



**BIRKWOOD
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

ENGLISH POLICY

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1. Introduction

At Birkwood Primary School, we have a shared vision that all our children will succeed so are committed to raising standards in English for all. We work continuously to understand and address any barriers to learning. Taking evidence informed approaches, in response to current educational research, we view the acquisition of language and literacy skills to be of the utmost importance and instrumental in helping our children achieve in all areas of the curriculum. As such, the teaching of English is of the highest priority at the heart of our curriculum.

Access to high-quality books within the English curriculum is central to our school's successful approach to engaging and supporting our children to become independent and motivated readers and writers. Our school library is exceptionally well stocked with books to cater for all ages, stages, and interests. As we know, when children enjoy reading, they read more frequently and become better readers.

All staff emphasise the importance of books and literature and teach English knowledgeably, creatively and effectively. Our curriculum is constantly strengthening and adapting to ensure that recent educational research is informing best practice. Success in English has a direct impact on children's self-esteem, attitude to learning and achievement across the curriculum. Therefore, we aim to inspire a lifelong love of literature by equipping our children with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and excel.

2. Aims

The English national curriculum (2014) states that:

'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 language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.'

At Birkwood Primary school, we believe that exposure to children's literature within the primary school setting is vital as a rich context for learning; not only in English as a subject but to support building a reading culture throughout school.

We read high quality books which our children are enthusiastic about, and which offer opportunities for empathy and act as stimuli for enquiry and appreciation. Our carefully chosen texts develop the spoken language requirements of the national curriculum through debate, drama, and discussion, using the issues raised through and within the texts. Books are at the core! The national curriculum states that:

'This guidance is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons.'

The selection books available in school supports teachers with ensuring that objectives for reading and writing, including those for grammar, can have purpose and audience.

We always aim for writing opportunities to be meaningful. Motivation for writing comes from several stimuli. These include reading a range of high-quality texts; exposure to inspirational authors; real experiences; moving pictures; role play and art. We want children to have real reasons to write, whether to entertain, explain, persuade, inform, or instruct and that where possible this is embedded within a text or linked to a curriculum area. Writing 'in role' across a range of genres forms part of our approach, especially in KS2, as does critique and making comparative analysis. These writing skills support children in preparation for their time in secondary school and our approach sits comfortably with the following statement from the national curriculum:

'The national curriculum for English aims to ensure pupils write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.'

Our overarching aim is to ensure that children master the objectives of study for their year group, achieve in line with age related expectations or better and develop a life-long love of literature.

3. The Teaching of Reading

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. All staff and governors consider the teaching of reading to be a priority and continually strive to improve and develop to ensure that our children are fluent, competent readers by the time they are ready to leave. Reading takes place at every opportunity and for a range of purposes throughout the school day. Our ultimate aim is to enable our children to access a wealth of literature both in school and beyond and to learn about the world around them through high quality texts.

In all year groups, time for all children to read independently, read aloud or be read to during the school day is prioritised. Texts studied and knowledge accumulated is progressive as the children move through school. Books are Lexile checked and mapped out throughout the year for each year group and all teachers ensure children master the reading programme of study for their year group. In the early years, we ensure there is a balance of teacher led, focused and child-initiated activities.

A booklet entitled, *Reading Pedagogy at Birkwood*, provides a guide to oracy-based reading comprehension and teachers alternate between building fluency and teaching comprehension sessions from Year 2. Reading enthusiasm is transferred to learning across the wider curriculum. In foundation subjects, reading as an expert researcher and reading for understanding of key vocabulary and content supports each block of teaching. The well-stocked library and classroom reading areas support children to do this as we have a strong collection of non-fiction genres as well as a range of fiction, poetry, plays and philosophical novels.

Phonics

We believe that reading is the key which unlocks the whole curriculum and current evidence shows that the ability to effectively decode is essential to learning to read. Read Write Inc. (RWI) is the choice of phonics scheme at Birkwood. RWI in action is an inclusive literacy programme for all children learning to read, which teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension.

