



# FARNWORTH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ENGLISH POLICY

Recommended by	K O'Grady
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## CONTENTS

1. Rationale	2
2. Principles	2 - 3
3. Aims	3
4. Role of the teacher	3
5. Speaking and Listening:	3 - 4
• Rationale	
• Classroom environment	
• Teaching approaches	
6. Reading:	5 - 6
• Rationale	
• Classroom environment	
• Teaching approaches	
• Progression	
7. Writing:	6 - 9
• Rationale	
• Classroom environment	
• Teaching approaches	
8. Parental involvement and Home learning	9
9. Equal Opportunities	10
10. Assessment	10
11. Resources	10
12. ICT	10 - 11
13. Special Educational Needs	11
14. Standards / Targets	11
15. Monitoring and Evaluation	11

### 1. Rationale

At Farnworth CE Primary School, we encourage our pupils to become lifelong learners. We want to give children an education of the highest standard; we aim for excellence in all our school activities and encourage all pupils, whatever their ability to achieve the best they possibly can. We believe that providing pupils with a well-balanced, enriching and engaging English curriculum will aid them in developing into self-assured, expressive and articulate communicators. Our English policy will ensure that all pupils become confident speakers, listeners, readers and writers, preparing them for life in the 21st century and beyond.

### 2. Principles

- English is a right for all pupils and it is our duty to deliver good quality learning experiences through which children can become confident and competent in their use of English.

Policy:	English Policy		Page   2		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



- We endeavour to encourage children to read and write for enjoyment, as well as for advancement of skills.
- The development of English throughout the whole school is the responsibility of ALL staff, and should be monitored by the English Subject leader and Senior Leadership Team.
- English must be developed across the entire curriculum. Teachers must create opportunities in all subject areas to employ use of/develop English skills through purposeful tasks.

### 3. Aims

1. To raise the standard of English;
2. To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say and matching style and response to audience, context and purpose;
3. To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning;
4. To enable children to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader or audience.

### 4. Role of the staff

- a) **model:** as a skilled user of language, the adult's role is the central element in fostering positive attitudes towards English;
- b) **facilitate:** providing a supportive and stimulating environment, organising purposeful activities and enabling children to develop English skills;
- c) **initiate:** providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing;
- d) **assess:** evaluating and assessing the development of skills in English.
- e) **Intervene:** take timely and effective action to ensure next steps in learning are achieved
- f) **monitor:** observing and recording the development of skills in English

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## 5. Speaking and Listening

### • Rationale

Talking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of our children depends. Through the development of oral and aural skills, they learn about language and this equips them to demonstrate and refine their learning.

Our overall aim is for our children to become efficient language users. This will be achieved by devoting time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through purposeful interaction with adults, children will be provided with experiences that develop their skills and their thinking.

Policy:	English Policy			Page   3	
Author:	K O'Grady			Version:	1
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee			Status:	Non Statutory
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



- **Classroom environment**

Learning environments at Farnworth are flexibly organised so as to encourage discussion and promote sharing of ideas. Predominantly (though not exclusively) tables organise children into groups, and children are allocated places depending on ability, skills, experience and how much support they require. These groups are transient - to allow children to interact and share ideas with many different people, and to ensure that each child is provided with support when needed for a specific area of their learning in English. It also stops children from believing that they are of a specific ability banding to prevent limiting them and 'capping' their potential.

- **Teaching approaches and organisation of learning**

We employ use of 'talk for learning' across the curriculum, which encourages and develops interdependent learning and meaningful talk. This ensures that all children are active in discussions and that they each participate in development of ideas.

Within the learning environment, children should feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed and the use of talk should be planned into sessions across the curriculum. All children should understand that talk is part of their learning.

- Use of talk and well-organised group activities, ensures that all children are active in discussions and that they each participate in development of ideas – teachers must plan to use such activities strategically across the curriculum as a means to share and develop ideas through teamwork and discussion
- A variety of experiences and activities should be provided to promote a wide range of types of talk
- The value of talking and listening for social, communicative and cognitive purposes should be communicated to children through activities inside and outside of the classroom
- Groups should be referred to as 'teams', to instil a sense of togetherness and shared purpose. A group is a gathering, whereas a team is working towards a goal, collectively
- Teams must be carefully constructed in order to add as many different skills, attitudes, opinions and interests into the team, creating a broader range of viewpoints and expanding discussions
- Staff must model relevant and correct oral language and grammar in interactions with children within lessons, and around school
- Staff must make best possible use of resources and displays in order to support the development of children's speaking and listening knowledge and skills
- Opportunities for speaking and listening should include television, radio, computer software, podcasts, speeches, drama and debate along with team tasks
- There is a strong link between speaking and listening, and reading and writing. Teachers must use speaking and listening activities to develop reading and writing.

