

Hartford Junior School



English Policy

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English policy

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

We believe in bringing out the best in everyone.

We want all our children to be **curious, confident** learners who can **communicate** effectively through our bold and engaging curriculum.

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.

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.

School's vision for English and Literacy

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, chosen on their literary merit, aims to inspire a love of literature and a recognition of its relation to other subjects studied in school where appropriate. Our English lessons will teach children specific skills which are then embedded across the curriculum throughout the day.

Aims

At Hartford Junior 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.
- a confident grasp of transcription skills with the broader aim of producing automaticity in the writing process.

Objectives

At Hartford Junior 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 continue to develop children's 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.

Rationale

In English we provide for the language development of pupils and extend and build upon their ability to use language to think, explore, recognise and communicate their ideas.

We teach children specific oracy, reading and writing skills which are then embedded across the curriculum throughout the day.

Our aim is for our children to be literate so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others effectively.

We inspire our children to have a passion for reading. Our children will encounter a variety of rich texts, chosen on literary merit which are thought provoking and engaging.

We have chosen texts which:

- Enable pupils to encounter characters, situations and viewpoints that mirror their own.
- Share circumstances and settings with pupils where social, cultural backgrounds and values differ from their own.

Phonics & Interventions

At Hartford Junior School we use Hartford Infant and Preschool's systematic synthetic phonics programme to deliver phonics interventions where appropriate. This is a systematic synthetic phonics programme that suits the needs of our children. The scheme is taught through 6 stages, see Appendix 1 for further detail. Stage 1 supports the development of listening and speaking skills. Stage 2 - 5 is a systematic approach to phonics teaching and word recognition skills. Stage 6 focuses on word-specific spellings and the rules for spelling alternatives. By continuing the use of this scheme at Hartford Junior School, it provides consistency for pupils in their transition from Hartford Infant and Preschool. On entering the school in Year 3, all pupils are screened for phonics to create phonics groups. Where appropriate, pupils revise phonic sounds taught at Year 2 in the Autumn term of Year 3, to ensure they are ready to begin the Year 3 Spelling Shed programme by the Spring term.

Elsewhere in the school, pupils will receive bespoke phonics interventions if they are identified as having gaps/weaknesses with their word decoding ability. All pupils across the school are assessed in reading fluency in Autumn 1 as a diagnostic. Any pupils identified in being below the expected fluency rate will be further assessed to determine the root cause of their weaknesses. Children with a low fluency rate and a low comprehension of the text will undertake a reading fluency/comprehension intervention.

Transcription: Spelling

Alongside phonics we teach how to read and spell the year group specific Common Exception Words. 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 Junior 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. Children work their way through the Spelling Shed Steps which corresponds to the National Curriculum's English Appendix 1: Spelling document. The children are assigned a spelling shed task each week and are tested on those words weekly. They practise spelling the words using electronic devices or paper and pencil.

Reading Intervention

As above, if children have been identified as having weaknesses with the phonic decoding ability, they will receive a phonics intervention. Phonics assessments are carried out every 2 weeks to review children's progress and provision is adapted in response to this.

Daily 1:1 reading is put in place for all children where possible, especially for children who have been identified as being in the bottom 20%. The York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) or other suitable reading fluency or comprehension intervention is put in place for pupils who have been identified as having lower than expected rate of reading fluency. Reading fluency assessments are completed termly as a diagnostic to identify the lowest 20% and assess all of the children's reading fluency rate.

'Write Away Together' interventions are put in place for children who are working below age related expectations. The children's strengths in their writing is celebrated, with the aim of boosting their confidence whilst providing them with feedback so they can edit and improve their writing.

Reading at Hartford Junior School

On entering the Junior school, children in Year 3 review phonics learning as a supportive transition from the infant school. The children who did not pass the phonics screening check in Year 2 are monitored and can retake until they have passed this. Phonics groups are created to ensure that all pupils receive the correct provision suited to their needs.

All children have daily **Reading Recharged** lessons. This consists of opportunities for children to become familiar with reading domains, key vocabulary to be taught and specially chosen texts incorporating a range of diverse characters to meet the needs of our individual children.

The children read class novels. These novels are chosen on their literary merit and link to the writing outcomes at the end of each half term. Pupils can read individually, to be read to by the class teacher, in pairs or chorally as a group. The class novels have been chosen considering a range of genres, writing styles, character viewpoints and diversity.

Each half term children complete **STAR** reading assessments to determine an appropriate ZPD range, allowing them to choose a book suited to their reading level. Each time a child completes a book linked to the Accelerated Reader system they complete a short quiz to assess their understanding of the text. Teachers monitor and track their progress ensuring that they are choosing books within the appropriate range. Throughout Reading Recharged lessons, teachers continuously carry out AfL linked to the reading domains. At the beginning of each term children complete a Reading Fluency Assessment which identifies pupils who may have a particular weakness e.g. comprehension or phonics. Once identified, these children are assessed using YARC assessments or another suitable reading fluency/comprehension intervention assessment. If a child is working significantly below age related expectations, they will be assessed fortnightly using the Hartford Infant and Preschool Phonics Assessment grids.

Independent Reading

At Hartford Junior School we believe that children should master their reading. Children are provided with extensive opportunities to read independently throughout the school day. Through the **Accelerated Reader** system [AR], teachers track children's progress and assign them to a book that promotes progress.

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 reports.

