



Welcome to
Homerswood



A pathway to grow, be curious and discover

English Policy
Homerswood Primary and
Nursery School

Ratified : September 2023

Review : September 2025

Statement of Intent

The teaching of English at Homerswood Primary and Nursery School is designed to give pupils the key skills in English that enable them to access material in all curriculum areas, and provide a foundation for their learning throughout their school career and beyond. To achieve this, we are focused on making English interesting, exciting and purposeful by engaging the pupils with the joy and wonder of books and capturing their imagination both inside and outside of school. English is viewed as a fundamental part of the holistic development of the child for inspiring minds through literature and fostering positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning. Furthermore, we work hard to enable children to become their own authors, providing a host of contextual, purposeful opportunities for writing from the early years to the end of key stage two.

At Homerswood Primary and Nursery School, English and the teaching of English is embedded across the curriculum. Our aim is to ensure that every child progresses in the areas of reading, writing and speaking and listening. We believe in supporting our children to love reading and writing. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We believe in setting high standards in the presentation of writing along with setting the important foundations in spelling and grammar. We aim to inspire children in their writing by providing opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. We value reading as a key life skill and we are dedicated to enabling our pupils to become lifelong readers. We believe that through supporting our children to learn to read, they will be able to read to learn for the rest of their lives. Reading is key for academic success. We believe in developing reading fluency and all comprehension skills coupled with promoting a love of reading so all of our children can access the delights and rewards that reading provides.

Implementation

The aims of our English curriculum are:

- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative literacy curriculum
- To promote a positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- To develop children's ability to become confident users of language, both oral and written.
- To enable our children to become fluent and responsive readers.
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstance and demands.
- To enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama/role play activities.
- To develop a lifelong love of reading and writing.
- To provide clear and consistent teaching throughout the school.

With these aims in mind, writing and reading opportunities are timetabled daily across all year groups.

EYFS

In the Foundation Stage, emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening, understanding, correct oral pronunciation and valuing all forms of print. We recognise that communication and language provides a foundation for learning and development, and we are proactive and passionate about supporting the children's emerging literacy.

In Nursery and Reception, the daily routine includes planned and spontaneous activities that promote these skills through:

- A wealth of opportunities to experience and develop speaking and listening.
- Sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books.
- Immersion in a print rich environment with opportunities for oral language, mark making and emergent writing.
- Adult directed activities that develop children's early communication, language and literacy skills.

Children's communication and language development is given high priority. Language and vocabulary is developed through daily routines and conversations, story sessions and singing and rhyme sessions. At Homerswood, time is given to developing a love of reading and books. Children have at least 3 story sessions a day and a daily singing and rhyme session. These sessions develop vocabulary and comprehension and feed the imagination as well as developing children's knowledge. Every day we have a whole class gross or fine motor movement sessions so that children develop physical strength in order to write, core strength to sit at a table and on the carpet and hold pencils and tools.

All practitioners are aware of the importance of high quality conversations and dialogue with children. We provide a language rich environment by commenting on what children are interested in, or doing, and through the modelling of new vocabulary to build children's language.

Writing in the Foundation Stage

To support writing in the Foundation Stage, we:

- Provide a range of experiences that develop gross and fine motor skills.
- Encourage children to give meaning to marks they make.
- Support children to use their knowledge of print and letters in their early and emergent writing.
- Model the correct formation of letters.
- Verbalise our cognitive processes when modelling writing.

Early Reading

At Homerswood Primary and Nursery School, we are currently using 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' to develop early reading skills. Children practise reading fully decodable books that match their secure phonic knowledge. These reading

practice sessions ensure that children become fluent readers who understand what they are reading. Each session has a clear focus as follows:

- Decoding
- Prosody
- Comprehension

Assessments are used to match the children's secure phonics knowledge in reading words to the right books, so children are successful when they learn to read. Parents are also supported to help their children to read at home through a range of resources.

Key Stages 1 and 2

Teachers plan units of work using the National Curriculum statutory guidance, Hertfordshire County Council's English Plans, Literacy Shed Planning units and our own planning for writing across the curriculum. Units are linked to carefully selected high-quality texts and incorporate speaking and listening, reading, and writing objectives.

Each term, children are exposed to and engage with a range of non-fiction, fiction, poetry and short film units that include extensive opportunities for vocabulary building and speaking and listening. Throughout each term, children will explore quality texts in a range of genres and build skills that enable them to produce increasingly independent final written outcomes. Teachers and support staff personalise learning to ensure that every child is successful and makes good progress.

Learning includes:

- Daily phonics sessions in key stage one.
- Daily English sessions in all classes.
- Whole class reading across key stage 2.
- Weekly handwriting and spelling lessons in all classes.
- SPAG input embedded in planning units.

Phonics teaching

In daily phonics and beyond, we teach children to recognise the grapheme and phoneme correspondences within written texts. Within phonics lessons, children are set in phased groups. Regular, half-termly phonics assessments ensure that our provision is appropriate and that progress is ongoing.

