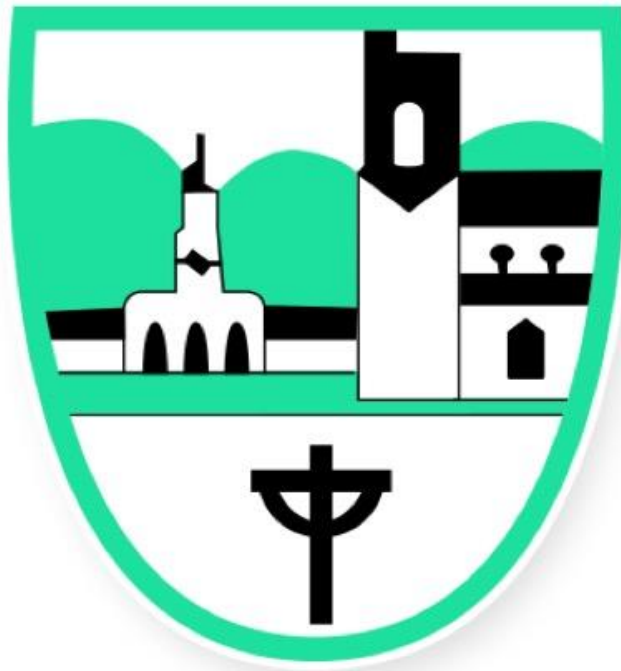


The New National Curriculum

A Guide for Parents



English

English in Year 1

During the early years of compulsory schooling, much of the focus is to develop confident readers, mainly using the phonics approach. Many schools will follow a programme of phonics teaching, so it is well worth finding out from your child's school if they have any parent support materials.

Phonics is the relationship between printed letters and the sounds they make. Children will first learn the most common letter sounds, and then look at more difficult patterns such as recognising that "ow" sounds different in "cow" than in "low", or that both "ai" and "ay" make the same sound in different words.

Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Year 1, some focuses may include:

- Listen and respond to adults and other children
- Ask questions to extend their understanding
- Learn new vocabulary related to topics or daily life

Reading Skills

- Learn the 40+ main speech sounds in English and the letters that represent them
- Blend sounds together to form words
- Read aloud when reading books that contain familiar letter sound patterns
- Listen to, and talk about a range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts
- Learn about popular fairy tales and folk stories, and retell the stories
- Join in with repeated phrases in familiar books
- Make predictions about what might happen next in a book
- Explain clearly what has happened in a book they've read or listened to

Writing Skills

- Hold a pen or pencil in the correct and comfortable way
- Name the letters of the alphabet in order
- Write lower-case letters starting and ending in the right place
- Write capital letters, and the digits 0 to 9
- Spell simple words containing the main sounds they've learned in reading
- Spell the days of the week
- Learn to write words with common endings, such as -ed, -ing, -er and -est
- Plan out sentences aloud before writing them
- Write simple sentences, and those using joining words such as 'and'
- Begin to use full stops and capital letters for sentences
- Combine some sentences to make short descriptions or stories



English in Year 2

As children move through Key Stage 1, the new curriculum intends that almost all children will secure the basic skills of decoding so that they can become fluent readers. As their reading confidence grows they can begin to write their own ideas down.

Decoding is the ability to read words aloud by identifying the letter patterns and matching them to sounds. Once children are able to “decode” the writing, they can then start to make sense of the words and sentences in context. Watch out for hard-to-decode words such as “one” and “the”. These just have to be learned by heart.

