



Newnham Croft Primary School

Vision

At Newnham Croft our children are at the heart of everything that we do. We believe that Newnham Croft is a special place – caring and inclusive – where the guiding principles are teamwork and respect for all. Newnham Croft is an aspirational school, where learning is exciting, challenging and creative. We aim to foster a sense of self-belief and purpose in our children to equip them for the opportunities that life presents.

Reading, Phonics and English Policy 2023

Policy approved by the Teaching and Learning Governing Body Committee on: Date: 3 February 2023

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Introduction

At Newnham Croft Primary School, we believe that English is a fundamental life skill. English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations. We aim to provide an environment, which is rich in vocabulary that enables all of our children to be successful writers and foster a lifelong love of reading.

Our school aims and values are embedded in our teaching of English. In an environment, which values every individual and supports the development of independence, confidence and self-esteem we want to ensure children have the best possible skills in reading, writing and communicating. A variety of enrichment activities are used to enhance the teaching and learning of English. These can include themed days or weeks, outside speakers, educational visits, residential visits and visitors.

Teaching and learning

Our teaching in English enables the children to:

- become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- speak confidently, clearly and audibly and to take account of their listeners;
- listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- learn how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- become confident, effective communicators, both verbally and non-verbally, through a variety of activities, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings.
- be enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with evermore challenging and substantial texts;
- enjoy writing and to recognise its value;
- learn the skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation in order to liberate creativity;
- take care with their learning producing accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- take personal responsibility for the quality of their written work by supporting them in the improvement of planning, drafting and editing.

Curriculum Content

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study. Within the National Curriculum we teach children to speak confidently and to listen to others. We teach them to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. We do this within an 'integrated' approach, ensuring that children are able to apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Spoken Language and Listening

In the Foundation Stage, communication and language development is key to children's overall development and progress. We ensure that our teaching involves giving the children opportunities to engage with a rich language environment, developing their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and enabling them to speak and listen in a range of situations. We enable the children to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. We actively develop attentive listening and response. We ensure that children interact with others in play and to 'get things done'.

In Key Stage 1 we build on the children's speaking and listening experiences from the Foundation Stage. We teach children to speak clearly, thinking about the needs of their listeners. They work in small groups and as a class, joining in discussions and making relevant points. They also learn how to listen carefully to what other people are saying, so that they can remember the main points. They learn to use language in imaginative ways and express their ideas and feelings when working in role and in drama activities. Another skill practised is performing poetry.

In Key Stage 2 we build on the children's experiences of speaking and listening from Key Stage 1, teaching children how to speak in a range of contexts, adapting what they say and how they say it to the purpose and the audience. We enable them to take varied roles in groups, giving them opportunities to contribute to situations with different demands. Through an integrated approach we teach children to respond appropriately to others, thinking about what has been said and the language used. By the time the children leave Newnham, we aim for them to be able to speak to an audience independently for a range of purposes including: presentations, show and tell and drama.

Reading

Reading for Pleasure Intent Statement

Reading for pleasure is essential as English includes not just reading but speaking, listening and writing skills as well; it focuses mainly on the development and mechanics of these skills, whereas reading for pleasure focuses on individual choice and reading that is done primarily for enjoyment. Reading is a life skill something we all do everyday, it is not just a classroom activity.

Intent

It is important that children are motivated to read regularly; when their reading miles increase, so does their fluency and stamina which in turn increases their enjoyment of reading. Therefore, the link between children's motivation to read and reading for pleasure is reciprocal. Furthermore, we know that reading pleasure is beneficial not only for not only reading outcomes, but for wider learning enjoyment and mental wellbeing. Thus, we work hard to foster a love of independent reading and build communities of engaged readers.

We believe that reading for pleasure should be a fundamental part of childhood and life-long learning:

- Children deserve a rich curriculum which encourages extensive reading of whole books and other kinds of texts.
- The active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core part of every child's educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment.
- Extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to children's educational achievement.
- Children are encouraged to read texts which reflect the heritage of minor ethnic groups.
- Children are allowed to explore and engage with texts in their native language, whatever that might be.
- All children should have access to a wide range of texts in different formats and genres and support in enjoying them where necessary.

We will support and encourage children to read for pleasure. They may chose to read fiction, nonfiction, poetry, picture books, the same book over and over, comics, magazines and so on. At school we teach the skills required for reading - decoding (using a variety of strategies, including phonics) and comprehension. However school reading should not only be seen as synonymous with 'work' as this can cause children to become turned off from books and reading.

Phonics and Early Reading

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Newnham Croft Primary School we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression*, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Newnham Croft we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Newnham Croft we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins as soon as the children attend on a full-time basis in the autumn term.
- We follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace. (From September 2023)
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading. (From September 2023)

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'.
 - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - decoding
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.
- In Years 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books. (from September 2023)

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books with parents through workshops, leaflets and the [Everybody read!](#) resources.

- We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ensuring reading for pleasure (also see the Newnham Croft Primary School Reading for Pleasure Intent Statement)

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Newnham Croft Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records when their child has read and reading certificates are given for motivation for every 50 reading sessions.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Visits to the public library are also organised and membership facilitated.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at selected times. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).
- We use the Everybody read! resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.
- A display board with reading recommendations from the full range of staff and pupils is displayed centrally. The board was designed by the pupils, for the pupils. There is a display of new books in the library for pupils to see and use.
- Reading assemblies take place each week and include the reading of books as well as recommendations.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support

- weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** for Reception and Year 1 is used:
 - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.
- **Fluency assessments** measure children’s accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
 - in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
 - with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
 - to assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to ready any more fully decodable books.
- A **placement assessment** is used:
 - with any child new to the school in Reception and Year 1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- The **Rapid Catch-up assessment** is used
 - with any child new to the school in Year 2 and above to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching. (From September 2023)

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-up in Years 2 to 6 (From September 2023)

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - the Rapid Catch-up initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching
 - the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching
 - the Rapid Catch-up fluency assessments when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books for age 7+.
- The fluency assessments measure children’s accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the Rapid Catch-up programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.

