Finally, independent writing in a structured teaching and learning sequence which incorporates editing, reviewing and redrafting work of one's own and that of others to increase 'voice' and control.

Staff plan closely with colleagues across EYFS, KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2. All teachers and support staff attend weekly planning meetings and all staff training. This ensures a whole school consistent approach of opportunity and expectation of the highest standards.

In KS1 and KS2, at least one half term's work will be based on sharing a quality text read in its entirety. It is also school policy that when studying a novel, all children will have their own individual copy of the text to read and share together.

We use books to create opportunities to develop reading fluency and comprehension with a focus on key reading strategies and skills; develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to apply across the wider curriculum; plan and write an initial piece with a clear context and audience before evaluating the effectiveness of writing by editing and redrafting.

Newcomen Primary School promotes a whole school consistent approach to the teaching of English. We relentlessly promote our whole school generic **Writing Checklist** as our non-negotiable which incorporates grammatical constructions, sentence structure and punctuation elements and which is revisited on an annual basis as staff training.

All classes from Year 1 upwards, actively teach the **'Word Family List'** which is based on English Appendix 2: from the National Curriculum in England 2014. From Year 2 weekly spelling rules are based on Appendix 1 from the National Curriculum. These are revisited

during the week to ensure commitment to long term memory. Alongside the teaching of spellings, meanings of words are discussed and clarified and explicitly taught and revised. In Year 1, spelling rules are closely linked to the phonic sounds the children are learning.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling elements are introduced to the children on a weekly basis, constantly reinforced and applied to other areas of learning where appropriate. This promotes a deeper understanding in knowledge and skills and increased confidence in application. Grammar elements are introduced in a logical manner and closely linked to writing which reinforces meaningful links in learning. Where children are taught in ability groups, they will be working on a common theme at the same time and sharing the highest of expectations.

## **Inclusion**

Newcomen Primary School is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential. Barriers to learning are quickly identified and the school is committed to closing any gaps in achievement. Each child is unique and within every school there will always be a number of children, who for a variety of reasons, are classed as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies children with a suspected Special Education Need early so that interventions are swift and immediate.

All children receive quality first teaching and activities are differentiated appropriately. Every teacher at Newcomen is a teacher of every child in our school, including those with SEND. When identified pupils require additional support, proven intervention programmes, booster classes and 1-1 support are provided. Small, focused groups are also provided for children who may require additional support within lessons.

The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through targeted support in the classroom and additional 1-1 focused support.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessments are undertaken in line with our school assessment policy. Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what needs to be done to achieve the next steps. Group and individual targets are discussed and set accordingly.

Marking of work in English constitutes the school's formative assessment of pupils' work and should also be in accordance with the School Marking Policy.

Specific marking in writing should highlight and praise particular achievements and be followed by recommendations for the next steps needed to move the individual child forward where appropriate. Children are given focused time within the English lesson to read and act upon the teacher's marking. Marking should always be for the children and be manageable for the teacher. Peer marking is used when appropriate

Assessment of Reading and Writing is based on the objectives and expectations of the National Curriculum in England, KS1 and KS2 framework document. The objectives for each year group are based on the statutory programmes of study and expectations in English and complement our whole school consistent approach to the teaching of English.

Consultations with parents and carers take place each term and an annual written report is given in the last term of the school year. Open afternoons occur on a termly basis where parents and carers are invited into school to celebrate and enjoy children's work in books and the learning environment. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into school and actively encouraged to contact school should the need ever arise. Teachers also contact parents/carers to discuss the progress of a child and to celebrate achievement.

## **Staff Development**

All staff members keep up to date with subject knowledge and use quality resources to support their delivery of an ambitious and stimulating curriculum. All teachers and support staff attend staff training. Training needs, based on the local and national initiatives, are identified, planned and delivered by the HT (NLE) and the English Team.

As a National Support School, Newcomen Primary School supports the Self Improving School System and actively works with, and supports other schools with staff development work and whole school improvement.

