



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

# English Policy

## Phonics, Reading and Writing

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**Version:** 1

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



*Children at the HEART*

## **Rationale**

This policy provides a set of principles on which we base our practice reflecting the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and the Statutory Framework for the Foundation Stage.

## **Aims**

Through our curriculum we aim for pupils to be;

- able to speak, read and write with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. We prioritise oracy and reading because we understand that these are the key to all learning
- able to think clearly and articulate their thoughts in speaking and writing
- confident, creative and reflective users of language
- able to analyse and evaluate features of language
- develop their knowledge and understanding and use of spoken and written English and reading across a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills
- develop as people, applying the HEARTS values to their own lives through the texts, plots and characters explored
- immersed in high quality core texts as a focus for reading and writing. These texts represent a diverse range of authors and text types and are often linked to knowledge and vocabulary from other curriculum subjects.

## **Values**

**Happiness** – reading is taught in a way which allows children to enjoy the pleasure of stories, poems, plays, non-fiction, instructions, talking books, e-books, labels, signs and much more. Children are given a wide range of diverse, high quality literature to read and have a range of texts read to them by adults. Our book corners and library provide a variety of reading material for children to take home and engage in. Writing supports pupils thinking and helps build resilience in tackling the challenges of transferring thoughts and feelings to words.

**Esteem** – the structured teaching of basic skills encourages confidence in tackling texts from the early years in school. Peer and self-assessment of writing enables children to take pride in their work. Positive attitudes to, and a curiosity about, diverse characters, settings and vocabulary support pupils' healthy and hopeful thinking. Effective displays and learning environments celebrate pupils' successes and model high expectations of what all can achieve as well as an excitement about the written word.

**Achievement** - individual achievement is recognised with regular basic skills assessments, individual targets and the celebration of success. All adults have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and the highest achievements are displayed as models to others.

**Respect and Responsibility** - pupils are taught the value of books from an early age and the well-kept book corners and displays of new materials encourage a love and respect of books. Pupils are taught to be responsible, look after their book bags, book areas and general areas of the school. Positive relationships, healthy attitudes and respect for all are key features of texts chosen. Texts reflect key aspects of HEARTS values.

**Truth** – pupils are encouraged, through modelled, choral, paired and individual reading, to discuss and evaluate books and reading material. They are encouraged to give honest and evidence-based assessments of what they have read. The discussions that we have around literature focus on key aspects of honesty and empathy and the attitudes that we value.

**Spirituality and Service** – pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and contemplate quietly when listening to stories and poems. A range of creative resources are used as stimuli for writing and children are given time to reflect on them. Pupils are encouraged also to reflect constantly on what reading teaches them about themselves and the world that they inhabit, including our relationships with, and attitudes to, others.

## **Implementation**

### **Subject Organisation:**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Communication and Language and Literacy are covered throughout all of the foundation curriculum. These opportunities will be planned through each of the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 the English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum 2014 guidelines. All KS1 and KS2 classes have four core English sessions per week. In addition to these core lessons, pupils have the opportunity to regularly revisit prior learning in early reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting.

We believe that all pupils should fulfil their potential in learning and we therefore reinforce a “can do” attitude and approach to learning. We expect that the large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace. Depth of understanding is prioritised, alongside high expectations of every child, including those with additional needs.

### **Spoken Language Intent:**

Our English curriculum reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils’ development across the whole curriculum both cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that our pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers therefore ensure the continual development of pupils’ competence in spoken language to become confident, creative and reflective users of language in readiness for their later life.