Reading throughout the school

In the Foundation Stage Literacy development involves the encouragement of children to link sounds and letters to begin to read. Our teaching ensures that children are given access to a wide range of reading materials in order to ignite their interest. We teach the children using Little Wandle, which is a structured phonics approach which develops their knowledge of initial and final sounds together with short vowels sounds in words. We develop their recognition of familiar words. We use stories, poems and a range of other texts in our teaching.

During the Foundation stage and KS1, the school aims to use the banded books incorporating the Big Cats Collins series which supports the teaching of Little Wandle. Children are also encouraged to use books from the library and read in their home languages.

In Key Stage 1 we build on the children's reading experiences from Foundation Stage. We develop the children's interest and pleasure in reading within a context where children are taught to read confidently and independently. We teach the children through a phonics approach, focusing on words and sentences and how they fit into whole texts. Children are enabled to work out the meaning of texts and are learning to articulate their comprehension.

In Key Stage 2 we build on the children's experiences of reading in Key Stage 1, continuing to encourage them to read enthusiastically a range of materials and to use their knowledge of words, sentences and texts to understand and respond to meaning. We continue to focus on higher order reading skills such as deduction and inference. Through a whole text approach we increase children's abilities to read challenging and lengthy texts independently. We support their abilities to reflect on the meanings of texts, analysing and discussing them within group contexts. Reading across the school is taught through daily English lessons and guided/whole class reading.

Reading at home is regarded as an important part of reading development. Reception, KS1 and Year 3 children and parents are encouraged to respond to the books they are reading at home using reading logs diaries.

We hope that our children will develop a love of reading and use what they read to develop their writing.

Writing

In the Foundation Stage, Literacy development involves the encouragement of children to link sounds and letters to begin to write. We use a variety of texts to support children's abilities to differentiate between print and pictures. We teach children about the connections between speech and writing. We develop their knowledge and understanding of the symbolic nature of writing, the sounds and names of letters and how to write them and value the importance of emergent writing for their own purposes.

In Key Stage 1, we build on the children's writing experiences from the Foundation Stage. We develop the children's writing skills so that they are able to write independently, enjoying communicating through the written word and understanding the value of writing. We give them opportunities to develop their skills in writing narrative and non-fiction texts. We teach the children to spell and use initial punctuation correctly to create a variety of sentences. We teach them to write neatly using our chosen handwriting scheme.

In Key Stage 2, we build on the children's writing experiences from Key Stage 1. We develop the children's understanding that writing is essential to thinking and learning as well as being enjoyable in its own right. We explore how the English language can be used to express meaning in different ways. We teach the processes of planning, drafting and editing to improve their work and to sustain their fiction and non-fiction writing.

We cater for a range of teaching and learning styles by delivering lessons and modelling writing in a variety of ways. We encourage children to develop the ability to work collaboratively in pairs and groups. Children are also given choice and are encouraged to challenge themselves with their writing.

Handwriting Guidance

At Newnham Croft Primary we are following the Letterjoin handwriting scheme. An important element of the new National Curriculum is the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.

When teaching handwriting we aim to help our children to:

- Develop fine motor control
- Develop letter shapes using gross motor movements
- Develop a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style

When teaching handwriting:

- 1) A common cursive style will be introduced and developed from an initial print style (Letterjoin) to a fluent joined style using the teaching resources from Letterjoin.
- 2) Capital letters will initially be taught in context e.g. own name, address, etc.
- 3) In KS1 handwriting should be taught once a week and practised daily and in KS2 Handwriting should be taught at least once a week, with children being given opportunities for reinforcement, ideally 2 times per week.
- 4) A variety of writing implements should be available to children (pencil grip in KS1 if needed)
Including handwriting pens being introduced from year 3/4 where appropriate.
- 5) The school agreed alphabet style of upper and lower case letters is found in the Letterjoin resources for each year group.
- 6) Pupils with special educational needs or/and disabilities linked to handwriting will have the necessary support.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Curriculum Teaching

English is timetabled and taught as a discrete subject at Newnham Croft Primary School, however this subject is inherently cross-curricular and opportunities for teaching and applying knowledge and skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing are built into planning across the curriculum.

Children are given opportunities to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Purposeful role-play is used to develop language and imagination. Children are given opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, songs, poetry and books. An environment is provided which reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books. Children are provided with opportunities to see adults writing and they can experiment with writing themselves.

Speaking and listening activities are embedded throughout the Curriculum. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and individual word banks. Staff provide balanced and varied learning opportunities within the classroom. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the Curriculum.

Inclusion

Our aim is that all children will be challenged and motivated by differentiation of materials and tasks. The class teacher will also aim to identify those children who may benefit from additional learning opportunities in English.

Children identified as having Special Educational Needs may need greater differentiation of materials and tasks consistent with that child's I.E.P.

Children for whom English is an additional language receive support from class teaching assistants and the schools EAL Teaching assistant who work in collaboration with the class teacher to develop English language and so ensure full access to the curriculum. Technology is also used to support children who are acquiring English as an additional language.