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Policy:	English Policy		Page   4		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019

## 6. Reading

### • Rationale

Reading is an essential life skill – it enables children to access the rest of the curriculum and to navigate their whole world; for this reason we place a great deal of importance on this aspect of education. Our aims are that our children will learn to read, will enjoy a wide variety of texts and will become independent, critical, life-long readers and learners. We aim:



- To build on the children's previously acquired language experiences and early reading skills
- For pupils to emerge from inexperienced readers to independent readers who read a variety of texts for different purposes
- To look for higher standards because we have high expectations of our children
- For children to develop as readers and to be able to enjoy reading for pleasure, alone or as a shared experience with an adult or their peers. We want children to be able to read independently and be able to follow personal interests, also to use their research skills to extend their knowledge and understanding
- To encourage children to recognise the link between reading widely and the development of imagination and how this improves their ability to write. Reading also supports the development of composition and style of written pieces
- To help children to realise the importance of imagination and creativity
- To help children to recognise that reading plays an important part in education, and life as a whole by providing them with real-life experiences in which to apply their skills.

### • Classroom environment

Reading has a very high profile in our school, which is mirrored by our school environment. Around school, beautiful artwork, created by parent volunteers, adorns the walls – featuring quotes and images from well-known texts. The school library is a bright, attractive space and contains a broad range of texts. We believe in encouraging children to choose books for themselves as we want them to discover enjoyment in reading. All children and adults have access to the library, and we have a booking and returns computer programme which children are taught to use independently. Year 6 pupils act as school librarians and are supported and trained by a member of our support staff who is responsible for the library. The librarians are based in the library one session per week to provide assistance and support in using this facility. Each classroom has a library area within which a variety of text types are provided. Children are inspired to read through special events such as World Book Day, carefully selected reading programmes, and additionally through exploring various texts and genres via lessons planned by the teacher.

### • Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

Approaches used at Farnworth include:

- Regular reading to children in all classes

Policy:	English Policy		Page   5		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
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- Home reading books to be shared with parents; there is an expectancy that teachers/support staff, parents/carers and – in KS2 – children, comment regularly on reading within their Reading Diaries. Diaries are collected in at least once a week, to be monitored by teachers
  - Paired reading with peers, younger ‘reading buddies’, or an adult
  - Developing phonological awareness: phonics teaching across KS1, using Letters and Sounds as a core programme and drawing upon elements of other programmes
  - Additional phonics intervention groups across school, including KS2, including use of ‘Toe by Toe’ and Read, Write, Inc
  - Use of novel studies, to teach reading and writing together
  - Use of the Accelerated Reading programme in Years 4 and 5 – a motivating and inspiring programme which closely targets children and has been proven to increase their rate of progress
  - Language experience, combining writing and reading
  - Modelling of reading strategies
  - Guided reading in small groups and provision of age appropriate, stimulating tasks based on this reading
  - Shared reading with Big Books and enlarged texts
  - Uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading (USSR)
  - Computer research
  - Use of dictionaries, Thesauri and various information texts within lessons, accessed independently by the children
  - Embedding a range of texts in studies across the curriculum
  - Written comprehension tasks – a mix of guided/modelled tasks (within which children are taught skills and strategies), and individual assessment tasks
  - Access to a well-stocked, well-organised school library, and to class libraries.
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- **Progression**

Children progress through the book bands until they are ready to become ‘Free Readers’ (select any book). Children can only become free readers when they have shown they are able to both read and comprehend the meaning of the higher - level book band texts. When they become free readers, children are encouraged to read widely, incorporating both fiction and non-fiction texts into their personal reading programme.

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## 7. Writing

- **Rationale**

Writing is an essential tool in the learning process. Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions; to explore and develop their imagination and creativity; to present evidence of research and to share knowledge and understanding. By developing these skills, we can equip our children to use writing across the range of curricular activities in which they are involved, and in the outside world.