Speaking and listening are at the heart of language not only as foundations for reading and writing but also as essential skills for thinking and communication. They play a vital role in the development of our pupils’ receptive and expressive vocabulary.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

### **Reading Intent:**

We are determined that every pupil in our schools will learn to read. We aim for our pupils to read with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. Reading is prioritised because we understand that it is the key to all learning. Our pupils will thrive in an environment that promotes a 'love of reading' culture and encourages them to develop the habit and gratification of reading every day.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- become fluent, confident, enthusiastic, critical and independent readers
- appreciate our rich, varied and diverse literary heritage
- have an interest in words and their meanings and develop their vocabulary through reading
- use phonics as their primary method of word reading during their early reading development
- use a range of strategies which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression
- use appropriate comprehension strategies whilst reading to understand and make sense of texts
- reflect on their reading and offer a personal response to a wide range of diverse texts
- appreciate the tools of the writer and the techniques used to involve the reader in the text
- appreciate the work of individual authors, illustrators and publishers
- read daily with adults both at home and at school
- access a wide range of rich, varied and diverse reading materials in both their classroom, school and public libraries
- use ICT based reference materials for information
- read fluently, accurately and with confidence to enhance their future success in later life.

### **Reading Implementation:**

- Early reading is taught through a rigorous and sequential approach to systematic synthetic phonics. The programme of study we follow is HEARTS Phonics
- All children benefit from our 'Every Child. Every Day' strategy which ensures every pupil reads with an adult at home or at school five times a week
- Focus is given to ensuring our pupils have strong foundations for future learning. Pupils will learn how to listen for sounds in our environment from nursery and progress through to grapheme, phoneme correspondence and blending skills in reception. This will ensure our pupils have gained fluency and accuracy in word reading by the end of year one
- At early stages of reading, we teach pupils to use phonics as their primary method of reading unfamiliar words. We then teach pupils to use a range of further strategies which will help them to read with meaning, understanding and expression
- All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in. They will establish an appreciation and love of reading and use highly skilled reading as a tool to gain knowledge across the curriculum
- In English lessons, we choose high quality, rich and diverse core texts which allow pupils to explore our HEARTS values, widen their experience and expand their vocabulary. They become very familiar with these texts exploring them in depth through drama, discussion and character analysis.

**Reading Lessons:**

Early reading in EYFS and KS1 is taught discretely through effectively planned and sequential modelled, choral, paired and individual sessions. Throughout early years and year one, word reading skills are taught explicitly in phonics sessions. Individual reading sessions ensure pupils develop fluency as quickly as possible.

As pupils enter year two and continue through to year six, they receive at least three reading lessons a week. These lessons prioritise reading to fluency and utilising comprehension strategies to secure understanding when reading texts. Our pupils are given many opportunities during the school day to listen to and practise reading with expression and the skills of engaging the reader. In these sessions, the children access rich, diverse, high quality texts which, whenever possible, link closely to texts or topics that they have previously studied or are currently studying. This makes it easier for them to activate prior knowledge and make links to future learning. The books and extracts that are used are progressive to build stamina when reading longer, more complex texts.

**Phonics:**

Early reading is taught through a rigorous and sequential approach to systematic synthetic phonics. The programme of study we follow is HEARTS Phonics.

Our phonics structure in EYFS and KS1 is based on the Early Reading Research (ERR) system and is continuously being developed as we evaluate its impact each year. We have clear expectations for pupils' phonics progress term by term from nursery to year 2.

Building a team of expert reading teachers through high quality, regular CPD opportunities has enabled our staff to teach early reading with skill and precision. HEARTS phonics lessons are taught to the highest standard to reduce the number of pupils who need extra support. Ongoing assessments immediately identify any pupil who is falling behind and targeted support using the HEARTS structured intervention programme is given.

The teaching of phonics happens every day. Pupils are taught to blend and segment through three daily group sessions of twenty minutes in reception and year one. Year two will see the children further apply their phonics knowledge to spelling development.

Pupils will have regular, structured time to:

- speedily recognise and respond correctly to 'common exception words' where the alternative pronunciation has not yet been learnt
- speedily recognise and respond correctly to the correct GPC
- blend words to read
- segment words to spell
- apply their phonics to develop fluency when reading.

Any pupil who is not secure in their phonic knowledge by the time they reach KS2 continues to have targeted additional support following the HEARTS Intervention programme. Progress of these pupils is continually tracked to ensure curriculum expectations are reached as soon as possible.

