



# LANNER PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ENGLISH POLICY

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## English Policy

At Lanner School, we believe that vocabulary, speaking and listening, reading and writing are inextricably linked, not just within the 'English' curriculum but within the curriculum as a whole, encompassing all subject domains. The acquisition of vocabulary and the ability to communicate through speech, reading or writing is fundamental to pupils' development as independent learners, during their time at school and beyond. Knowledge and understanding of vocabulary is an essential element of being competent and confident communicators. As such, we recognise it as a key tool for future learning and to enable humans to function in society. Knowledge and understanding of vocabulary is central to our ability to understand, interpret and communicate with each other and the world around us. In turn, this has a direct effect upon progress in all areas of the curriculum; therefore, vocabulary is given a high priority at Lanner School, enabling the children to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective learners. At Lanner School, staff recognise that fostering a life-long love of reading in children is crucial to the acquisition of vocabulary. We believe that parental involvement is vital in developing a positive approach to reading and parents/carers are informed and involved as much as possible.

'Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum.' (DfE, 2014)

## Early Vocabulary Acquisition

Hart and Risely (2003) found that by the age of 4, a child from a deprived background is exposed to 30 million fewer words than a child from a wealthier, 'professional' family. 86 – 98% of words in a child's vocabulary are also found in their parents' vocabulary.

Similarly, the Millennium Cohort Study in the UK found that by the age of 5, children from low-income households were over a year behind in vocabulary compared with children from high income households.



## Vocabulary development

Research (Nagy 1980; Beck, McKeown et al 2002) suggests children learn around 3000 new words every academic year. Beck et al assert that this figure relies heavily on wider reading and less than 10% of these words are explicitly taught. For reticent readers, the vocabulary gap will only get bigger: the Matthew Effect.

## Why are we teaching vocabulary?

Much learning of vocabulary is incidental: through oral interactions, being read to or through independent learning. However, for many children, particularly within areas of deprivation, this incidental acquisition of vocabulary does not necessarily happen. Therefore, it is essential that children are taught vocabulary to

enable them to access the curriculum, texts and other academic resources in education to ensure that they can engage with and benefit from all the opportunities that life has to offer.

The 2017 Education Policy Institute 'Closing the Gap' report (Andrews, Robinson and Hutchinson) stated at the end of secondary school (2016) the gap between 'disadvantaged' and 'advantaged' pupils was 19.3 months. This gap had narrowed between 2007 and 2016, but by just three months.

The **Department of Education 2017 'Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential'** report stated:

"We know that vocabulary at age five is a key predictor of whether a child from a disadvantaged background is likely to 'buck the trend', succeed at school and become socially mobile in later life. And yet on average, by this age, disadvantaged children are significantly further behind in vocabulary than in any other area of cognitive development."

Similarly, Marzano (2015) noted, "the importance of direct vocabulary instruction cannot be overstated. Vocabulary is linked to academic achievement. Effective teachers select terms for direct instruction, use a research-based process to teach those terms, and assess and track students' progress with new terms."

At Lanner, rich and robust vocabulary teaching goes beyond definitional knowledge; it gets children actively engaged in using and thinking about word meanings and creating relationship and links with and between words. However, the teaching of vocabulary must be part of our teaching of language-rich texts, not in isolation. This provides the dual benefit of contextualising vocabulary within appropriate sentences but also provides cultural capital.

Context is everything when learning new language. As Biemiller asserts, when recalling newly learnt vocabulary, students are "...often aware of the specific context in which word meanings were first learnt." (Biemiller 1999) This is also true when students encounter new language in stories or non-fiction texts. When explaining new words, students refer to experiences with these texts in much the same way that they would refer to real life experiences. The context provides a hook on which to hang new learning. Thus, the context in which these students come across new language is vital.

## Aims

Our aims are for all children at Lanner School to:

- Understand and apply their knowledge of phonics and spelling patterns and use this to decode words with accuracy and speed;
- Become fluent, confident, independent readers with a good level of knowledge and understanding of texts and authors.
- Develop the habit of reading regularly and for a range of purposes, through contact with engaging and challenging texts, which reflect our literary heritage and cultural capital.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, and develop a secure understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, which can be transferred into their independent writing;
- Develop their research skills and ability for critical analysis, reflection and appraisal in reading texts and the application of reading skills across the wider curriculum, with a particular focus on the acquisition of vocabulary.
- Achieve and make progress in line with national expectations;
- Have access to a sequential and progressive curriculum that prioritises vocabulary through speaking, reading and writing, ensuring that the learning needs of all groups, including boys, SEN and PP, are well met.

Furthermore, we recognise the importance of working together with parents/carers to support their children's development of vocabulary and communication skills through speech, reading and writing.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

We strongly believe that learning about books starts before children join us at Lanner School. Children who enjoy books at home usually find the more formal aspects of learning to read much easier. In our nursery and the reception class, children take high quality picture books to share with their parents and carers at home. Parents and carers are given guidance on how to read and talk about books with their children to foster a positive attitude towards books, reading and ultimately, vocabulary. This shared reading helps the very young child become familiar with print delivering a message, left to right directionality, orientation of a book, prediction, sequencing and book language. All of these are the precursors of independent reading.

