

English Policy



The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West)

March 2025



The Inspire Multi Academy Trust








English Policy

Purpose of Study:

It is worth quoting the purpose of the English curriculum from national curriculum programme of study: 'English has a preeminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.'

Aims:

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. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

-  read easily, fluently and with good understanding
-  develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
-  acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
-  appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
-  write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
-  use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
-  are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

The Approach to the Teaching of English at The Inspire Multi Academy Trust

At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, opportunities for English learning and the application of skills are woven into our curriculum. Each class have a daily lesson in English in addition to discreet Whole Class Reading, Phonics and Spelling which are also taught daily. Throughout the week, time is also given to handwriting, individual reading, and listening to, and reading, stories and poems.










Building a Strong Foundation in the Early Years:

At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we recognise the importance of building a strong foundation within the Early Years. If children do not develop sufficient communication and language skills before starting school, this disadvantage persists and affects future attainment. Communication and language skills are vital for young children to develop. Early interactions are crucial to children's language development. **The quality and quantity of interactions matter.**

The EYFS programme for communication and language states that:

- the development of children's spoken language underpins all 7 areas of learning and development
- back and forth interactions form the foundations for language and cognitive development
- the number and quality of conversations children have with adults are crucial
- adults build children's vocabulary by commenting on what a child is doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added
- reading to children and engaging them in stories, rhymes and songs helps children to learn new language
- modelling vocabulary and asking questions help children to use and embed newly acquired vocabulary and language structures in a range of contexts

At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust we have deliberately constructed a curriculum that allows children to develop their communication and language through:

-  Explicit teaching of vocabulary across the curriculum
-  Modelling
-  Planned teaching and experience
-  High-quality and frequent interactions
-  The promotion of Oracy
-  Story telling
-  Song, nursery rhymes and poetry
-  Positive social experiences
-  Shared reading

Developing children's communication and language benefits from careful and deliberate curriculum planning, taking account of all areas of learning. The Early Years Leader and Curriculum Leader have worked together to decide what they want all children to know and think about and identify the vocabulary and concepts that are associated with this.

Spoken Language



The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing.

Our aim at The Inspire Multi Academy Trust is to develop a positive attitude towards speaking and listening. Oracy is the ability to express yourself clearly and communicate with others effectively through spoken language. It is the strategy for learning to talk and learning through talk. From Reception to Year Six, we have high expectations of all of our pupils in order for them to learn, understand and use a wide range of vocabulary, structure their thoughts and to be able to communicate confidently with adults and peers. We recognise that it is a partnership between home and school which encourages each child to have a confidence in their own voice.

The Plymouth Oracy Project was designed to enable members of the school team to further develop their knowledge and understanding of dialogic talk for learning. What is Dialogic talk for learning? It is simply providing children the opportunities to engage in talk which enhances their learning. The aim of the project is to enable teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants to improve the oracy development of pupils, which will impact positively on all aspects of their learning across the curriculum. Through the project, staff have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the four strands of Oracy skills and considered how these can be implemented throughout the curriculum. The result has been children from Reception through to Year 6 are now engaging in high quality talk throughout the curriculum.

Reading

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of 2 dimensions:

-  word reading
-  comprehension (both listening and reading)

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we believe that reading and writing is an essential life skill and are dedicated to enabling our children to become enthused, engaged and successful lifelong readers and writers.

Phonics:

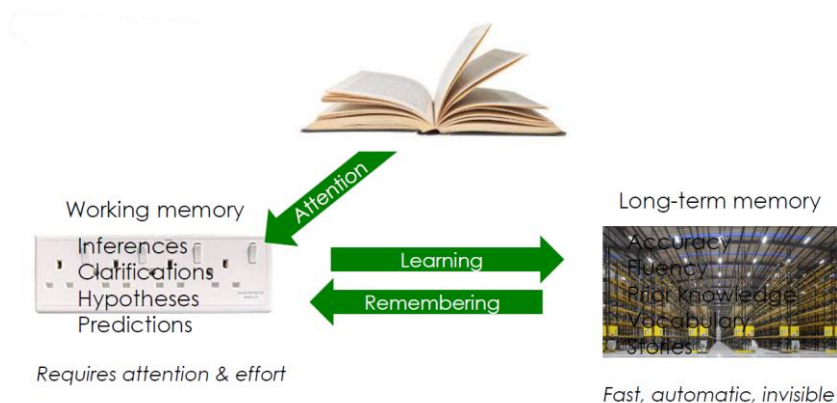
In practice, children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words. At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we follow the 'Read Write Inc' programme of teaching. When children start Reception, we introduce them to 25 new phonemes. During this stage the children will learn to recognise, form and use these sounds in simple words to enable them begin to read and write simple words and captions. Once they can independently blend and read words with the sounds they have learnt, they start reading stories and texts that have words made up of the sounds they know. This means that they can embed and apply their phonic knowledge and start to build their reading fluency. Once secure, the children move on to the next stage whereby they will learn new sounds, alternative spellings and this enables them to read a greater range of texts and improve their reading fluency. Throughout this process there is a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment.