**Individual Reading:**

- Reading to adults encourages pupils to practise reading to fluency
- 'Every Child. Every Day' strategy which ensures every pupil reads with an adult at home or at school five times a week
- Targeted comments and specific next steps are recorded in a reading record

- Early readers read books which are phonically decodable using the graphemes they have been taught. This follows the culminative progression taught in phonics sessions and allows pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics to reading a book. The main scheme used for this is **Oxford Reading Tree, Floppy's Phonics**. We use additional books from the Pearson Bug Club scheme that are matched to the GPCs pupils have been taught.
- Pupils also have the opportunity to borrow books from the school library or class book areas. This is a free choice which encourages reading for pleasure and gratification.

### **Adults Reading to Children:**

Adults read to their class daily. The texts are carefully planned for to ensure that represent a range of genres that encourage them to appreciate our rich, varied and diverse literary heritage. To further aid our pupils' appreciation of literature we ensure a range of modern and traditional authors are shared both from their local and wider communities. These opportunities develop our pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and further enhance a love of reading culture.

### **Writing Intent:**

It is important for all our pupils to develop as independent, confident, enthusiastic and expressive writers. They should be able to use a range of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences and be confident in their choice of language style for a specific purpose. Pupils should also regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to the reader
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and with confidence
- develop an interest in words and their meanings and be able to use a growing vocabulary effectively
- develop a good understanding of the features needed when writing for a specific purpose
- understand the conventions of written language
- have fluent and legible handwriting
- be familiar with a range of structures in fiction, poetry and non-fiction and use this knowledge to write effectively in a range of different styles
- understand how writers can have an effect on the reader and incorporate ideas and skills of other authors into their own writing
- plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing making significant revisions where appropriate
- work collaboratively with other children to discuss the editing of written work
- use ICT as a tool for writing

### **Writing Implementation:**

#### **EYFS, KS1 and KS2:**

English units of work are planned carefully using high quality texts. These texts are chosen with thought and reflection. Our intent for each chosen book encompasses HEARTS values, widens their experience of life and ensures pupils have opportunities to expand and deepen their vocabulary. These are used as a stimulus and model for pupils' own writing.

To develop and enhance accuracy and creativeness in our pupils writing we use elements from the Pie Corbett *Talk for Writing* model. This model builds on our love of reading and ensures the engagement and enjoyment of our pupils. Its pedagogy is cumulative and based on the principles of how children learn.

*Talk for Writing* enables children to imitate the language they need to develop competent oracy in order to rehearse, retell, analyse and adapt good example texts. Consistency of this model throughout our pupils'

primary years ensures connections are made to prior learning and future learning guaranteeing their readiness for later life.

The sequence of each writing unit in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 follows a tight structure:

#### Imitation

Creative opportunities to engage pupils in text will be the 'hook' to learning. Word discovery sessions encourage pupils to embed and develop word choices, vocabulary and phrases. Pupils will learn to internalise a model text by having many opportunities to rehearse and re tell a story chorally as a class, in partners and individually using story or text maps. Short burst writing sessions will be planned to develop grammatical structures learnt from the text. Analysis will encourage children to look for features that make the text effective and engaging.

#### Innovation

Pupils will have the opportunity to create an adapted text or story based on the structure of text learnt during imitation. Modelled and shared writing opportunities will enable pupils to utilise toolkits for successful writing and develop whole class feedback strategies to become engaging writers. Pupils will have opportunities to peer and self-assess their work to make improvements.

#### Creative Application

Pupils will have the opportunity to use the stimulus and pattern learnt to create a new text. This may include applying their acquired writing skills within a curriculum lesson.

All pupils are given many opportunities to experience different styles of writing and are encouraged to write for a variety of readerships.

#### **Handwriting Implementation:**

The *Letter Join* scheme of work is used to teach handwriting in EYFS, KS1 and KS2. Correct letter formation following the scheme is modelled by teachers in marking and during teaching. Handwriting is also taught as independent lessons in all key stages, to ensure presentational standards are high and remain there. During these sessions, pupils practise specific joins and words that include that join.

