Kindness Courage Curiosity

Otford Primary School



English Policy

Autumn 2026

Next Review date: Autumn 2027

Otford Primary School English Policy (2026-2027)

"English has a pre-eminent 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."

Kindness	Courage	Curiosity
Care Share Include	Grow Try Persevere	Question Discover Explore

Policy updated: Autumn 2026
To be reviewed: Autumn 2027

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

At Otford Primary School, the purpose of education across all areas of the English curriculum is for all pupils to:

- *achieve the aims and expectations of the National Curriculum: Key Stages 1 and 2*

- *develop deep and creative engagement with language through reading, writing, speaking and listening*
- *become increasingly aware of wider cultures and diverse experiences through engagement with motivating and powerful texts*

ORGANISATION

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Speaking and listening are at the heart of all language development. At Otford, high quality classroom discussion is used to support pupils articulate their ideas, consolidate their understanding and extend their vocabulary.
We increase the quantity and quality of classroom talk by:

- Planning opportunities for dialogue into lessons including paired, group and class discussion
- Asking open ended questions which require pupils to explain, reason or argue
- Probing with follow-up questioning
- Encouraging children to ask their own questions
- Using drama activities to build confidence and deepen understanding
- Giving children opportunities to perform their own work through different means including presentation and recitals
- Creating a classroom culture that encourages dialogue

At Otford, we use a range of activities to support speaking and listening which include: Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing', collaborative learning, debate, hot seating, conscience alley, freeze framing, book talk, show and tell, play, reader's theatre and circle time.

READING

At Otford, reading is taught through a range of high-quality texts which stimulate children's curiosity, imagination and interest. We ensure that a diversity of backgrounds and experiences are represented within these texts and authors to ensure pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Children's reading needs are met through reading lessons (whole-class or guided group), weekly library visits, reading at home, daily independent reading and, where necessary, 1:1 reading sessions with an adult or individual/group reading interventions.

PHONICS

1. Teaching and Assessment

We aim to provide systematic phonics teaching using the 'Bug Club' phonics programme and the Phonic Book scheme of work to plan and resource phonics lessons in KS1 and KS2. Our approach in teaching phonics is multi-sensory, active and engaging. Children will learn to read all 44 graphemes and we will teach them strategies to remember the sounds and read tricky words. Children are encouraged and supported to apply their phonic skills in all other areas of the curriculum.

Lessons are streamed in each year group and are tailored to support individual needs. Formative assessment opportunities are integrated into phonics learning. Phonic progress is then assessed and tracked at the end of each term and recorded on Phonics Tracker (an online tracking tool) so that gaps are easily identified. Teachers track the sounds the children know from each 'phase' and the 'tricky' words that the children can read on sight. The teacher then uses this termly formative assessment to stream the children effectively in each class.

Children who still require phonics support in KS2 are tracked using the same assessment for KS1 in order to identify specific gaps that the children have. They are then supported through phonics teaching and practice within reading lessons or in specific phonics interventions.

2. Bug Club and Phonic Book Scheme

From September 2021 the school has been following Bug Club Phonics and the Phonic Books schemes. These programmes will be used for all children receiving phonics teaching and support in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, all classes will use the teaching overview of Bug Club Phonics to plan and deliver their phonics lessons on a daily basis. Phonics groups needing to revise particular sounds will use the appropriate lessons before moving on to the next sound following the Bug Club format online.

In Key Stage 2, children will be screened using the phonics tracker to diagnose unknown sounds- these sounds will be targeted in their reading and spelling to close their learning gaps. Formative assessment will be used regularly to revisit sounds taught in these interventions.

3. Supporting learning at home

Children take home 'Bug Club' reading book so that they continue to practise their recognition of tricky words and sounds that they have already learnt, and develop their reading comprehension skills (learning new vocabulary, making inferences, predicting, explaining, retrieving information and sequencing events). These books contain sounds that the child will have been explicitly taught within their phonic lessons. No child should come across a sound of a tricky word that they have not been taught.

HOME SCHOOL READING

The importance of reading at home with parents/carers is recognised and encouraged through children choosing levelled books and library books to take home, teachers monitoring home reading records, and parent workshops. Recommended reading lists are also communicated to parents.