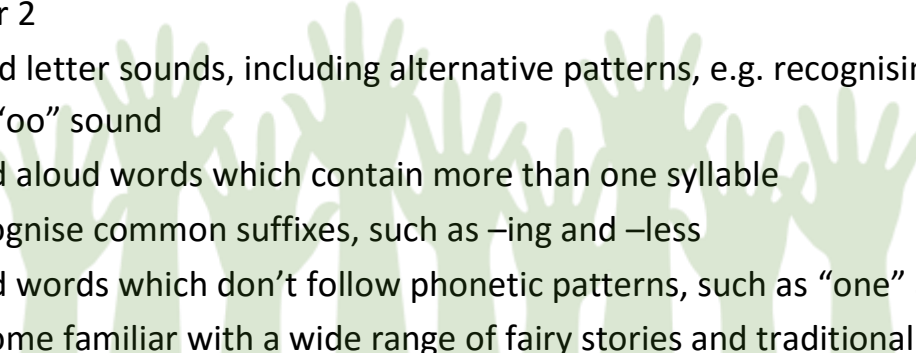
At the end of Year 2, all children will sit the National Curriculum Tests for Key Stage 1. These will include two short reading tests, a grammar and punctuation test, and a spelling test of ten words.

Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children’s spoken language skills develop. In Year 2 some focuses may include:

- Articulate and justify answers and opinions
- Give well-structured explanations and narratives, for example in show-and-tell activities

Reading Skills

- Read words aloud confidently, without obvious blending or rehearsal
 - Learn letter patterns so that decoding becomes fluent and secure by the end of Year 2
 - Blend letter sounds, including alternative patterns, e.g. recognising “ue” as the “oo” sound
 - Read aloud words which contain more than one syllable
 - Recognise common suffixes, such as –ing and –less
 - Read words which don’t follow phonetic patterns, such as “one” and “who”
 - Become familiar with a wide range of fairy stories and traditional tales
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- Discuss favourite words and the meaning of new words
- Check that what has been read makes sense, and self-correct reading where necessary
- Make predictions about what might happen next in a story

Children will be expected to read aloud books which are appropriate for their reading ability. During Year 2 their increasing knowledge of decoding should allow them to read a wide range of children's books.

Writing Skills

- Form letters of the appropriate size, using capital letters where appropriate
- Use appropriate spaces between words when writing
- Begin to use joins between letters where needed
- Spell longer words by breaking them into their sound parts
- Learn to spell some common homophones, recognising the difference between them
- Use the possessive apostrophe in simple phrases, such as "the boy's football"
- Write about real events and personal experiences
- Plan out writing in advance, including by writing down key words
- Re-read writing to check that it makes sense and to make corrections, including punctuation
- Use question marks, exclamation marks, apostrophes and commas in lists
- Use the present and past tenses correctly in writing
- Begin to write longer sentences by using conjunctions, such as "and", "but", "if" or 'because'

Homophones are words which sound the same, such as 'blue' and "blew", or "one" and "won"



English in Year 3 and Year 4

In lower Key Stage 2, your child will build on their work from KS1 to become more independent in both their reading and their writing. Most children will be confident at decoding most words – or will have extra support to help them to do so – and so now they will be able to use their reading to support their learning about other subjects.

They will begin to meet a wider range of writing contexts, including both fiction and non-fiction styles and genres.

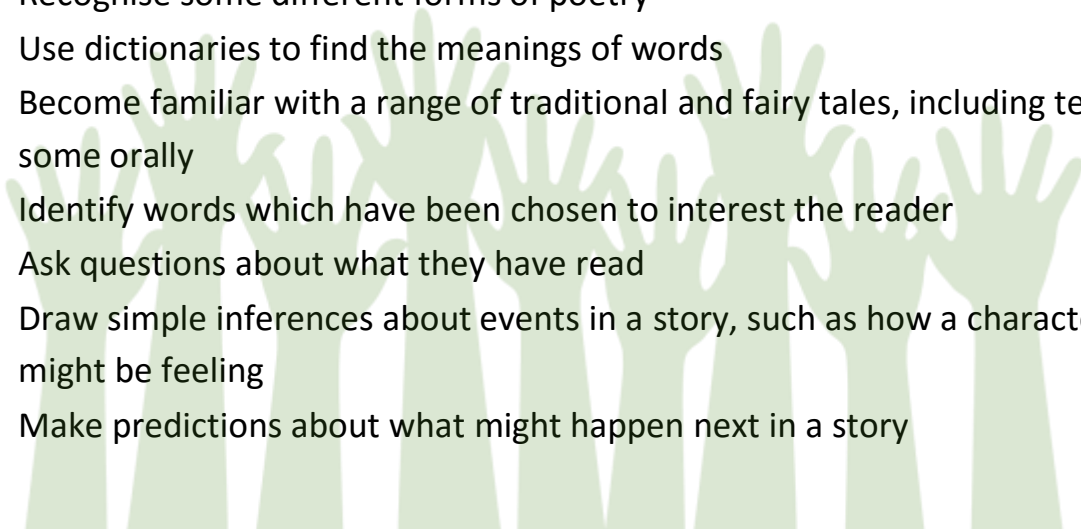
Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Years 3 and 4, some focuses may include:

- Use discussion and conversation to explore and speculate about new ideas
- Begin to recognise the need to use Standard English in some contexts
- Participation in performances, plays and debates
- Explain thinking and feeling in well-structured statements and responses

Reading skills

- Extend skills of decoding to tackle more complex words, including with unusual spelling patterns
- Read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and literary books
- Recognise some different forms of poetry
- Use dictionaries to find the meanings of words
- Become familiar with a range of traditional and fairy tales, including telling some orally
- Identify words which have been chosen to interest the reader
- Ask questions about what they have read
- Draw simple inferences about events in a story, such as how a character might be feeling
- Make predictions about what might happen next in a story



- Summarise ideas from several paragraphs of writing
- Find and record information from non-fiction texts
- Take part in discussions about reading and books

Children begin to identify how authors choose words for effect, for example by selecting 'wailed' instead of 'cried', or 'enraged' rather than 'cross'. They may begin to make such choices in their own writing, too.

Writing Skills

- Write with joined handwriting, making appropriate join choices
- Spell words that include prefixes and suffixes, such as anticlockwise
- Spell some commonly misspelt words correctly, taken from the Y3/4 list
- Use a dictionary to check spellings
- Use possessive apostrophes correctly in regular and irregular plurals, such as children's and boys'
- Use examples of writing to help them to structure their own similar texts
- Plan out sentences orally to select adventurous vocabulary
- Use paragraphs to organise ideas
- Use description and detail to develop characters and settings in story-writing
- Write interesting narratives in stories
- In non-fiction writing, use features such as sub-headings and bullet points
- Review their own work to make improvements, including editing for spelling errors
- Read others' writing and suggest possible improvements
- Read aloud work that they've written to be clearly understood
- Extend sentences using a wider range of conjunctions, including subordinating conjunctions
- Use the present perfect verb tense
- Use nouns and pronouns with care to avoid repetition
- Use conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to add detail about time or cause

- Use fronted adverbials
- Use direct speech, with correct punctuation

Young children have a tendency to repeat nouns or pronouns, leading to several sentences containing 'He' or 'They'. They can use alternatives to make writing more interesting. For example, alternatives for describing an individual character might include: he, the burglar, Mr Smith, John, the criminal, the villain, etc.

To add information to a sentence about its location, children might use conjunctions ("Although it was still early..."), adverbs ("Early that morning...") or prepositions ("At about six-thirty that morning..."). Often these techniques allow children to write more complex sentences.

Grammar Help

For many parents, the grammatical terminology used in schools may not be familiar.

Here are some useful reminders of some of the terms used:

Present perfect tense: a tense formed using the verb 'have' and a participle, to indicate that an action has been completed at an unspecified time, e.g. The girl has eaten her ice-cream

Fronted adverbial: a word or phrase which describes the time, place or manner of an action, which is placed at the start of the sentence, e.g. "Before breakfast,..." or "Carrying a heavy bag,..."