Policy:	English Policy		Page   6		
Author:	K O’Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



Our aims are:

- To develop pupils into efficient and effective writers who are able to write appropriately for a variety of audiences
  - To support pupils in acquiring the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within a range of contexts
  - To ensure all pupils can use the conventions of written language and grammar
  - To ensure that all pupils experience a range of purposes and forms of writing
  - To ensure all pupils have opportunities to plan, edit, draft and present their work
  - To develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of the writer's craft
  - To encourage creative thought and imagination to be expressed and developed through writing
  - To develop pupils' love of writing, and their understanding of the importance of having a good level of literacy, in order to succeed in later life
- **Classroom Environment**

Children's written work is displayed around school to celebrate it and motivate the children to continue to write. Within the classroom, displays feature word banks and grammar and punctuation rules, to be accessed by children independently as they write. Dictionaries and Thesauri are also readily available for children to access, as and when they need them. Class computers are switched on at the beginning of each day, to be readily available for quick searches/reference during writing sessions. Additional visual and written notes and resources are added to Working Walls, when studying particular topics/subjects, and children often contribute resources such as books and artefacts that relate to current areas of study. Children are encouraged to read their written work aloud to the class and their efforts are always celebrated. Children give constructive feedback to their peers and address this feedback to improve their writing; they are also encouraged to assess their own writing and set targets for themselves.

• **Teaching approaches and organisation of learning**

All pupils should be writing daily in some form across the curriculum, using the skills and knowledge acquired in English lessons. Class teachers will ensure that children are exposed to all relevant genres and writing forms. Teachers will have **high expectations** of all pupils, and will not place limits on children, or communicate limits to them through dialogue, resources or marking. Children must feel motivated, inspired and able to write and to progress further as writers.

The following approaches are used to support our children in developing as writers:

- Examples of various forms of writing are shared and discussed so that children become familiar with the structure and language features of these forms e.g. letters, diaries, lists, invitations, notes, etc.
- Use of novel studies, to teach reading and writing together
- Children write for a range of audiences such as: themselves, their peers, the school, and the wider community
- Children are encouraged to write at length, and are given clear targets - relating to the amount expected - at the beginning of sessions. If they do not do enough, they revisit the piece in their own time. Through regular and extended writing, children develop muscle strength in their writing hand, speed in their writing, and perseverance – all essential elements of early writing development

Policy:	English Policy		Page   7		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



- The purpose of each piece of writing is made clear to children before they begin
- Teachers show children how to approach a writing task by writing themselves, explaining what they are doing as they go along (modelled writing) or by scribing the children's ideas onto large sheets (shared writing). Teachers also sometimes write models that are shared with the class before embarking on a new task
- Children are organised into groupings (teams) and various activities are used to promote discussion and development of ideas. Children use their 'Thinking Books' to record notes during talk and sharing activities, which are then used in writing sessions. In addition to this, Farnworth is beginning to explore the use of 'Thinking Tools,' such as: Thinking Hats, Maps, Think Step and Cort tools, to help children to note down and develop initial ideas and to organise thinking in preparation for writing
- Children are taught to use, and supported in using their own planning to inform their writing
- Grammar rules are taught within English sessions discreetly, but are then brought into writing sessions through tasks given to the children. Grammar rules are explored, and understanding of them developed, through games and other interactive activities within which children are provided with opportunities to apply and explore rules that they have learned in class
- Children are continuously reminded of the importance of reading in becoming good writers, as reading helps to develop imagination and understanding of how texts are structured and composed in relation to their purpose, in addition to enabling children to experience written English grammar 'in action', in a range of styles
- We use various resources to support children in their writing development, in the form of displays; VCOP pyramids/fans; synonym wheels; punctuation fans and other teacher made resources
- Scaffolds such as writing frames and planning grids are used to support children however, they must not 'cap' expectations by limiting the children to a certain space or amount of sentences etc. Once again, we have high expectations for all of our children
- Teachers do not over-rely on worksheets or downloadable resources. Any sheets that are present in children's workbooks are useful and have a clear purpose. They are used by the children within the writing process
- Dictionaries and Thesauri are made available for independent access in classrooms
- We believe in planning for our children's interests and providing a variety of stimuli to engage and excite them in order to support the development of ideas for writing and to encourage enjoyment of writing. Resources used involve images, film clips, artefacts, songs and various text types
- Targets are translated to children via clear 'Can I?' statements given at the beginning of lessons, use of Success Criteria (which is either created by the teacher or the children), verbally during group work or independent writing time, and within marking of children's written work
- Teachers mark children's writing with green and purple pens; 'The Green Pen of Greatness' (used to highlight positive points and comment on achievement of targets/objectives), and 'The Purple Pen of Progress' (used to provide children with clear, focussed, personalised 'Next Steps' to help them to progress). In all year groups, there is an expectancy that teachers provide children with regular feedback of this kind, adapting the way Next Steps are written to suit the age/ability of their classes
- Children must be given time to read this feedback, ask any questions to clarify their understanding of what needs to be done to improve, and to consider how to go about doing so
- Progress must be evident over time within Process Books