Otford Reading Scheme

In Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6), the curriculum emphasis is predominantly on comprehension. Otford uses a mixed reading scheme, adhering to a colour-coded Book Bands system. The focus of this scheme is primarily to expand and challenge readers with subject content, genre and text type, suitable for their age and life experience. The scheme is made up of 'real', high quality books, which are stored in the classroom, and stickered with the colour book band and the year group they belong to. In this way, children are given the opportunity to choose their own books at the appropriate level. For children reading below the expectations of their own year group, teachers must ensure that a selection of the correct level books are made available **in class** for them to choose from.

The following chart is intended as a guide, although some children will progress at different speeds and may need additional support if their phonics knowledge is less secure.



Monitoring reading

Reading will be monitored using the following resources:-

- Target Tracker
- Comprehension papers – standardised reading ages (NTS papers used)
- Recorded observations during lessons and Guided Reading.
- Running records/ miscue analysis using the PM Benchmark Kit (available in the staffroom).
- Reading Record books and/or reading bookmarks.
- Reading Scheme Class Record Folders

All teachers should maintain a reading scheme class record folder, which contains a 'toolkit' of resources. Within each folder each child must have a record sheet detailing what books they have read and what book band level they are on. Class teachers must routinely check to ensure that children are reading widely and regularly. It is important to chase up those who have not changed a book in a reasonable amount of time, and if necessary, contact parents to ensure home reading is happening. Reading Record books must be checked and signed **at least once a week.**
When pupils have completed a book, teachers/ LPs will need to approve the changing of books and encourage next steps. Simple questioning about the book will suffice, using the following types of questions to assess fluency, comprehension and engagement:

- Can they summarise the general story?
- Can they discuss characters in the story?
- Can they read a brief passage from the book with expression?
- Can they read unfamiliar words and discuss meanings?

Reading Values

Reading and reading for pleasure is to be celebrated and promoted at Otford. Children should be encouraged to be *kind* readers by sharing books, promoting them and helping others to read. Children should feel empowered and have the *courage* to try new books, new authors and challenge themselves with their own reading. We want to inspire *curiosity* about the world around us and the people in it, and so we promote a diverse approach to reading, selecting books from a variety of genres, cultures and text types.

READING COMPREHENSION

KS1 Guided Reading

At Otford, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 (up until the Summer Term) are taught guided reading in groups.
Texts are selected based on their current phonics knowledge and reading level.
Each group works with a teacher at least once a week, reading and taking part in a discussion around the text in order to improve their fluency and comprehension.
In the following session, children respond to the book independently through a range of planned activities which could include book talk, roll on the wall and questioning.
Throughout the week, pupils are then provided with other opportunities to practice and consolidate their comprehension skills and vocabulary.
In order to develop children's love of reading, there is also a session in which children can read for pleasure.

KS2 Whole- Class Reading

At Otford, pupils in Years 3 to 6 will be taught using whole-class reading-Complete Comprehension as a resource to guide the teaching and learning of reading through engaging text passages from a range of genres, including high-quality contemporary fiction.

Complete Comprehension scheme is progressive and focusses on the explicit teaching and precise learning of the reading skills. Each unit is focussed on an engaging text extract, vocabulary study and reading skill. Power-points, text extracts, focussed questions and mix-up questions are pre-planned and guide the explicit teaching of reading and provide opportunities to model how to answer questions as well as independent rehearsal. The approach is based on the I do-we do-you do to model and scaffold the reading skill prior to independent exploration. Learning is recorded in Guided Reading Books and extracts are used to show active reading skills like highlighting key parts and skimming and scanning.

During the reading sessions, pupils are explicitly taught the focussed VIPERS skill:

- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Prediction
- Explanation
- Retrieval
- Sequence/Summarise.

WRITING

Shared, guided and independent writing

At Otford, we plan writing around rich, engaging texts and cross-curricular experiences.

We strive to foster the enjoyment of writing and recognition of its value. We use a variety of techniques to help with this, including some of the Talk for Writing approaches, as well as drawing upon the creative teaching ideas found in the Power of Reading teaching sequences.

Children are taught to consider the purpose of and audience for their writing. There are four main purposes of writing: to describe, to narrate, to inform, and to persuade. Pupils are taught to adapt their writing according to their audience, which includes selecting an appropriate form or genre.

In order to become effective writers, exemplar texts are used to explicitly teach the features and structures of different types of texts, punctuation and grammar. Children are given opportunities to collect vocabulary for writing and experiment with language and grammar structures to create a specific impact on their reader before using and applying them to longer pieces of writing. Where relevant, grammar may be taught discretely to reinforce particular concepts.