Direct speech: words quoted directly using inverted commas, as opposed to being reported in a sentence



English in Year 5 and Year 6

In upper Key Stage 2, your child will increasingly meet a wider range of texts and types of writing, and will be encouraged to use their skills in a broader range of contexts. Their knowledge of grammar will also increase as they prepare for the National Curriculum Tests to be taken in the summer term of Year 6.

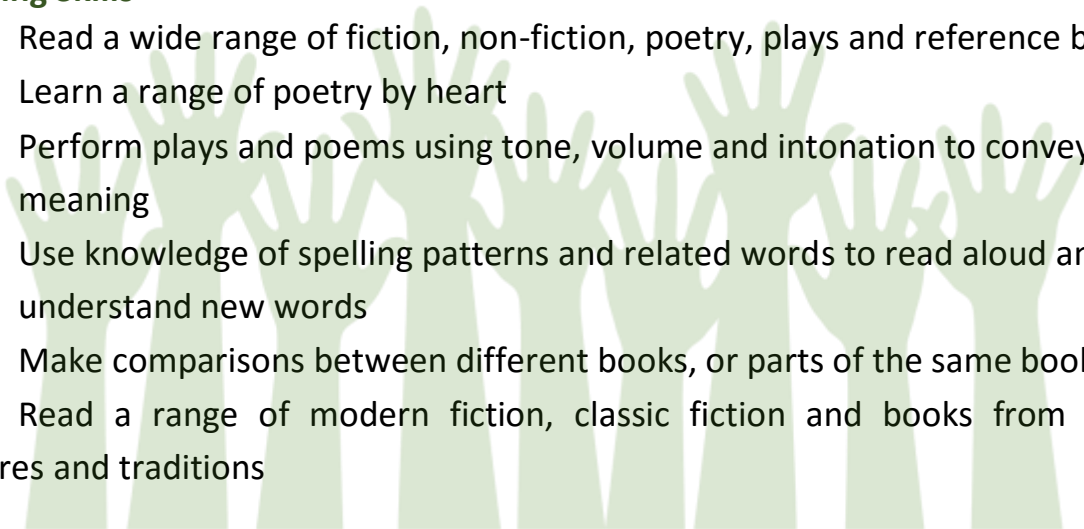
Year 6 children will take a reading test of about one hour, a grammar and punctuation test of about forty-five minutes, and a spelling test of twenty words. These will be sent away for marking, with the results coming back before the end of the year. Your child's teacher will also make an assessment of whether or not your child has reached the expected standard by the end of the Key Stage.

Speaking and Listening

- The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Years 5 and 6, some focuses may include:
 - Speak clearly in a range of contexts, using Standard English where appropriate
 - Monitor the reactions of listeners and react accordingly
 - Consider different viewpoints, listening to others and responding with relevant views
 - Use appropriate language, tone and vocabulary for different purposes

Reading Skills

- Read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays and reference books
- Learn a range of poetry by heart
- Perform plays and poems using tone, volume and intonation to convey meaning
- Use knowledge of spelling patterns and related words to read aloud and understand new words
- Make comparisons between different books, or parts of the same book
- Read a range of modern fiction, classic fiction and books from other cultures and traditions



- Identify and discuss themes and conventions across a wide range of writing
- Discuss understanding of texts, including exploring the meaning of words in context
- Ask questions to improve understanding of texts
- Summarise ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details
- Predict future events from details either written in a text or by 'reading between the lines'
- Identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- Discuss how authors use language, including figurative language, to affect the reader
- Make book recommendations, giving reasons for choices
- Participate in discussions about books, building on and challenging ideas
- Explain and discuss understanding of reading
- Participate in formal presentations and debates about reading
- Provide reasoned justifications for views

Figurative language includes metaphorical phrases such as 'raining cats and dogs' or 'an iron fist', as well as using language to convey meaning, for example by describing the Sun as 'gazing down' upon a scene.

