



English policy Updated 20.4.20

In the teaching of English at Hartford Infant School [HIS] we wanted our policy and practice to reflect the school's vision for all of the children. At Hartford Infant School:

We believe in bringing out the best in everyone.

We want all our children to be curious, confident learners who can communicate effectively.

We want all children to be:

- articulate, using a rich vocabulary,
- independent, active learners who are self-motivated,
- happy, with a love of learning,
- resilient problem solvers,
- respectful members of the community, with high standards of behaviour.

We offer high standards of teaching and learning in an enabling, inclusive environment where each child is nurtured and valued as an individual and encouraged to reach their potential.

We have a bold and engaging curriculum that develops the following **core skills**:

- Curiosity
- Confidence
- Communication

What is English?

English is defined as the combined skills and knowledge of reading, writing and oral language. The English curriculum is divided into main areas of Reading, Phonics, Writing, Spelling, Handwriting and Speaking and Listening. In this policy we refer to English but recognise that Literacy is taught in Reception.

School's vision

Through our English and Literacy, we will provide for the language development of pupils and will develop their ability to use language to think, explore, recognise and communicate their ideas. Our curriculum taught through high-quality core texts aims to inspire a love of literature and a recognition of its relation to other subjects studied in school. Our English lessons will teach children specific skills which are then embedded across the curriculum throughout the day.

Aims

At Hartford Infant School we aim to develop in all the children:

- a positive attitude towards all aspects of English,
- the ability to communicate and respond effectively,
- the competence to produce work of high quality,
- as much independence and confidence as possible,
- a keen awareness of audience in all areas of English, across the range of Literacy skills,
- persistence and resilience,
- the confidence to tackle and solve problems through the application of knowledge and the use of skills across the curriculum.

Objectives

At Hartford Infant School we aspire:

- to provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of speaking, reading and writing,
- to develop children's interest in books and encourage "a love of books" attitude that will support their learning across the curriculum and enrich their lives,
- to develop children's early oracy skills and embed this across the curriculum,
- to teach children the craft of writing,
- to develop children's confidence and the skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences,
- to teach the basics of writing so that children know, do and remember the skills of spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation,

- to foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing,
- to value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Phonics and spelling at Hartford Infant School

Phonics

At Hartford Infant School we use the Letters and Sounds and Jolly Phonics programs to support our teaching of phonics across Reception and Key Stage 1. We use these programs as a resource and have adapted them to suit the needs of our children. Our phonics is taught through 6 phases. Phase 1 supports the development of listening and speaking skills. Phase 2 - 5 is a systematic approach to phonics teaching and word recognition skills. Phase 6 focuses on word-specific spellings and the rules for spelling alternatives. These are clearly mapped out with specific phoneme/grapheme correspondences in our Phonics Long Term Plan and further detail is provided in our year group Medium Term Plans for Phonics. Phonics is taught as a discrete 20-30 minute session **every day in all year groups**. Each lesson follows the structure of revisit and review (previous learning or CEWs), teach, practise and apply. Further opportunities for practise and application are given during daily Guided Reading sessions. In Key Stage 1 parents/carers are notified of the phonics focus each week through our homework. The children can then choose to practise these in their own way if they wish. In Reception, children are set a weekly phonics task as part of their homework.

Spelling

Alongside Phonics we teach how to read and spell the year group specific Common Exception Words (set out in National Curriculum – Appendix 1 for Key Stage 1, and in Letters and Sounds for Reception). We believe spelling enables our children to become more effective writers. Put simply, the less thought we put into spelling, the more thought we can put into what is said. Children can labour under the pressure to spell and at Hartford Infant School we aim to support the development and skill set of the children as spellers from an early age. Children are encouraged to develop their spelling skills alongside their decoding skills in phonics. Children are taught that theme-based word mats, Common Exception Word mats and classroom displays are there to support and reinforce their ability to spell correctly. Through our homework in Key Stage 1 parents/carers are notified of the week's grapheme/phoneme correspondences taught and/or Common Exception Words covered. The children can then choose to practise these in their own way if they wish. In Reception, parents/carers are given sets of Common Exception Word cards as they are taught, so they can practise them at home with their children.

Intervention

Termly assessments are carried out across the school to track progress and identify gaps in learning. These are passed on to the next teacher and continued. For those children who are not on track we aim to provide early intervention.