Our RWI sessions occur daily, with no exceptions, as the continuity and pace of the programme is key to accelerating the progress of our children's reading development. It is explicitly taught daily to EYFS, Year 1, Year 2 (who are not yet fluent readers) and children in Key Stage 2 who have not completed the programme. Children are grouped according to their phonic ability.

We follow the five underlining principles of 'Read Write Inc' in all sessions:

- Pace – for pupils to complete the programme as quickly as possible
- Praise – pupils learn more quickly when they are praised for what they do well
- Purpose – each activity within the programme has a clear purpose
- Participation – all pupils take part in all of the lesson
- Passion – show the pupils how much we enjoy teaching the lessons

Lively phonic books are closely matched to the children's increasing knowledge of decodable words and red words. As children re-read stories, their fluency increases, so children are asked to practice what they have learned during the day, at home. Every child takes a copy of the text they have been reading within their phonics session plus another book from the scheme, which matches their phonic knowledge. All children also choose a reading for pleasure book which they share with adults both at home and in school.

As children progress through the scheme, they build up both their phonetic knowledge and comprehension skills. This particularly applies to decoding and blending. As this becomes more established, children can tackle an increasing repertoire of words with greater confidence and accuracy. Over time, and upon completion, this then establishes them as literacy ready. For pupils, who have reached this stage, they then move onto regular fluency into comprehension sessions.

Our early reading leader works closely with the school reading leader alongside staff. Team teaching, regular coaching and support and regular training takes place. Priority is always given to any current area which we need to improve upon. The early reading leader meticulously undertakes assessment, tracks pupils' progress, and ensures that pupils are moving through the phonic stages at an acceptable pace. Pupils are regularly assessed for their knowledge of speed sounds, reading accuracy, and reading speed. They are then regrouped by the early reading leader, who works with the reading team to determine next steps for groups and identify any pupils needing 1-1 tutoring. For any 'stuck' pupils or those that are 'hard to move' additional phonics teaching takes place. This can be one to one tuition, same day intervention or pinny time.

All staff who are deployed to deliver the programme receive accredited training and are highly skilled in its delivery. Staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own CPD by accessing videos from the RWI portal and are informed with current research, for example, from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The reading leader has produced a Padlet collection of current articles and resources as a reference for staff to develop their awareness, knowledge and understanding of the complex processes involved in reading.

Year 1 Screening Check

The purpose of the statutory Year 1 screening check is to confirm whether pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. In order to ensure our children are prepared for the check the teaching of phonics begins in EYFS. Teachers ensure that phonics is embedded across the whole school day through Read Write Inc. sessions, focused activities, and child-initiated activities in the provisional areas. Practice checks are undertaken regularly to identify target pupils who require additional support. RWI checks also inform teacher assessment for learning.

Reading Aloud

Teachers at Birkwood are knowledgeable about books which lend themselves to being read aloud. Teachers read high-quality books which have been researched by leaders in school and mapped out across school from EYFS to Y6 on our reading spines. These include lengthy class novels, short stories, folk and fairy tales, myths and legends, cultural books, poetry, and picture books.

Pupils are exposed to teachers reading aloud daily through reading sessions and story time which is timetabled at the same time each day in all classes across school. This shared experience gives our children access to a wider range of texts, broadens their reading experience, and boosts their enjoyment of reading.

All teachers have a collection of books for story time. This ensures that the children have a bank of books by significant authors which they know well, enjoy, and can recite. For our younger children, these memorable texts feature repetition, rhythm, and rhyme, reflect

children's interests, and have strong story structures. These have been chosen from a wide range of authors.

The books chosen for reading sessions and story time use lively language and inventive ways to introduce our children to rich vocabulary. The Birkwood reading sequence and pedagogical approach is mapped out carefully and is documented, shared with teachers and referred to. Regular professional development and opportunities for staff teams to collaborate and share practice focus on; the reading sequence, keeping up and catching up, pedagogical choices and assessment. Teachers are encouraged to keep abreast of current educational research.

Home School Links

Year group specific recommended reading lists by age are available on the school website. Most of these books can be found in school and children who have specific interests are catered for as they can suggest books to order in. For example, Children can request new books for the library by writing to the headteacher.