Policy:	English Policy		Page   8		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



- In-school and inter-school moderation and standardisation meetings help teachers to regularly review and assess children’s writing, and to ensure that they are aware of what is expected from children within each year group
- Literacy Company standardisation materials are used to set standards from Years 1-6
- Children have Thinking Books (for planning, note-making and ideas), Process Books (for day-to-day English work such as reading tasks, grammar tasks and drafting and editing of writing, and Writing Books (for redrafting and best presentation of work).
- Handwriting is taught three times a week, for 15-20 minutes, using the scheme we have adopted as a school. Within English work, handwriting of both children and teachers should suit the purpose of each task. For presentational pieces, the school handwriting style is expected – using the relevant line guides. For note writing, there is no specific expectation as long as children can read it. Within Process Books (day to day tasks/drafting and editing etc.), handwriting should be neat and legible, but does not have to be in the school style.
- Phonics is taught daily in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. It is based on the Letters and Sounds programme and follows the progression of this programme; however, teachers draw upon their own knowledge and ideas and on other phonics’ programmes to provide varied and interesting phonics’ sessions.
- We use the ‘Big Spelling’ programme, alongside teaching spelling rules to children weekly, and sending out spellings from the relevant National Curriculum lists. Once children have completed Phase 6 of the phonics’ programme, they progress onto ‘Big Spelling’. Children have all been assessed to find which stage they are at. Children are then provided with a personalised set of spellings. They are tested weekly on their spellings and move onto the next list when they get all of those spellings correct. In addition to this, children in Years 3-6 are provided with half-termly National Curriculum spellings that are taken directly from the lists relating to their year group. They are tested on these at the end of each half-term. This ensures that children are tested both at their own personal level, and at the level expected of a child of their age.

## 8. Parental involvement and Home learning

Working together with parents to support our children is important to us as a school community. Parental involvement is always for the benefit of the children. We expect parents to support their children at home by reading with them daily, commenting in their Reading Diaries regularly, and assisting them in learning weekly spellings and any other tasks sent home. Additional English homework may be given by individual teachers, depending on each child’s individual needs. Additional homework can also be requested by parents if they feel that their child needs more support with any aspect of their learning. Parents are expected to encourage children to read and write in a range of forms at home and in the outside world to give them a sense of how relevant and vital these areas of learning are. Updates on progress in English are given during Parents’ Evening appointments, and within reports. Parents and teachers can arrange meetings with one another at any time to discuss progress in English.

Parents who wish to volunteer to listen to children read are always welcomed. A book club for parents and staff is held once monthly to provide adults with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of texts and to critically analyse books together. Through this club, we aim to enthuse adults about reading in the hope that this enthusiasm will be passed on to our children.

Policy:	English Policy		Page   9		
Author:	K O’Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



## 9. Equal opportunities

The SIP Strategy for the Promotion of English and Numeracy states that there is a need to raise standards of English among boys. We are aware of the research that suggests boys underachieve in English. Farnworth is dedicated to addressing this issue and to do so we give equal access to materials, teacher time and attention. Additionally, we target boys through specific tasks and stimuli in order to engage their interests and motivate them. We are also dedicated to diminishing the difference between the majority of children and other groups, such as SEN, Pupil Premium, underachieving children and various others. At Farnworth, we aim to raise standards among all children equally.