In Reception children's GPCs and CEW knowledge are assessed on a termly basis. This information, along with the children's reading records and current coded library level, help teachers to identify children who have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Support is then put in place for these children in the form of 1:1 intervention with teaching assistant, who may, for example, practise recall of Phase 2 sounds on a daily basis, or give additional opportunities to practise reading Phase 3 words. A phonics workshop is provided for Reception parents early in the Autumn term to ensure they understand our approach to reading and writing at Hartford Infant School.

In Year 1 targeted support is given to those children not on track to meet the age-related expectation in phonics. Teachers monitor this closely by carrying out termly Phonics screening checks and tracking pupils progress and attainment. Those children identified are provided with additional intervention. Prior to the Phonics screening assessment parents of Year 1 children are invited to a phonics workshop where they are given the opportunity to watch a Phonics lesson. This workshop also explains how phonics is taught at Hartford Infant School and gives parents ideas on how they can support their child at home.

For those children who do not pass the Year 1 phonics screening check immediate support is given when they enter Year 2. For example, they take part in various interventions which may include phonics flash, Expanded Rehearsal Technique (ERT), Project X CODE reading and a recap phonics group. We also carry out practise phonics screening assessments termly and monitor their progress carefully.

Reading at Hartford Infant School

Reading

Discrete reading sessions take place every day in Key Stage 1. In Reception these sessions are introduced at an appropriate time in their first year. For these sessions, the whole class takes part in a reading carousel. The children are in differentiated groups and complete a different task each day of the week. One of the activities is shared reading. The texts selected for this are high quality and reflect the teaching objectives, genre or classroom topic. The class

may spend anywhere between 1-4 weeks on a text, depending on its length. For shared reading with a small group; the teaching assistant models the reading process as an expert, providing a high level of support. The children then complete a follow up activity that has a specific, pre-planned focus (taken from our Reading Assessment Grid). This activity is completed in the child's reading exercise book. Another activity that forms part of the carousel is Guided Reading with a teacher where the responsibility for reading shifts to the learner. This takes place with a group of children, of similar ability. The children read and respond to a challenging text with the adult supporting. Teachers complete a running record and use each child's individual reading assessment grid to record questions asked, observations made. Texts are banded linked to difficulty and are carefully chosen and matched to the reading ability of the group. It is intended that this Guided Reading group provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about reading and to further develop and extend their reading and comprehension skills.

Some of the other activities you may see during the daily reading carousel:

- practise of spelling KS1 Common Exception Words,
- handwriting following "Think Write" program,
- reading comprehension tasks,
- Tapestry observations [usually adult led],
- phonics activities e.g. use of phonics area, finding words with a specific sound in a text,
- independent reading,
- use of storytelling shelves.

In Reception, children have the opportunity to read a coded library book 1:1 with an adult twice a week. During this time, the adult will model the use of strategies needed to decode texts at this early stage of reading, for example, segmenting and blending, and looking out for Common Exception Words. They may also read sentences back to a child, to support them with their developing fluency. Adults ask the children basic comprehension questions to ensure they are understanding what they have read. These sessions help to provide evidence for children's reading skills, which are documents on a running record.

Independent Reading

At Hartford Infant School we believe that children should master their reading and not race through a colour coded system. We aim to provide depth and breadth through high quality reading opportunities. Our assessment for reading is outlined in more detail in the Assessment Policy. Our children have access to a range of "book banded" appropriate texts to support their reading at home. The books from pink band through to orange band are phonics based so that children can practise the grapheme phoneme correspondences they have been learning. Colour bands beyond this are not all phonics based as we feel that by this stage the children have a wide range of skills to draw upon in addition to their phonics. Most of our earlier reading books are from Oxford Reading Tree, Project X, Big Cat Readers and Songbirds Phonics. We also provide our "free readers" with high quality chapter books from a range of authors e.g. Roald Dahl. Children in Key Stage 1 can change their book during guided reading sessions and at lunchtimes. In Reception, reading books are changed weekly for children.

Teachers are responsible for:

- ensuring that children are taking home books appropriate to their reading level,
- communicating effectively with parents about the children's progress termly via the parent consultations and annual report.

We promote a love of reading and encourage children to read at home using our whole-school Reading at Home Tree. This is used as a 'ladder' for the children to progress up from the star at the bottom of the tree to the star at the top of the tree. Each child will start with a blue 'Reading at Home' card and their name will be on a blue card. Each new academic year the children will start again on a fresh blue reading card as the purpose of the reading tree is to read as many books in a single academic year. The tree helps the children to challenge themselves based on their prior achievement. Children will be expected to read 40 times to complete the blue card. This can be quite daunting, so the total has been divided into milestones of 10 sessions, 20 sessions and then 40 sessions. At each, WOW milestone the children can move their name card up the tree. The children are encouraged to go to the headteacher's office to show off their reading progress. This process will then be repeated for the next 6 coloured cards totalling 280 sessions altogether. This is an aspirational target of reading 280 times over the year based on feedback from parents (2018-19). We don't 'push' children to get onto the final, purple card but celebrate what card they are on as we firmly believe that every reading session ensures children become the best reader they can be.