Reading Comprehension and Whole Class Reading

Whole-class reading at Birkwood is structured around the explicit teaching of fluency and comprehension through an oracy-rich, highly modelled approach. Fluency is the bridge to comprehension and is taught explicitly in alternation with comprehension in key years 2-4. When delivering comprehension lessons, teachers begin by immersing pupils in the context of the text and explicitly teaching key vocabulary, before modelling fluent reading using a clear 'storyteller voice' and thinking aloud to make reading processes visible. Pupils rehearse fluency through repeated, supported reading with peers, receiving feedback and refining expression, accuracy and pace. Comprehension is developed through carefully sequenced discussion, text exploration and analysis, where pupils remain closely anchored to the text, building meaning collaboratively and deepening understanding of vocabulary, structure, syntax, semantics and authorial choice. This gradual release from teacher modelling to independent application ensures all pupils develop reading stamina, secure understanding and the ability to read with prosody, confidence and insight.

Teachers work hard to enable children to help children to visualise and to build a picture in their mind. Teachers think aloud as they grapple with a section of text and show children the thought process needed to achieve comprehension modelling by updating the situation model aloud. Comprehension modelling is when the teacher explicitly demonstrates how a skilled reader makes sense of a text by thinking aloud, showing strategies such as predicting, clarifying vocabulary, making inferences and linking ideas. Situation monitoring is the reader's ongoing process of checking and updating their mental picture of the text as new information is revealed, noticing when something no longer makes sense and adjusting their understanding accordingly. In short, comprehension modelling teaches pupils how to understand a text, while situation monitoring is the internal process pupils use to maintain and refine understanding as they read. We share and articulate the pictures in our minds.

Situational Modelling

This relies on local cohesion inference involving understanding of grammar, cohesion, structure, text, sentence and word. Global cohesion inference is modelled by teachers where possible. This includes filling gaps left by the writer, using clues in the text, figuring out what the writer means use of subject knowledge to understand context and drawing upon vocabulary knowledge. Elaborative inference will naturally follow on from local and global cohesion.

Comprehension

Checking and revising our mental model as we read and understand more, based on prior knowledge, is a key element of being a successful reader. Teachers 'think aloud' for the children - showing that in the light of a new sentence or understanding, we can change our inference or prediction. This requires the reader to constantly update their mental picture of what's going on. By reading whole texts at Birkwood, we teach children to become readers, not simply just to read.

Birkwood has been analytical towards the range of strategies needed for children to reach the age-related expectation in comprehension by the end of Year 6. All National Curriculum objectives are covered through carefully thought through reading lessons which are bespoke to whole class texts. In time, flowing from excellent fluency alongside background knowledge and vocabulary understanding, excellent comprehension follows. By the time children enter Year 6, they are ready to answer questions involving:

- Vocabulary – understanding the meaning of words in context
- Inference - strategies to make and justify inferences based on evidence from text
- Predict - what might happen from details stated and implied
- Explain – authorial intent, thoughts, opinions, meaning enhancement, language choice, extracts contribution to overall meaning, themes and patterns, information contribution to overall reading experience, make comparisons within and across texts
- Retrieval – retrieve and record information and key details from fiction and non-fiction
- Structure – identify organisation of different text types
- Sequence – discuss sequence of events, make links between how items of information are related
- Summarise – identify and discuss main ideas from one paragraph or more

Reading Ambassadors

At Birkwood Primary school, we are proud to have an inspiring team of young readers who are keen to share their passion for reading with others. Our Reading Ambassadors promote reading across school by supporting library organisation, attending events, presenting in assemblies and reading with younger pupils.

They make a valued contribution to cultivating a positive reading culture throughout school by attending reading events such as World Book Day, helping in the library, keeping the library tidy, choosing and sorting books as well as presenting in assemblies. Perhaps most importantly though, is their favourite job of the week - spending time listening to younger children read and reading stories to younger children.