Pupils are encouraged to produce accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction, through planning (oral and written), drafting (individual, partners and groups), revising, editing their own and other's work and publishing when appropriate. Teachers explicitly teach and model each stage of this writing process, encouraging children to become more independent over time.

SPELLING

Spelling is taught following the Spelling Shed programme. Spelling patterns are actively taught each week, with spelling lists available on Spelling Shed for pupils to practise online at home. Pupils are also taught the words from the lists specific to each year group, for which there may be no specific spelling pattern. Spellings are revisited throughout the week in Daily Basics class teaching time.

HANDWRITING

At Otford, handwriting from EYFS-Year 4 is taught in discrete handwriting sessions, focussing on letter families and following the Nelson scheme. Children who require more support with their handwriting are taught specific skills within targeted groups. In Year 5 and Year 6 handwriting is taught as an intervention group, to those children who need. This also follows the Nelson scheme. Should the Year 5 and Year 6 teachers feel the whole class would benefit from handwriting input, they are able to do this.

Teachers observe and monitor how children are forming letters so that they can provide immediate feedback during handwriting practice sessions.

ENGLISH IN EYFS

In EYFS, children have daily phonics sessions with children split into ability groups. Handwriting practice takes place in small groups in early morning work. Interventions are focused on practising tricky words and phonics revision for children who do not yet know all Phase 2 sounds. From Term 3 onwards, key texts are taught every week, with vocabulary for storytelling and non-fiction.

ENGLISH ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

We are using a thematic approach to teaching English. Children will study a class text or texts linked to their termly theme which underpins learning across the curriculum. This gives children a breath of opportunities to hear, embed and use new language which is crucial for children's language development.
Children are encouraged to draw upon what they have learnt through their reading and apply their spelling, punctuation, grammar and written language skills to their writing across the curriculum in foundation subject areas.

ASSESSMENT & TARGETS

Children are assessed using Otford Primary School progression documents for reading and writing. Teachers assess pupils against the statements which are a more detailed breakdown of the National Curriculum statements and make a termly summative assessment of their progress. Pupil attainment is measured in year group bands, and are described as being below, at or above age-related expectations (ARE). Targets for pupil progress at KS1 and KS2 are based on a child's attainment at EYFS and KS1 respectively.

Spelling

Children in Year 2-6 sit tests in Term 2, 4 and 6 which cover all of the spelling patterns covered that term, including sections of the word lists for each year group which do not have a specific spelling pattern.

Reading

Children in Y1-6 sit NTS comprehension tests in Term 2, 4 and 6 to guide and moderate the assessments of the tracking grids. We use this information alongside ongoing assessment for learning, pupils' progress in guided and whole-class reading sessions and the independent work they produce in their reading journals.

Writing

There are no summative assessments for writing. Teachers track progress using the statement tracker for their year group, based on writing outcomes in children's books. Teachers use their professional judgement to determine whether or not a child is able to achieve the writing outcomes independently, or whether they have needed support to do so.

PUPIL FEEDBACK & MARKING

At Otford, we aim to deliver appropriately timed feedback that focuses on moving learning forward.

This may be given as purposeful verbal feedback at the point of learning or written feedback on longer pieces of writing using the school marking code. Teachers specifically plan opportunities throughout the week for children to receive and respond to feedback using purple editing pens and model how to do this effectively.

Children may also mark each other's work, using two stars and a wish to motivate and provoke deeper thinking on an objective.

We also want children to think about their own learning more explicitly by teaching them to monitor and evaluate their own progress and work. At the end of each unit, children are asked to reflect on their learning which is an important part of the metacognitive process.

HOME LEARNING

Children should read for 20 minutes at home each day with their parent, who should then sign their child's reading record to show that they have read. Parents should also support their child's home learning by practising the weekly spellings with them.

ROLE OF PHASE LEADER

- To promote the vision, culture and ethos of the school within English, in their phase.
- Ensure continuity and progression when pupils move year groups.
- Help staff with the planning and implementation of the English curriculum
- To lead staff to achieve high quality teaching, effective use of resources and the highest standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.
- To liaise effectively with senior colleagues to ensure consistency of approach in teaching and learning in English across the school.

CONCLUSION

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies.

- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Feedback and Marking
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- SEND
- Computing