#### **Spelling Intent:**

Pupils should develop as independent and accurate spellers who are confident to use an evolving and adventurous vocabulary in their own writing.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- attempt to spell words for themselves using a range of strategies
- write an increasingly wide range of words from memory using spelling rules from National Curriculum Spelling Appendices
- use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment and computer spell checks
- develop an understanding of spelling patterns and rules
- use a range of strategies to learn spellings, especially those mis-spelt in their own work

#### **Spelling Implementation:**

Spelling is taught and practised in phonics, writing and foundation subject lessons.

In reception and KS1 there are specific lessons focusing on spelling patterns and spelling of common exception words. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise these spellings.



In KS2, discrete word study lessons are taught. Pupils explore the meaning and origins of words as well as spelling rules. From year two onwards there are at least three spelling lessons a week. Pupils focus on spelling rules, misconceptions, ways to remember words and common patterns. Pupils will be assessed on retention of spellings in a variety of ways, including dictation. Class environments are key to developing independence in pupils spelling progress. Subject specific vocabulary is displayed and pupils are expected to use the correct spellings of these words.

### **Cross Curricular Opportunities:**

Teachers will take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. This gives pupils opportunities to review and apply knowledge from foundation lessons, to learn and apply subject specific vocabulary and to use familiar words in new contexts.

Planning includes regular opportunities for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

English lessons will generally follow the theme of the termly topic. Reading and writing skills are also taught within foundation lessons, to ensure these skills are embedded throughout, and writing levels remain consistently high across all lessons.

### **The use of ICT:**

Opportunities to use ICT to ignite and support teaching and learning in English are included in planning. Visual literacy opportunities are planned regularly as stimuli for writing and discussion.

Additionally, iPads, Chrome books or laptops are frequently used in lessons, following online safety guidelines to aid learning.

### **Homework:**

Our Homework Policy lays down clear guidelines with regard to English homework. The specific requirements for each year group are explained and communicated to parents.

## **Assessment**

All teachers make individual informal assessments when and where appropriate, to ensure that progress is regularly recorded and monitored. These assessments are used to inform future planning, set targets and scaffold appropriately.

### **Foundation Stage:**

Pupils are assessed through observations, activities and work scrutiny. This is then evidenced onto their foundation stage profile either in the form of written comments or digitally in Tapestry.

### **EYFS & KS1:**

Pupils' progress in word reading and spelling is monitored by a cumulative benchmark of increasing knowledge of grapheme phoneme correspondences alongside the skills of blending and segmenting. This is assessed half termly.

### **KS1 & KS2:**

Pupils are formally assessed at the end of each term in reading and in grammar punctuation and spelling, using commercially produced standardised tests. These tests are used to identify gaps and track progress.

Teachers assess pupils progress in writing throughout the term against termly objectives that work towards the National Curriculum end of year expectations.

Writing assessment is used throughout the term and used to inform teaching.

Moderation of assessments is carried out by teachers and SLT to ensure that judgements are accurate and are used to support progress. We also take part in the national initiative 'No More Marking' which provides us with an opportunity to standardise comparisons and judgements.

**Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND):**

Teachers follow the HEARTS Academy Trust SEND and Inclusion Policy to ensure that all children make progress in English.

**Marking and Feedback:**

In English all adults follow our Marking and Feedback Policy.

**Partnership with Parents**

We believe in the importance of working together with parents in all aspects of school life. Teachers hold workshops for parents to inform them of key elements of the English Curriculum in that key stage and give suggestions of ways that they can support their children's confidence and progress in English. These workshops explain the important role parents play in helping their children to learn to read by listening to their child read their reading book every day and by reading and sharing books with their children regularly.

We use online platforms e.g. Dojo, Google Classroom to share spelling and reading resources with parents and children to keep them updated on the learning in the classroom.

Parents are updated on their child's progress in English as well as the other curricular areas in the form of written reports each term. The written report in July contains details of a child's effort and attainment in English over the year. Parent-teacher consultations take place twice in the academic year.