Reading areas

Every classroom at Hartford Infant School will have an inviting area to share books and stories. Books are displayed on an "open" bookshelf (where children can see the front covers of the book). The books here will reflect the needs and interests of the class. Some of the books may also link to the current enquiry. In addition to this, each class across the school has a story shelf with baskets filled with reading resources such as puppets, story language, vocabulary, small

world and a range of writing frames. These story shelves are usually based on a traditional tale or story that the children are familiar with and are changed each half term.

Reading into Writing

In addition to Guided Reading, shared reading also takes place within some of our English and Literacy lessons, particularly at the beginning of a unit; the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned on our English Medium-Term Planning and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate with the reading of the core text. The texts selected are of a high quality which reflect the teaching objectives, genre or classroom topic.

Writing at Hartford Infant School

How do we teach writing?

Our approach to teaching writing covers the 'transcription' and 'composition' requirements of The National Curriculum, Development Matters and PIVATs for SEND. To support our teaching of writing across the school, staff refer to Alan Peat and Pie Corbett's strategies. Teachers are flexible in their selection of these Literacy experts' strategies to suit the needs of the children and text type being taught. Each of our lessons begin with a Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar starter. Here the children will recap previously learnt skills. Following this, teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Children will then be given the opportunity to practise the skills which have been taught. Guided group sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. The skills taught in these sessions may differ from what has been taught as whole-class. Children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions. They are also given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Teachers will continuously make links and refer to the English working wall.

Core texts

Writing is closely related to reading, with the two activities reinforcing each other. Similarly, we aim to develop a positive attitude to writing and to extend the children's abilities to express their thoughts and ideas on paper, thus enabling them to communicate clearly through the written word. We use high-quality core texts, some of which are taken from Pie Corbett's Reading Spine, for children to experience the link between reading and writing. These texts are mapped out clearly in our English Long Term Plan.

Vocabulary

Learning vocabulary is key to learning and progress across the whole curriculum since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently. We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in several ways, these include:

- display of key words linked to topics and subjects,
- word mats to support the current enquiry and/or core text,
- using the correct vocabulary orally,
- using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes,
- Common Exception Word windows,
- working walls.

SEND Learners

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English and Literacy according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment in liaison with the SENCo. Some of these children in Key Stage 1 are working on PIVATs and this document is used to support teachers in planning bespoke sessions. Where possible, these sessions link to the whole-class core text. These children work with both the teacher and teaching assistants as well as having opportunities to work independently.

Oracy

We believe that oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language. We aim to develop children's early oracy skills using a range of oracy strategies to support the children's learning across the curriculum. These strategies include:

- talk partners and/or trios and the traverse to share thoughts ideas,
- discussion groups
- sentence stems to scaffold children’s contributions.

We teach oracy to aid children’s discussion in all subjects. We created a set of Hartford Infant School discussion guidelines that are followed in all classrooms to help support high-quality talk. The children are introduced to key sentence stems that help them share their ideas and opinions e.g. **I agree**, **I disagree**, and **I think**. We also use oracy to support our children with their articulation of what they have learnt in our curriculum. The children are familiar with the sentence stems **I know**, **I can**, and **I remember** and use these to talk about their learning.

Handwriting

We follow the “Think Write” program for handwriting. Our children are introduced to 5 different animals which include Harriet the cow, Georgia the pig, Rupert and Zach the sheep and Pippa the rabbit. Each of the animals have a starting shape. For example, Harriet the Cow’s shape is a tall straight line, which starts on the grass, reaches up to the clouds and then returns to the grass. Each letter of the alphabet belongs to a “family”. See below:

Harriet the Cow tall straight line letters

Georgia the Pig up and over letters

Rupert the White Sheep short straight line letters.

Zac the Grey sheep unusual short straight line letters

Pippa the Rabbit below the line letters

In Reception the children have daily handwriting sessions where they are taught how to form the letters in the families, learning one new letter a week, giving them the chance to full embed the correct formation. As the children progress into Key Stage 1 handwriting is taught discretely once a week. In addition to this the children are given opportunities to practise their letter formation during their reading carousel.

See *Think Write script* (available in all classrooms) for further information on how to form each letter correctly.