



White Meadows Primary Academy

English Policy

Background and Aims

At White Meadows, we recognise the vital need for children to be confident, creative readers and writers who develop an enjoyment of the subject and a desire to develop their skills post primary school.

As a school, we have the following aims for the learning of reading and writing for all children:

- Developing fluency in reading, including the ability to decode, comprehend and infer meaning from a wide variety of genres
- Be confident and accurate with their use of grammar
- Use a variety of techniques to ensure accurate spelling
- Use fluid and legible styles of handwriting
- Write creative, interesting and well-structured texts for a variety of genres and audiences
- Be exposed to and enjoy high quality texts
- Have positive attitudes towards both reading and writing

Schemes of Learning and Mastery

Read Write Inc.

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics programme. They progress onto domain based comprehension lessons once they can read with accuracy and speed.

The programme is for pupils from Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write. We also use it for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly as an intervention strategy. For our Nursery children, we use pre-phonics activities to support the basic foundations of reading and writing.

Using Read Write Inc. Phonics allows pupils to:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read

- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire good handwriting

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively in 'buddy pairs' to explain and consolidate their learning. This provides teachers with opportunities to assess understanding and identify difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation or problems with blending and knowledge of the alphabetic code.

In Reception, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils quickly learn the sounds and the letters or groups of letters needed to represent them. Simple mnemonics aid in their rapid comprehension, which is particularly beneficial for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated on a daily basis, with pupils practising reading high-frequency words with irregular spellings—known as common exception words.

The children are assessed and grouped in small cohorts according to their ability. At the end of each half-term, the children are reassessed to ensure they have made progress, and they will be regrouped accordingly.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher support their increasingly fluent decoding.

Once children complete the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, they are taught within their year group using a whole-class, domain-based approach to further develop their comprehension skills. This method integrates reading, writing, thinking, and spoken language across all activities to ensure the daily progression of children's comprehension and broader literacy skills. They will also gain access to the Accelerated Reader programme, which tests children to provide an accurate reading level, known as their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and allows them to take quizzes each time they complete a book. Please see below for further details on Accelerated Reader.

Guided Reading (previously called Reading Workshop)

We have chosen to employ the six strands of the Reach2 'Great Reading Strategy' to ensure that coverage of reading across the whole school is prioritised and all children enjoy reading; becoming lifelong readers.



6 Strands of 'Great Reading Strategy' 1

In Key Stage 2, Guided Reading lessons are utilised throughout the week to develop reading skills. This method incorporates a blend of dialogic approach, independent reading tasks and group reading activities with a teacher or teaching assistant, typically conducted through a whole-class, domain-based approach. Additionally, designated 'reading for pleasure' time is allocated to enhance enjoyment of reading and to supplement the requirements for Accelerated Reader.

Spelling

For Reception to Year 2, Read Write Inc allows the children to spell effortlessly so that they can put their energy into working out what they want to write. When using 'Read Write Inc' to write the children will:

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- Learn to write the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds (graphemes)
- Learn to write words by sounding them out and then writing the corresponding graphemes
- Learn to write simple and then increasingly complex sentences
- Compose a range of texts using discussion prompts
- Compose stories based on picture strips

From Year 3, students are supported and taught multiple techniques to gain independence in learning spellings. These are based on National Curriculum 2014 age-related spelling schemes.

Spellings are also supported in a manner of other ways too:

- Visual display of key words linked to topics and subjects, especially on working walls
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses independently in class to correct and enhance words
- Using texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Targeted one to one/small group support where appropriate
- Student use of 'vocab book' or 'vocab walls' to independently try to write a word before investigating
- Teacher will recognise 'some' of the important spelling mistakes that a student may make in their English and Independent Writing book
- Student response to marking outlines that students will write out chosen corrections to practice correct spelling structure

Writing

At White Meadows, we strive to provide as many opportunities to write as possible. We aim to meet the expectations set out by the National Curriculum 2014, which include the ability to appropriately write: to use correct spelling and punctuation, adhere to grammatical conventions, and write for a wide range of purposes.