## **Resources and Accommodation**

All classes promote books and the love of reading and have a wide selection of texts to engage our pupils within classrooms.

Our popular and extremely well-resourced school library is located in Learning Area 3. We have two designated outdoor reading areas: Caterpillar Corner and the Gazebo of Tranquillity. These were requested by the children in our Family Questionnaire 2021.

After school reading clubs occur throughout school to promote a love of reading and to encourage high quality level discussion on texts outside of lesson time. Within these clubs, pupils are given the opportunity to state and justify their opinions on the texts they read in a relaxed and nurturing environment whilst challenging the opinions of others in a courteous and respectful way. Pupils at Newcomen Primary School embrace our reading initiative READ (Read, Enjoy And Discover) which promotes home/school reading and encourages children to extend their reading choices and promote reading for pleasure.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head Teacher, members of the SMT and English Team monitor English. Team teaching is employed throughout year groups and promotes whole school consistency.



Shared collaborative book studies and regular lesson drop-ins are undertaken. These enhance individual practice and ensure a whole school consistent approach. New members of staff are coached and mentored by experienced team members to ensure our whole school consistency.

## Home School Partnership

All parents receive a laminated Year Group Curriculum Overview detailing information about the curriculum at the beginning of each academic year. This explains in detail the curriculum including the school's emphasis on sharing reading at home for pleasure. Parents and carers are advised of, and consulted on, the school homework timetable and policy. We also ask that parents and carers support children with the weekly learning of spellings; this is a great cause of celebration throughout school resulting in the visit of Leonardo, our much-loved school mascot.

Reading at home is encouraged on a daily basis. Each pupil has a reading record that is signed by their parent/carer when they have read at home. When a child has read more than 50 times, they are awarded a certificate in recognition of their dedication to reading. These certificates continue to be awarded in increments of 50 up to 300 and are awarded in our weekly Celebration Assembly



# Impact

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils are able to read fluently and write effectively and with confidence in preparation for their next stage of learning at secondary school.

They will master the mechanics of both reading and writing and develop a passion for English and language to enable them to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions effectively.

Children will make at least good progress in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening from their last point of statutory assessment. We intend that the impact of our English curriculum will ensure our pupils are academically and emotionally extremely well-prepared for life beyond primary school and throughout their exciting educational journey. By the end of KS2, almost all our pupils achieve the Expected Standard (the statutory national expectations) in Reading, Writing, and GPS based on the National Curriculum in England, KS2 framework document 2014. We expect the number of pupils achieving at the higher score within the expected standard to be at least well above the national picture.

## Outcomes – Journey through school

Standards in the basic skills have improved dramatically over the last ten years. **By the time our pupils leave Y6, many are achieving standards well beyond what would normally be expected at their age.** It is clear pupils want to achieve and succeed. They thrive on being challenged, which results in behaviour for learning being superb.

## Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2		Reading	Writing	Maths
average progress scores in reading, writing and maths. (National Average Progress Score = 0)	2023	8.0	3.6	6.8
	2022	6.2	4.6	6.7
	2019	7.3	4.9	5.8
	2018	3.3	6.3	8.1
average 'scaled scores' in reading and maths	2023	112	N/A	110
	2022	111	N/A	111
	2019	112	N/A	111
	2018	107	N/A	111

Key Stage 2		Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM Comb	National
percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard or above in reading, writing and maths.	2023	96%	82%	94%	82%	59%
	2022	100%	98%	100%	98%	59%
	2019	98%	98%	98%	98%	65%
	2018	98%	100%	98%	96%	64%
percentage of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and maths.	2023	80%	33%	53%	27%	8%
	2022	66%	30%	60%	26%	7%
	2019	65%	48%	63%	41%	10%
	2018	32%	49%	64%	23%	10%

The performance of all pupils in all groups is significantly above that of pupils nationally.  
The performance of Disadvantaged pupils is significantly above that of 'Other Pupils Nationally'.