4. The Teaching of Writing

At Birkwood Primary School, writing is taught through a coherent, research-informed framework that emphasises strong foundations in transcription alongside the explicit teaching of composition. Pupils develop writing through rich reading, talk and curriculum knowledge, with teachers modelling the writing process clearly and consistently so that pupils understand how high-quality writing is constructed. Sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary are taught deliberately and in context, enabling pupils to make purposeful choices to suit audience and purpose. Writing is carefully sequenced, allowing pupils to plan, draft, revise and edit with increasing independence, while regular opportunities for discussion and feedback strengthen clarity and intent. This approach ensures that all pupils are supported to become confident, capable writers who can communicate effectively across the curriculum.

Both transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition skills (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) are explicitly taught during English lessons. Transcription and composition skills are then applied and developed in writing in all curriculum areas.

EEF KS1 literacy recommendations 6

“Transcription refers to the physical processes of handwriting or typing, and spelling. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated. If children have to concentrate to ensure their transcription is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing. A large amount of purposeful practice, supported by effective feedback, is required. Spelling should be explicitly taught...relevant to the topic or genre being studied.”

Within each writing unit taught, the correct technical vocabulary is modelled to children. High quality, often bespoke models are shared and discussed with children. The children then use this knowledge to inform, prepare and discuss their own writing. Pupils are taught how to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish their work and have frequent opportunities to work through this writing process.

EEF KS2 literacy recommendations 4

“Writing can be thought of as a process made up of five components: planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Effective writers use a number of strategies to support each component of the writing process. For example, planning can be improved through the strategy of goal setting. Describe and model how, when, and why pupils should use each strategy, support pupils to practise with feedback, then gradually reduce support as pupils increasingly use the strategies independently. Giving pupils a reason to write-and someone to write for-can support effective writing...teach pupils how to adapt their writing for different audiences and purposes.”

Our intent is to link writing to the world around us, by providing a context to write about people, places, and events outside their own experience wherever possible. We encourage reading into writing, building on the rich cultural capital underpinned by the range of high-quality texts available in all learning areas. Where appropriate, writing links to the wider curriculum. From very early on, children are encouraged to connect the spoken language to the written word through in the moment learning opportunities, adults scribing and interactive displays from rhymes, poetry and narrative to a variety of text types including non-fiction.

EEF PREPARING FOR LITERACY

Improving communication, language & literacy in the early years’ recommendation 1

“Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.”

Teachers plan for writing opportunities to be meaningful. Often, writing is based around a text, however, children’s experiences within the wider curriculum both within and outside of the classroom also regularly inform their writing. Throughout the teaching of writing, links are made to reading. A variety of genres are taught and at the start of a new unit, children analyse the structural and language features specific to that genre. Pupils are taught effective composition by forming, articulating, and communicating ideas, before organising them coherently for a reader. Teachers model the writing process and children are given opportunities for oral rehearsal and paired or guided practice before independent work begins. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Planning sequences are personalised and differentiated to meet the needs of all children. Staff thoroughly appreciate how drama can add a whole new dimension and depth to English. When Drama is used through a sequence of literacy lessons, it can bring a narrative and its host of characters to life. Staff therefore ensure drama is featured as much as possible.

Modelled writing happens in English sessions and in other areas of the curriculum. This involves the teacher modelling strategies in front of the children and communicating the strategies being used. Teachers model writing skills such as punctuating, rehearsing, proof reading, editing, word selection and text and sentence construction. Children are actively involved in the spelling and composition process. Teachers provide high quality models to inspire the children's writing. This is a live process due to the use of visualisers and technology in every classroom. Teachers also create opportunities for pupils to write at length in wider curriculum areas in UKS2 which further develops children's stamina for writing.

Objectives for writing from the national curriculum are taught, practised, and revisited over the course of the year and children have several opportunities to apply these. Each year, expectations are set out for planning, punctuation, text construction, editing and evaluating. As well as grammar features including conjunctions and terminology to be used in discussing writing.

Spellings

The national curriculum places great emphasis on correct spelling. At Birkwood, the teaching of spelling is embedded into daily practice across the curriculum in meaningful learning. Spelling is taught as part of a planned programme from EYFS to Year 6. From Year 1, teachers follow a whole school spelling scheme to ensure coverage of the common exception words, word lists and spelling rules. Spelling rules are taught within English sessions. Spellings are practiced discretely and applied in dictated sentences. Staff give prompt feedback to pupils in lessons and key spellings, which are incorrect are discussed. Teachers ensure incorrect spellings are addressed in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils access spelling word mats to support their independence when writing.