Fluency and comprehension are paramount to effective reading and children are supported in group and one to one sessions. Children who are at risk of falling behind receive daily (KS1) or Rapid (KS2) catch up sessions matched carefully to their assessed phonetic understanding. Children's progress is tracked using a detailed assessment package linked to our chosen SSP.

Whole class reading

Throughout the school, all children are exposed to a range of age-appropriate texts and reading strategies through daily whole class reading sessions. From year two onwards, this takes the form of whole class reading sessions. We follow the VIPERS framework to ensure that children are experienced in all reading content

domains. Across each term, teachers select a host of appropriate, quality texts which includes:

- fiction from a range of genres
- non-fiction in different forms
- poetry
- lyrics

Within reading sessions, teachers utilise echo reading, reciprocal reading, paired and guided sessions, adult support and pre-teaching to ensure that all children, including low-attaining readers, benefit from the sessions. Additional individual reading sessions are used to provide further support to those reading below the age-related expectations and to stretch those working beyond it.

Reading for pleasure

Many exciting and rewarding opportunities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books. Class libraries are well-stocked with a variety of diverse texts and children are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions about the texts they read. Yearly events to mark a love of reading are celebrated: for example 'World Book Day' and author visits. Every year, each class also visits our local library to encourage an engagement with reading in their wider community and librarians are in turn invited into school to engage in whole school assemblies.

Other opportunities to read for pleasure include children reading in paired classes and weekly sessions to visit the school library. We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children and utilise the help of community volunteers which includes our much valued part-time school librarian.

The delight in sharing wonderful texts with children is not undervalued and in all year groups, teachers take time to read aloud without pausing in order for full immersion in a text.

Writing

Children's exposure to a host of quality texts provide building blocks for their own writing. We encourage children to use quality texts as models for writing and to recognise and collect tools that will enable them to become authors.

At Homerswood, teachers provide scaffolded steps to enable children to develop skills for writing. Throughout the school, teachers support children to develop increased independence in their writing and move through the following phases which build towards quality written outcomes.

- Exposure and immersion in quality examples drawing on the features of text types.
- Skills building for success – spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Drafting and planning including talking about the content of their writing.
- Writing, editing, enhancing, publishing and sharing.

Editing and enhancing forms an ongoing and fundamental part of the writing process. At Homerswood, we encourage children to check their writing throughout each stage of composition and provide ongoing guidance towards success. Editing sheets are used across the key stages and children are provided with many opportunities to self and peer assess against personal targets.

Conferencing and assessment

From year 1 to year 6, conferencing sessions take place in class and individually, to drive learning on. Teachers and support staff meet frequently with each of the children to discuss their learning journey and to search for evidence of progress and application of learning during independent work. Previous targets are discussed and revisited and new evidence based targets are set collaboratively to ensure that children move on.

Increasingly independent extended writing outcomes are utilised at the end of and within writing units. Teachers utilise these pieces to assess against the national curriculum using our assessment grids which are displayed alongside writing in books. Assessment pieces take a range of forms and include a host of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Handwriting

At Homerswood Primary and Nursery School, we recognise the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

Children in EYFS learn phrases that help them remember the correct formation of letters linked to our chosen SSP scheme, Little Wandle. To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Penpals handwriting scheme from year 1 onwards: a whole-school programme designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet higher curriculum expectations. The use of patterns to support letter formation and appropriate letter-joins is also embedded, enabling children to further develop their fine motor skills. A high standard of presentation is also encouraged and expected in children's written work across the wider curriculum.

Additional handwriting sessions are provided where children's handwriting is a barrier to successful writing. Alongside the teaching of accurate letter formation and joins, dexterity materials are utilised where appropriate, to increase fine motor skills and to build strength and stamina.

Speech and language

At Homerswood, we recognise that effective speaking and listening are fundamental skills and, throughout the school in all subjects, we plan for and provide opportunities for children to develop their skills in these areas. Throughout each year, teachers support children in developing skills for:

- listening and responding
- questioning

- oral rehearsal
- presenting
- building vocabulary
- effectively talking with adults, peers and a wider audience

Wellcomm assessment and intervention enables our SPLD champion and the EYFS team to identify children for whom speech and language is more difficult. The assessment provides a baseline and those children who are at risk of falling behind the expected standard are supported from the earliest stage.

Role of the subject leader

Subject leaders attend twilights and feedback during Professional Development Meetings.

New ideas and resources are shared with staff as are examples of good practice within the school.

The English subject leader will:

- Monitor standards of work and quality of teaching.
- Support colleagues in the teaching of English.
- Ensure s/he is informed about current developments in the subject.
- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.
- Organise resources to support the school English policy.
- Co-ordinate purchasing, organisation and distribution of resources.
- Liaise with outside agencies and other schools.