## 10. Assessment

For writing, children are given written feedback in the form of clear 'Next Steps' and are also given verbal feedback during lessons. Written feedback always gives targets for improvement of writing. Children are given time to read and respond to this feedback and to ask any questions arising from this process, to ensure that they are clear on how to address their targets.

Writing is standardised and moderated within school, and across a cluster of local schools. From Years 1-6, Sheffield STAT Online is used to record and track children's progress periodically, and to identify gaps in learning for target setting and to inform planning. This enables teachers to clearly identify targets for progression, which are then communicated to children through marking. In Reception, children are tracked via the Early Learning Goals assessment methods and teacher commentary on children's independent and guided work gives information regarding progress made and discussions had with the children about their work.

Spelling tests are carried out weekly in each KS2 class, and with any child who has completed Phase 6 of the phonics programme. KS1 children complete the phonics screening test in Y1 and those required to do so, take it again in Y2. Children in Years 4 and 5 complete online comprehension quizzes and tests based on their reading, as part of the Accelerated Reader programme. Children in Years 1-6 complete weekly grammar tests, which are used as an assessment tool to identify gaps and inform future planning. NFER testing takes place in May as Y6 and Y2 children complete SATs. All of these assessments support the process of target setting and planning for children's progress.

## 11. Resources

Resources used include books, comics, newspapers, phonics games/activities, audio books, blogs/learning platform, film clips, ipads, laptops, computer software, the Internet, library of fiction and non-fiction texts, language/grammar games, word cards, images, songs, dictionaries, thesauri, spelling activities, text books, reading schemes, intervention programmes such as Toe by Toe and Read Write inc., Working Walls and various other prompts and scaffolds, as needed in each class.

## 12. ICT

ICT resources used in a English context at Farnworth are online sharing platforms, iPads, laptops, word processing programmes, phonics resources, educational online games, search engines, various websites, film clips and YouTube.

Policy:	English Policy		Page   10		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



Each classroom is equipped with an Interactive Whiteboard or touchscreen television, to support learning. Teachers use ICT to promote talking, listening, reading, writing, collaborative work, editing and cross-curricular work.

### 13. Special Educational Needs

The English subject leader and class teachers communicate any concerns regarding the needs and /or struggles of individual children to the SENDCo, who then works alongside them to establish targets and create support plans which will enable children to work towards the targets set. Targets are taken from gaps in learning identified within the Sheffield STAT programme. Interventions are provided for those children who require them, and are focussed on the improvement and development of basic skills, and the SENDCo, in partnership with relevant staff, applies for any further support required.

### 14. Standard/Targets

Whole school targets at present within English:

- Raise standards in writing across school
- Improve phonics and spelling approaches across school, ensuring consistency and steady progression
- Develop children’s comprehension skills further and bring progress in this area of reading, higher up the school, in line with that of word recognition processes.

### 15. Monitoring and Evaluating

The English Subject leader is responsible for monitoring and evaluating pupils’ achievements in English, the quality of learning provided in this area of learning, and teaching approaches used. This is then fed back to the Senior Leadership Team who advise on proceedings or act on information given themselves.

The English subject leader monitors progress of learners and success of teaching strategies in the following ways:

- Talking to staff, discussing strengths and areas for development and encouraging staff to seek support amongst their peers and to share good practice
- Continuously researching and reading around the subject area in order to stay up to date with current developments in education and to seek to upskill and improve herself, so as to better fulfil the role and improve standards
- Carrying out regular book scrutinies
- Perusing displays
- Participating in staff discussion of progression within classes, between classes and over time
- Talking to children about their work
- Organising and where relevant, delivering staff development and training sessions or planning opportunities for demonstration teaching/visiting other classes or schools
- Monitoring assessment data and scrutinising findings to identify any significant gaps
- Carrying out informal observations in the form of drop-ins, and giving feedback to staff
- Moderating writing and facilitating moderation within school
- Attending standardisation and moderation meetings outside of school
- Working alongside the Assessment Subject leaders to track progress in English.

Policy:	English Policy		Page   11		
Author:	K O’Grady		Version:	1	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee		Status:	Non Statutory	
Date of Approval:	20.7.17	Date of Issue	21.7.17	Date of Review	Summer 2019



Policy:	English Policy		Page   12		
Author:	K O'Grady		Version:	1	
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