From Year 1, pupils undertake a weekly spelling quiz. Pupils are given time to practise incorrect spellings after the spelling test and at other planned times throughout the day to ensure they master these. Use of Spelling Shed is used in school to help children to remember and apply the spelling rule correctly and children are encouraged use this at home.

Dictation

Dictated sentences allow pupils to apply phonic knowledge, spelling rules and vocabulary. Handwriting and English lessons also provide opportunities to revisit spelling.

Children apply their growing phonic and spelling knowledge when writing sentences dictated by the teacher during discrete spelling sessions and during writing lessons when appropriate.

In addition, handwriting lessons and modelled writing in English lessons are used to provide additional opportunities to talk about spelling and revisit and practise strategies. Working walls support pupils with spelling and speed charts are displayed around school and in classrooms for pupils to use. Spellings are taught in the context of a sentence to ensure children understand their meanings. Word meanings are discussed with children to build children's vocabulary.

Grammar and Punctuation

Teachers focus on teaching grammar through reading, writing and spoken language and staff ensure grammatical terms are embedded into their daily teaching. Discrete grammar is taught as part of the build up to independent writing. Opportunities to practise what they have been taught through oral rehearsal, modelled, and guided work precedes children's independent writing. Where appropriate, writing is linked to a high-quality text so that it is purposeful for the children. However, where this stifles creativity or limits outcomes, teachers choose alternative stimuli as previously outlined. Working walls support children in learning and using grammatical terms in a meaningful context.

Syntax and Sentence Parsing

At Birkwood, sentence parsing and syntax are taught explicitly through oral language, enabling pupils to rehearse and refine sentence structures before writing. Through teacher modelling, structured talk and deliberate rehearsal, pupils learn how word order and sentence construction create meaning, supporting both accurate writing and secure comprehension.

SPaG Testing

Low-stakes testing that prompts recall of previous learning helps children and teachers to identify strengths and weakness and inform next steps. Teachers make ongoing assessments to build a picture of children's grammatical knowledge and understanding. This allows them to address gaps quickly. After drafting a piece of writing, children revise and edit work and common misconceptions are addressed through whole class teaching. Leaders ensure the statutory SPaG test is administered to children in Year 6, in May.

Handwriting and Presentation

For children to develop a fluent, neat, and legible handwriting style it is essential to have a consistent and systematic approach across school. Teachers have high expectations in relation to presentation and expect that handwriting in English and wider curriculum lessons matches that produced in discrete handwriting lessons as far as possible. Incorrect letter formation is addressed promptly, and teachers model the correct formation to avoid bad habits.

At Birkwood Primary, handwriting is practised regularly in English lessons and modelled by class teachers. Pencil grips are used when needed for pupils who struggle with pencil control. Children are given the option to try different writing implements including handwriting pens to use and choose for different purposes effectively. Pupils in EYFS use a range of writing implements to suit their developing needs. Lefthanded pupils also receive specific teaching:

- Grip the pencil 2.5 cm to 3.8 cm from the point
- Tilt paper so that arm is at right-angle to bottom edge of paper / slate
(and the top right corner of page is toward writer)
- Write with the hand below the writing line and the wrist straight.

Further information [Handedness Research Institute](#)

Birkwood was involved in the Helping Handwriting Shine (HHWS), NFER research project, in 2019, which focused on the use of metacognitive strategies for teaching handwriting for accuracy, speed and fluency. Leaders provide follow up information and development opportunities for staff to continue to apply the HHWS principles in lessons.

Pupils are taught about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example: quick notes, drafting, revising or a final handwritten version. Children are also taught to use an unjoined style, for example: for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

5. Moderation

Regular staff meetings focus on moderation of writing using school interims, portfolios and exemplification materials. Termly moderation takes place within the local collaboration. Y2 and Y6 staff attend local authority moderation training. Judgements are based on a portfolio of work across the school year.