In the case that a child's AR Level is at the lower end of the programme, we will use the Hartford Infant and Preschool's **Bug Club** programme. This uses the same book banding system established in the neighbouring Infant School and is carefully matched to the children's current phonics and reading stage. Once the teacher has ascertained the child's reading level, Bug Club supports them to develop their reading skills preparing them better to be introduced to AR at the appropriate time.

We promote a love of reading and encourage children to read at home using our **'Reading at Home' card**. The children are rewarded with house points, the more that they read and complete. They must write in the card when they read at home which keeps a track of the child's individual practice.

Book Club

As part of our weekly timetable, every class takes part in **Book Club**. Book Club allows opportunities for children (as well as teachers) to recommend good books that they have read with the aim of encouraging other readers to follow suit and read that book as well. Its main purpose is to promote a love of reading with the children, establishing it as something they can look forward to doing. Book Club might also be a time for the teacher to read part of a book or a child to read part of a book they have particularly enjoyed.

Reading areas

Every classroom at Hartford Junior School will have an inviting area to share books and stories. Books are displayed on a bookshelf, with some titles front facing (where children can see the front covers of the book). The books here will reflect the needs and interests of the class and will mostly be those books that have been promoted/read by the class teacher. Some of the books may also link to areas of the curriculum. Books will be displayed on the class 'reading trolley'.

Reading into Writing

In addition to Reading Recharged, 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. The class novels are chosen on their literary merit. 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. Throughout the writing unit, the children produce outcomes linked to the class novel.

Writing at Hartford Junior School

How do we teach writing?

Our approach to teaching writing covers the 'transcription' and 'composition' requirements of **The National Curriculum, Development Matters** and **PDJ/PIVATs** for SEND. To support our teaching of writing across the school, staff may 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. Lessons will incorporate Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar retrieval opportunities. 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 (available on our school website).

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,
- pre-teaching of key words from the Reading Recharged lessons.
- 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 Reception/ Key Stage 1 are working on PDJ/PIVATs and these documents are 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.

The four Oracy strands of Physical, Linguistic, Cognitive and Social and Emotional, are explicitly taught where possible and woven into our English and wider curriculum.

Handwriting

At Hartford Junior School we use the '**Letter join no lead font**' which aligns with Hartford Infant and Preschool, ensuring a smooth progression and development of children's handwriting skills. Since handwriting aids transcription, age related handwriting activities are planned for all year groups which is taught during 'English fluency' time.

Definitions of terms referred to in this policy:

CEWs – common exception words: words that do not follow the common phonetic spelling rules.

GPCs – grapheme phoneme correspondences:

Appendix 1

Phonics assessment

The phonics assessment is a **guide** and may differ according to individual children. For further information on **how we assess reading**, please see our Assessment Policy.

Hartford Infant and Preschool Phonics Stages

Stage	GPCs and spelling rules							
Stage 1								
Stage 2	s	a	t	p	i	n	m	o
	c	k	ck	h	b	f	ff	e
	u	r	l	ll	ss	w	x	y
	v	j	z	zz	qu			
Stage 3	ch	sh	th	ng	ee	or	igh	ai
	oa	ar	oo	oo	er	ur	ow	oi
	ear	air	ure					
Stage 4	Consonant clusters (those below are examples only and others may be covered)							
	ft	nd	st	lt	cr	tr	dr	tw
	st	sl	pt	sp	gl	nt	str	ps
	sk	lp	lf	scr	shr	thr	nch	fr
	nl	fl	gl	pl	cl	sm	pr	sc
sk								
Stage 5	ph	wh	ve	ay	ie	ou	ea	oy
	ue <small>(blue)</small>	ir	er <small>(unstressed)</small>	ore	aw	au	a-e	e-e
	i-e	o-e	u-e					
	Adding -s and -es to make plurals Adding suffixes (with no change to root word) -ing, -ed, -en, -est. Adding prefix un- Compound words Spelling words with ff, ll, ss, zz, ck after a short vowel							
	ow <small>(snow)</small>	oe <small>(toe)</small>	tch	ue <small>(rescue)</small>	ew <small>(screw)</small>	ew <small>(new)</small>	are <small>(bare)</small>	y <small>(very)</small>
	c <small>(cell)</small>	k <small>(skin)</small>	n <small>(bank trunk)</small>	ear <small>(pear)</small>	ea <small>(bread)</small>	ie <small>(chief)</small>		
Stage 6	ey <small>(they)</small>	eigh (eight)	ei (reindeer)	ey (donkey)	i (silent)	y (reply)	ough (thought)	o (program)
	ui (fruit)	ou (you)	u (unicorn)	ear (earth)	or (word)	augh (laugh)	a <small>(father)</small>	al (half)
	ear (heart)	are (are)	ough (thought)	oor (door)	our (four)	al (always)	ar (warm)	ore (more)
	ough (plough)	ge (cage)	dge (bridge)	ere (there)	ier (pier)	ere (here)	mb (thumb)	s making /z/ (usual)
	ch (chicken)	kn (knee)	gn (gnat)	o (mother)	tion (station)	ch (chef)	le <small>(table)</small>	se (cheese)
	ze (breeze)	sc (scent)	ce (cement)	ai (said)	wr (write)	al (metal)	el (camel)	a (wash)
Adding suffix -ed where consonant is doubled e.g. stopped Adding suffix -ing where e is dropped Adding suffixes -ful, -ly, -less, -ment Changing y to i and adding es; change f to v and add es. Adding prefix dis- Apostrophes for contractions Apostrophes for possession								