EYFS staff consolidate these messages by reading to and with the children on a daily basis, alongside reading-linked continuous provision activities. A wide variety of texts and Computer-based activities are available for shared and independent learning in the classrooms. Each half-term, a new topic theme is introduced and books linked to these topics are shared with the class. From these books, key vocabulary is highlighted and shared with the children with the expectation that they, alongside EYFS staff, will use the new words.

When children join the Reception class they are taught Read, Write Inc phonics (RWI) in ability groups. In addition to the picture book that they take home, Reception age children also take home a RWI phonics reading book which is closely matched to the phonics learning within their phonics group.

This provides an important home/school link and feedback for parents and carers of their children's progress. Planning is in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and Development Matters with the aim of achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

## **EYFS and KS1 Phonics**

At Lanner, we teach Read, Write Inc (RWI) phonics lessons. Daily, discrete phonics teaching sessions take place throughout EYFS and Key Stage 1. The children are grouped according to ability. Groups are monitored and assessed continually by the phonics lead, creating flexibility for children to move between groups according to need and therefore ensuring a continuous cycle of consolidation and progression. The phonics lead also ensures that class teachers receive regular feedback in relation to each phonics group to enable further focus and progression of phonics to take place within the classroom.

Children take home a RWI reading book every Friday. These are closely matched to the needs of children within each group and monitored by the member of staff teaching that group. In addition, KS1 children take home a 'grapple' book to provide further challenge and encourage enjoyment in reading. These books are linked to the learning needs of each RWI group.

For those children who have successfully completed the RWI Phonics programme, we teach RWI Comprehension. These children are also enrolled in the Accelerated Reader programme. Progress on this programme is regularly monitored by the class teacher and the English Lead.

## **KS1 English**

Learning in English and across the curriculum is linked to a class fiction book and a non-fiction book each half-term. Appropriate texts are chosen to encourage book talk with the adult and to experience a wide range of quality texts from different genres. English lessons are taught with objectives taken from the 2014 National Curriculum. In addition to the daily phonics lesson in KS1, and opportunities for reading within English lessons, each week one English lesson is specifically dedicated to teaching higher level 'tier 2' vocabulary and the five KS1 reading domains associated with comprehension: Vocabulary; Retrieval; Sequencing and Summarising; Inference; Predictions. Furthermore, activities to encourage and extend understanding of vocabulary are taught as 'warm-up' starters at the beginning of each English lesson through the rest of the week. These are all linked to vocabulary within the class books.

There are also many other opportunities for children to engage in reading during the week through shared reading in lessons across the curriculum, one-to-one reading and independent reading. A range of whole books, extracts and computer-based sources are used.

The teaching of writing in KS1 is also linked directly to the class books. Indeed, acknowledging the crossover from reading into writing is imperative. In particular, staff regularly model use of Tier 2 vocabulary from the texts, both in their speech and when modelling writing. Additionally, elements of the 'Talk for Writing' approach are used to ensure that children develop and internalise the language structures needed to move from reading into writing.

## **Key Stage 2 English**

In Key Stage 2, whole class reading is taught using the PEE / PEEL paragraphs strategy. This is linked to the class books which inspires all of the learning for each half-term. Reading is taught for thirty minutes each day for four days of the week. To start each week, one day is dedicated to the acquisition and understanding of higher level or 'tier 2' vocabulary taken from the class book. Over the following three days, children are taught 5-10 minute vocabulary sessions to extend their understanding of the week's words and to provide opportunities for them to apply them. It is expected that children then make independent application of the new vocabulary in their written work: often this is set as a 'challenge' to motivate and engage pupils in making use of the new vocabulary. Teachers and teaching assistants also regularly model use of the vocabulary in their interactions with pupils, as well as explore the use of specific vocabulary within modelled writing.

During reading sessions, the class teacher reads the book to the class whilst they follow the book in their own copies. A range of activities are then provided over the course of the week. This will involve differentiated comprehension-style questions, with other activities such as emotions graphs, writing from a given perspective or true/false statements. Each activity must be linked to the eight KS2 reading domains: Vocabulary; Retrieval; Sequencing and Summarising; Inference; Prediction; Explanation of content; Explanation of word choice; Comparison.

Key Stage 2 children are enrolled on the Accelerated Reader programme. Children are expected to read at home for at least 15-20 minutes on most days of the week. During one reading session in school each week, staff monitor and support progress on AR and listen to readers. Children have daily opportunities to complete a book quiz and change their book when they have finished. To encourage children to read, they work towards AR certificates which are presented in assembly. The criteria for each certification level are displayed in each class.

As in KS1, English writing lessons in KS2 are linked to the class books for that half term. Children write for a range of genres, learning about grammar and punctuation through analysis of the relevant text types. Aspects of 'Talk for Writing', such as storyboarding and text-mapping may be included in lessons.