Each term, EYFS, Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 undertake moderation within the collaboration to verify judgements in line with consistent expectations and share good practice. The English lead, with Y2 and Y6 teachers, also attend moderation training provided by the local authority.

6. Planning

Planning is centred around high-quality texts, experiences, or interesting stimuli dependent on context and is evaluated and adjusted in response to assessment for learning. Objectives are taken from the English Programme of Study within the national curriculum. Wherever possible, links with other subjects are identified and used as opportunities to develop skills. Teachers plan for appropriate pitch and challenge to enable all pupils to achieve and make good progress.

Teachers in EYFS consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care. This information feeds into plans for a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. Staff are experts at 'in the moment' planning as they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the expectations set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

7. Assessments

Teachers regularly assess children's ability to read fluently and understand what they have read. Teachers triangulate information from a range of formative and summative assessment inclusive of:

- The Reading House
- The Reading Rope
- Fluency Rubric
- YARK Reading Assessments
- Reading End Points
- Comprehension Activities
- Discussion
- Questioning
- Book Talks

Following on from phonics assessments, teachers assess pupil progress through diagnostic fluency and oral comprehension to assess whether children. YARK testing alongside teacher judgement of a child's understanding and proficiency with whole class reading material is used to determine reading competency. In Year 6, past and practice SATs papers are used to prepare and assess. At the end of KS2, pupils complete the statutory SATs tests in reading. Children who fall below age-related expectations are closely tracked and supported by leaders and teachers.

Key stage interims alongside teacher assessment and exemplification materials are used to assess pupils' writing. Teachers gather evidence from a range of children's work which builds an accurate picture of the standard pupils are working at in writing. The interim frameworks help teachers identify gaps in teaching and move the children's learning forward. Teachers in mid- year groups use interims devised by the school to support their judgements against the pupil can statements. Exemplifications help to formulate accurate judgements. Writing work is passed on to the next teacher at the end of the year so that teachers know the standard children are currently working at.

Pupils identified with the potential to achieve a greater depth standard of writing at the end of Year 6 are tracked throughout KS2. Teachers provide opportunities to encourage writerly devices and techniques, independence, flair and passion for writing although we acknowledge that only a small number of pupils are likely to attain a greater depth standard.

Children's progress and attainment in English is recorded on Arbour to enable teachers and leaders to monitor children's progress term by term across the school and identify any particular groups who may be at risk.

8. EYFS

EYFS adhere to the guidance, principles, and commitments in the Statutory EYFS Framework to ensure that all our children develop at their age-appropriate stage and meet the early learning goal for Literacy and Communication and Language. Teaching focuses on the three prime areas of learning, which are a basis for successful learning and then shifts towards a sharper focus on the four specific areas (including reading). Teaching in our EYFS has a clear focus on learning and intentional teaching, but with playful learning at the heart. Teaching in FS1 and FS2 includes planned and spontaneous activities, centred around high-quality reading materials. Books extend and enrich children's vocabulary within the unit. Teachers share and enjoy a range of rhymes, songs, stories, and books and through role-play and discussions, extend and enrich children's vocabulary further. Staff effectively lead, scaffold and support pupils' learning in the provisional areas and in teacher led activities. At Birkwood, we begin the Read Write Inc. phonics programme in the summer term of F1 (or when children are ready) and it lasts until children have completed it successfully.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. This understanding begins in EYFS through daily, high quality phonics lessons through the Read Write Inc. scheme.

In EYFS, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and celebrated. Work is photographed and displayed. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities and independently apply their phonic skills through indoor and outdoor provisional areas and discussions.

Squiggle While You Wiggle takes place each week in Nursery during the Autumn term to develop fine and gross motor skills linked to writing. Staff also deliver *Dough Disco* throughout the year to develop manipulative skills and hand strength. Weekly, fine motor enhancements are also planned within provision.

In FS1, children are given lots of opportunities to write their name. This is always observed by an adult to ensure correct formation. In FS2, staff model writing different forms of writing in whole class teaching, focused tasks, and provisional areas. There is a mark making area in both classes which contains a variety of writing implements such as egg shape crayons, triangular grip pencils, different sized pencils, paintbrushes, and a variety of media to support children at different stages of pencil grip development. To develop fine motor skills, the children take part in a variety of finger gym activities. For example, using tweezers, cotton buds and threading. By following the key principles, our ultimate aim is to ensure that our children are school ready.