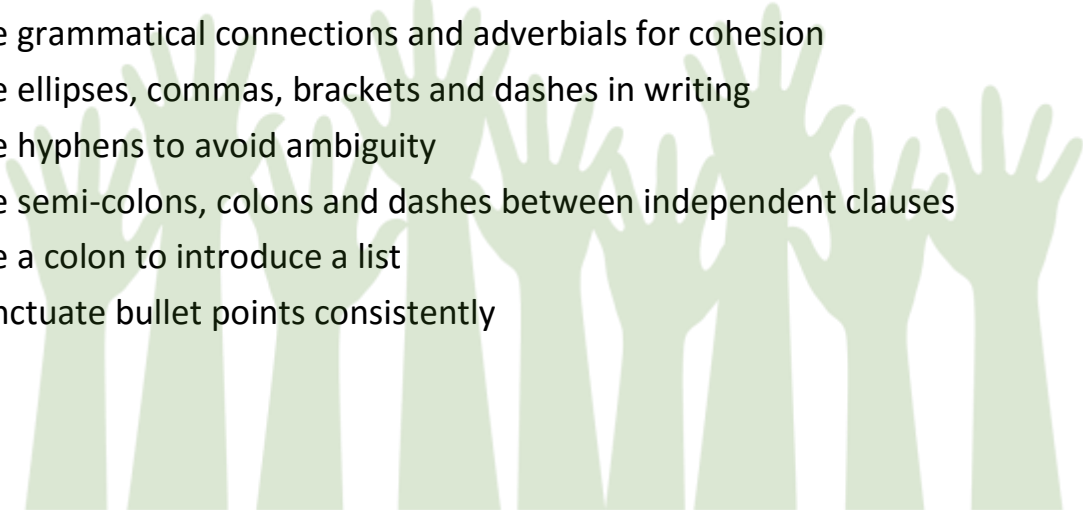
Themes & Conventions

As children's experience of a range of texts broadens, they may begin to notice conventions, such as the use of first person for diary-writing, or themes such as heroism or quests.



Writing Skills

- Write with increasing speed, maintaining legibility and style
- Spell some words with silent letters, such as knight and solemn
- Recognise and use spellings for homophones and other often-confused words from the Y5/6 list
- Use a dictionary to check spelling and meaning
- Identify the audience and purpose before writing, and adapt accordingly
- Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary to change or enhance meaning
- Develop setting, atmosphere and character, including through dialogue
- Write a summary of longer passages of writing
- Use a range of cohesive devices
- Use advanced organisational and presentational devices, such as bullet points
- Use the correct tense consistently throughout a piece of writing
- Ensure correct subject and verb agreement
- Perform compositions using appropriate intonation, volume and movement
- Use a thesaurus
- Use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
- Use modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility
- Use relative clauses
- Recognise vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal use
- Use passive verbs to affect the presentation of information
- Use the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause
- Recognise the difference in informal and formal language
- Use grammatical connections and adverbials for cohesion
- Use ellipses, commas, brackets and dashes in writing
- Use hyphens to avoid ambiguity
- Use semi-colons, colons and dashes between independent clauses
- Use a colon to introduce a list
- Punctuate bullet points consistently



Cohesive devices are words or phrases used to link different parts of writing together. These may be pronouns such as 'he' or 'it' to avoid repeating a name, or phrases such as 'After that...' or 'Meanwhile' to guide the reader through the text.

Grammar Help

For many parents, the grammatical terminology used in schools may not be familiar.

Here are some useful reminders of some of the terms used:

Noun phrase: a group of words which takes the place of a single noun.

Example: The big brown dog with the fluffy ears.

Modal verb: a verb that indicates possibility. These are often used alongside other verbs. Example: will, may, should, can.

Relative clause: a clause which adds extra information or detail.

Example: The boy who was holding the golden ticket won the prize.

Passive verb: a form of verb that implies an action being done to, rather than by, the subject.

Example: The boy was bitten by the dog.

Perfect form: a form of verb that implies that an action is completed.

Example: The boy has walked home.