## **The Wider Curriculum**

Reading, writing and the acquisition of vocabulary are, of course, essential components of our entire curriculum. Although there are arguably more opportunities to apply and enhance reading and writing skills within some subjects than others, further acquisition of vocabulary can be developed equally across all subjects. Within the wider curriculum, we focus on using a range of 'Tier 2' vocabulary which is applicable across the whole curriculum. This 'Tier 2' vocabulary focuses on the use of mostly academic verbs: identify, predict, hypothesise, investigate, analyse, argue, summarise, evaluate, infer as well as pattern. These are displayed in each classroom and on display boards around the school.

In addition, within each distinct subject area, children are introduced to, and encouraged to use, subject-specific 'Tier 3' vocabulary to broaden their range of vocabulary as well as develop and enhance their understanding of subject content. In each classroom, Tier 3 vocabulary for the term's topic is displayed on

the relevant topic board. In addition, all Tier 3 subject-specific vocabulary is introduced at the start of each individual subject lesson. Within EYFS and KS1, subject-specific vocabulary is introduced verbally. Images may be used alongside any written words to help to clarify children's understanding. In KS2, vocabulary will be introduced verbally and is also recorded in their books in a variety of ways. We regularly recap on vocabulary in the different subject areas and encourage the older children to independently review the vocabulary in their books and apply it within their written work.

Alongside teaching subject-specific words across the curriculum, at Lanner we believe that it is important to equip children with the vocabulary to speak and write in a more formal, academic tone. For this reason, we aim to scaffold children's talk and written work by using general 'Time to talk' sentence starters. Children are regularly encouraged to make use of these when asking and answering verbal questions across the curriculum. To further support this, particularly within opportunities for writing in our curriculum 'Learning Journey' books, children are provided with a range of subject-specific sentence starters (Appendix A) to support them in creating higher-level written work. The aim is that these sentence starters should become internalised structures for communicating thoughts and opinions both orally and in writing, which can be used throughout their lives.

### Assessment

Reading, writing and understanding of vocabulary are assessed on a daily basis within the taught reading and English sessions with feedback being given to children as necessary, in line with the Marking and Feedback section of our Teaching and Learning Policy. These teacher assessments feed into our Target Tracker system, from which a summative assessment for reading and writing is made each half-term.

In addition, reading is formally assessed at the beginning of each year and again during the summer term using the NGRT online reading tests. This data is used alongside data from the Accelerated Reader Star Reader tests which are taken each term, to ensure that children are reading texts that provide appropriate levels of support and challenge.

Assessment 'snapshots' of writing are made each half-term with a Progress Write, where children will be asked to independently complete a piece of writing, revisiting writing genres and objectives taught earlier in the half-term or in the previous term. Information from these, along with writing from across the curriculum, helps to provide a more complete picture of children's writing attainment, which also feeds into the Target Tracker system.

### Monitoring

Monitoring of English is carried out regularly through planning scrutiny, book looks, and where possible, lesson observations and pupil conferencing. Monitoring may be carried out by the subject lead, SLT or teaching staff.

### CPD

Opportunities for CPD are regularly presented at Staff Meetings, Twilights or INSET days. CPD is planned in relation to priorities on the School Development Plan, but may also be planned in response to areas for development that arise from monitoring or staff consultation.

Appendix A



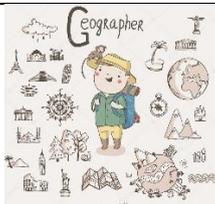
Scientist (as a scientist):

- When looking at the data, I have observed...
- My hypothesis is...
- My prediction is.... / My results support my prediction because...
- From examining my results, I can conclude that...
- I was surprised by this evidence because...



History (as a historian):

- The most significant effect of... was...
- The most likely reason....
- Based on..., I conclude...
- One piece of evidence that informs my decision is ...
- One of the main causes of ...
- From analysing the secondary sources, I believe...



Geography (as a geographer):

- The diagram / map shows/ highlights/demonstrates....
- The processes causing this are...
- This happens as a result of...
- In conclusion, ...
- The impact of this is...



RE (as a theologian):

- In my opinion, ...
- Upon reflection, ...
- Some people believe that...;however, others suggest...
- The Bible / Torah / Quran suggests that...



Design Technology ( as a designer):

- The product should be able to...
- The product successfully... / fails to...
- Looking at existing products...
- The common features I must include...
- In comparison, I can see that...

For the product to be successful, it must...



Art (as an artist):

- I would describe this work of art as....
- In this work of art, I recognise....
- This work of art is similar to....
- This work of art is different to....
- In comparison, I can see that...
- What interests me the most is...
- What stands out to me is...
- I think the artist made this work of art to....



Music (as a musician)

- I would describe this piece of music as....
- In this music, I recognise....
- This piece of music is similar/different to....
- In comparison, I can hear that...



PSHE (as a moral citizen)

- Upon reflection...
- From listening to..., I believe....
- Some religions believe...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What interests me the most is...</li><li>• What stands out to me is...</li><li>• I think the musician made this piece of music to....</li><li>• This piece of music would be suitable for....</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From a comparison of cultures, I have noticed....</li><li>• A similarity between.....religion/cultures is...</li><li>• From a personal point of view,...</li></ul>
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