Assessment in EYFS

Teachers baseline children on entry to nursery to establish their current level of development. This information is shared with the Head Teacher and SLT and progress is reported in pupil progress meetings each term. Further baselining occurs on entry to FS2 as children join Birkwood from other settings.

In the foundation years, assessment is an ongoing part of the teaching and learning process. Most of the observations for assessment are based on the activities that our children initiate

and engage with independently across the range of provision. Teachers draw on a range of evidence and discussions to support judgements made against children's progress in reading, writing and communication.

EazMag is used to record and store information about children's progress and attainment. The database allows staff to follow and track individual children or cohorts of children throughout EYFS.

Provision is made, where appropriate, for pupils working below expectations throughout the foundation stage. In the moment interventions are targeted and specialised based on teacher knowledge of each child. Teachers ensure that parents are provided with a written report of their child's profile scores and are dedicated time for discussion.

Our EYFS teachers and SLT members work closely with other schools within the local authority. Regular moderation meetings take place where teachers engage in professional discussion to ensure that our EYFS judgements are accurate and consistent with national standards.

9. Marking and Editing

Across the school, children's work is live marked so most marking takes place within the session. Dialogic and whole class feedback ensure children understand strengths and next steps. Staff are trained to give prompt feedback so that children have ownership over their own progress and to accelerate pupils' learning at all opportunities. Pupils are taught to reflect on and edit their work in all year groups.

When revising, editing and marking, teachers and pupils check against sounds and words which have been taught from that half term and recalling prior knowledge of all previously taught spellings. This includes all taught spelling rules and patterns taught so far as well as common homophones and common exception words taught so far. These weekly and half termly lists are available on the website and are kept track of in class and on working walls.

10. Learning Environment

Birkwood Primary School has been identified as a school with a strong reading culture. Teachers are consistent in their approach in creating an environment which is rich in print and builds cultural capital. The literacy rich classrooms provide a wealth of opportunity for pupils to use print and practice basic literacy skills. In addition, these inspiring learning environments promote motivation to read and write hence enriching the learning experience for all. Classrooms celebrate literature and working walls include examples of high-quality texts, shared or modelled writing and key vocabulary.

The wider school learning environment promotes reading, writing and spoken language across the curriculum. Displays reflect current and recent learning and books are celebrated across school. Class reading areas are constantly updated with classic and contemporary works and the new library is a cornucopia of inspiration for the whole school community.

11. Resources

The English lead has the responsibility for ordering and maintaining resources to enhance the teaching and learning of English. All classrooms are well resourced with dictionaries, high quality texts and phonics resources. Pupils have access to appropriate phonetically decodable books. The library and class reading areas contain a selection of books for all curriculum areas and books which children take home to read. We also have a staff section in our new library. We view teachers as learning specialists and therefore we know that it is important for them to regularly update their knowledge base. Access to a range of ICT

equipment is also available e.g., iPad, chrome books and laptops. Whiteboards are used regularly in lessons to practise writing skills and most classes have two interactive whiteboards which display models, vocabulary and worked examples. Our library both encourages and celebrates a love of reading.

12. Children with Special Educational Needs

Children who are making less than expected progress in English are identified swiftly through pupil progress meetings and ongoing classroom assessment. Personalised scaffolds, adapted tasks and visual timetables help ensure all pupils access learning successfully. Progress is monitored closely by the SLT, and where concerns remain, the inclusion lead is consulted to plan further targeted support. Current best practice for supporting pupils with SEND in English includes:

- Early and ongoing diagnostic assessment
- High-quality, explicit teaching (Quality First Teaching)
- Pre-teaching and overlearning of essential vocabulary and concepts
- Structured, cumulative interventions
- Consistent adaptive strategies

13. Greater Depth Standard

Some pupils, who show a flair in English, are supported to attain a greater depth standard in reading and or writing. Teachers are aware of who these pupils are and plan for them. These pupils are encouraged to write in a legible, joined script in all curriculum areas. They access high quality texts and use these as models for their own writing. Furthermore, they are emersed in rich vocabulary through daily teaching and are expected to apply their knowledge to written pieces across the curriculum. A writing grid has been created which drives internal moderation and assessment conversations around pupils who may reach the Greater Depth standard at the end of Year 6.