Throughout Early Years and Key Stage One, children are taught in small and focussed groups to target their specific needs for Phonics, alongside children of the same ability. Children are regularly assessed by the RWI Teachers within phonics lessons and by the Reading Leader every six weeks to ensure they are making the expected progress. Where progress is slower than expected, one to one tutoring is provided to ensure these children keep up. We make sure that pupils read books that are matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers, as well as consolidating the learning that takes place in school.

All class reading books shared with children have been specifically chosen to support language development, storytelling and to continually develop our children's love and passion for reading. The Early Years environment has been carefully planned so that it provides opportunities for reading in all areas of the classroom; creating comfortable pockets similar to the environments they experience at home, where children feel comfortable and confident to curl up with a good book.

Fluency:

At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we recognise the importance of children needing to read with increasing automaticity so that they are then able to concentrate on the content of what they are reading. Reading fluency can be defined as reading with accuracy, automaticity and prosody. When pupils read fluently, their cognitive resources can be redirected from focusing on decoding and onto comprehending a text. For this reason, fluency is sometimes described as a bridge from word recognition to comprehension.



We have invested in high-quality CPD for all staff so that they are well-equipped in the explicit teaching of fluency allowing children to read automatically and effortlessly. Staff recognise and understand that it is critically important to provide fluency practice. One reason is because those students who are stumbling over the little words (i.e. is, the, through) need multiple opportunities to make those words part of their sight vocabulary. Repeated practice helps students recognise these words as a whole so they can eventually access them automatically. Over and over again we encounter research that supports the need for reading fluency because disfluent reading taxes working memory. The brain has a finite amount of working memory. If the working memory is used up by decoding, then there is little left for comprehension. Decoding happens in long term memory. Readers need to access this memory quickly and accurately so they are able to focus on comprehension. We **must** drill in order to develop the skill.

Accelerated Reader:

As children near the end of their Read Write Inc journey, carefully planned transition support is provided to begin preparing children for fluency and comprehension development. This is complemented by the use of Accelerated Reader (AR) - a reading management and monitoring programme that aims to foster independent reading. The internet-based software assesses reading age and suggests books that match pupils' needs and interests. Pupils take computerised quizzes on the books and earn AR points as they progress.





At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we have chosen to utilise AR alongside our carefully constructed reading curriculum as it: gives children significantly greater choice in levelled books that offer appropriate challenge; provides immediate and regular feedback to children; allows teachers to make in depth and accurate assessments of children's reading and comprehension; motivates children to read independently and more frequently; and helps to develop a love of reading! Children are able to choose books within their level from our school library. We work closely with our local Schools' Library Service to keep our book stock current and to ensure that we have something for everyone. Children are encouraged to recommend books to each other and our Reading Prefects attend the library service on a regular basis to select new texts to add to the library.

Whole Class Reading:

At The Inspire Multi Academy Trust, the books we select for our Whole Class Reading programme complements and supports the curriculum where appropriate. For example, in Year 5, a project linked to Space, 'Mission to Mars', provides essential background information and justification for the events in 'The Jamie Drake Equation' by Christopher Edge, one of the last books read by Year 5. In Year 4, the in-depth study of the Early Egyptian Civilisation provides essential background knowledge in order for children to develop a schema and create interconnection when later reading 'Secrets of a Sun King' by Emma Carroll.

During these sessions, a range of strategies are used by skilled teachers to develop pupils' fluency and comprehension such as:

- 👤 Teacher-led modelled fluent reading
- 👤 Choral reading




-  Echo reading
-  Deep reading
-  Performance reading
-  Poetry, rhyme, repeated stories & music

Reading Across the Curriculum:

Children at The Inspire Multi Academy Trust are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts from Reception to Year 6 not just within their English lessons but across the curriculum. Each of the Areas of Study taught within the wider curriculum are underpinned by a deliberately chosen text which help teach, reinforce and extend the new knowledge or concepts being learned.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

-  transcription (spelling and handwriting)
-  composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
-  It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition

Throughout their time at TIMAT, children develop their writing ability by exploring a range of different genres. We expect the highest standards of writing every time a child writes in any subject, not just in English lessons, and place great importance on the planning, drafting, editing and rewriting process when writing at length. Teachers develop pupils' discourse knowledge by teaching the characteristics of texts which have been written for different purposes and audiences, as well as providing models of effective writing.

A Process Approach:

This involves pupils learning to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish their writing. **This approach might not be sufficient on its own and is therefore used alongside other approaches.** It is important to explicitly teach foundational skills, which are a prerequisite to allow all pupils to write effectively.

At TIMAT, our literature curriculum could be structured so that carefully selected content is revisited. Interleaving helps pupils to make connections between texts and concepts, so as to create a larger schema about how literature works. It is the content that makes the difference here, rather than interleaving in itself.

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation and Glossary

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.

Following their Phonics learning, children move on to learning Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) in daily sessions. Children learn the strategies, knowledge and skills needed to spell independently. Lessons are based on a four-part cycle of revisiting prior learning, teaching and practising new concepts, applying new learning and assessing children's understanding. Teachers also skilfully include SPaG techniques throughout all English sessions and throughout other lessons when the opportunities arise. Retrieval practice at the start of every English lesson is SPaG related, providing children with the opportunity to revisit and rehearse previous learning, enabling it to embed in their long-term memory.