14. Monitoring

The head teacher, English lead and senior leadership team carry out drop ins, books look, teacher surveys and pupil interviews to monitor standards and progress in English. These are linked with school improvement priorities. Teachers are given feedback and signposted to the latest research evidence and guidance documents. To strengthen teaching, teachers are given the opportunity to work collaboratively with other skilled class teachers and outside agencies or specialist practitioners. Pupil progress meetings are held each term in order to allow the head teacher and senior leadership team and class teacher to monitor and evaluate the progress of their children in English and identify next steps.

The progress of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Pupil Premium children is reviewed with the SENDCO during pupil progress meetings. The SEND Toolkit is used as a guide for identifying initial need and monitoring progress of SEND children through detailed provision maps.

The head teacher and English lead analyse data, end of key stage SATs results, tests, and pupil progress information. Recommendations from this analysis feed into the school development plan and performance management targets.

15. Parent Involvement and Homework

Parental involvement in children's education has a significant effect on children's achievement. Therefore, at Birkwood, we ensure there is strong communication between home and school. Examples of this include:

- Regular parent workshops throughout the school year
- Regular invitations to attend open classroom events
- Termly parents' evenings
- Reports in the summer term contain attainment level and effort level
- Online resources and learning shared via X, newsletters and website
- Parents are informed of the screening check results in Y1
- Parents are encouraged to support pupils with daily reading and spelling practice
- Parent questionnaires form part of the school's mission and vision
- Year 6 SATS meetings are held with parents
- Parents are warmly invited to attend performances, celebration events and class assemblies

We encourage parents to listen to their child read for a short session at home each evening and to support with homework set when appropriate. Log ins for online learning platforms such as Spelling Shed, and Purple Mash are sent home to promote strong home school learning links.

16. Enriching Experience and Celebrating Success

We are passionate about enabling children to experience the magic of books. To promote reading for pleasure, we invite authors and poets into school to work with our children and convey their love of reading and writing to the children. We believe that this helps to ignite a love of reading for all our children, forever. Celebrating success is important to children across school. Children are given opportunities to win house points for their achievements in English. Children's work is celebrated through displays, assemblies, our website, and X. Children enjoy working towards their bronze, silver and gold reading reward certificates and class readers of the week are announced in the weekly celebration assembly.

17. The Writing Framework

At Birkwood Primary School, The Writing Framework from the Department for Education underpins our whole-school approach to teaching writing by providing a coherent, evidence-informed structure that supports progression in writing from Reception through Key Stage 2. The framework emphasises the complexity of writing, the importance of explicit transcription (handwriting and spelling) instruction, sequenced teaching, and oral composition, ensuring foundational skills become automatic so that pupils can focus on higher-order composition skills. It also encourages identifying and supporting pupils who need extra help, as previously mentioned.

We use this guidance to shape our curriculum intent and implementation, aligning planning, pedagogy and assessment so that writing teaching is purposeful, cumulative and accessible to all learners. Through planned, high-quality continuing professional development, staff engage with the key principles and research-based pedagogies highlighted in the framework to deepen subject knowledge, refine instructional techniques and embed consistent practice across the school. Regular monitoring and professional reflection ensure that priorities - such as modelling, scaffolding, effective assessment and feedback - translate into classroom practice, strengthening outcomes and writing confidence for all children. This alignment between policy, continuous professional development and monitoring ensures our approach

is both research-informed and responsive, fostering rich writing opportunities that move beyond surface level outcome focuses towards meaningful, lifelong writerly competence.

18. Promoting use of Standard English

All teachers endeavour to always use Standard English and accurate grammar in resources, PowerPoints and classroom displays. It is vital that pupils are exposed to consistent use of Standard English and accurate grammar, to support the progress of literacy skills across the curriculum.

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