We utilise the 2014 National Curriculum alongside a White Meadows specific learning journey for writing, which has been carefully structured to engage young writers through an 'I do', 'We do', 'You do' approach. This method also allows for more time to learn how to 'read as a writer', with the goal of enabling pupils to 'write as a reader' in the published piece at the end of the journey.

We have recently embedded a **sentence strategy approach** in all English lessons - across the whole school, which reinforces important writing skills through explicit and repetitive instruction. This will enhance grammar and transcription skills and ultimately foster a more purposeful writing technique throughout the entire school.

We also support the students in many ways to achieve including:

- 'Do time' for mark making in Reception, as well as fun fine and gross motor skills activities
- Valuing children's writing at all stages
- Providing real opportunities for writing across all subjects
- Highly effective modelling of writing processes from teacher
- Opportunities for collaborative writing, especially when following the White Meadows Learning Journey and elements of 'Talk for Writing'
- Writing frames to assist where appropriate
- Teach grammar as a separate lesson where necessary
- Encourage and promote 'talk for writing' (See below)
- Providing time for planning, editing and revising
- Marking extended pieces of writing, especially Independent Writing, and set targets with the pupil

- Use Learning Intention checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught from as soon as the children begin in Nursery, where firm foundations are made for each child, along with strengthening fine motor skills. Each year group from Nursery to Year 2 will be taught focussed handwriting daily.

We use the Nelson handwriting scheme, which is recommended to complement the Read Write Inc. scheme. In Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and specific children in Year 2, there will also be activities that support fine motor skill teaching. The expectation for progression in handwriting is as follows:

- Nursery - To hold a pencil using pincer grasp.
To begin to form letters.
- Reception- To correctly form lowercase letters.
To begin to understand how letters are joined and start joining when ready.
To be immersed in different writing styles, enabling children to recognise both upper and lowercase letters in a range of fonts.
- Year 1- To correctly form uppercase letters.
Begin to form letters of the same size using joined letters.
- Year 2-Encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed.
To use upper and lowercase letters in the correct place.

Explicit writing techniques

We utilise many of the key components of Talk for Writing within our personalised school Learning Journey. Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the essential language needed for a particular topic orally before they

attempt to read and analyse it. Through engaging activities that help them rehearse the rhythm of the language required, followed by shared writing to demonstrate how to craft their writing, children are guided to write in the same style. We have adopted this approach, which has not only increased children's progress but has also been well received by both children and teachers.

The process follows three key phases: Imitation, Innovation, and Invention. During the imitation phase, children learn a model text, supported visually by a text map and accompanied by physical movements. They hear the text and articulate it themselves before seeing it written down.

Once the children are familiar with the text, they 'read it as a reader.' This involves in-depth discussions around the text, with a strong emphasis on vocabulary and oral comprehension. They are encouraged to express their opinions on their likes and dislikes regarding the text to enhance their own writing skills.

The next stage is 'read as a writer,' which involves identifying the underlying patterns of both the overall organisation and the ways in which the writer creates different effects. The text is 'boxed up' (broken down into key sections) to make the structure evident, allowing it to serve as a basic planner.

Once the children have internalised the text, they are ready to start innovating. Younger children and less confident writers modify their text maps and orally rehearse what they wish to express. More confident writers utilise the boxing-up planning tool before transforming their plan into written work. At this stage, teaching is focused on generating ideas and crafting composition. Finally, children move into invention where they write the text type independently and apply what they have learnt across the curriculum. Several 'inventions' are written and the most successful edited for publishing.

Accelerated Reader (AR)

We utilise the Accelerated Reader scheme to ensure that pupils develop their reading skills most effectively. This often occurs when they engage with appropriately challenging books. Through this scheme, students take the STAR Reader test online during designated testing windows throughout the year to determine an appropriate reading range, known as their 'Zone of Proximal

Development' (ZPD). As pupils are retested, their ZPD ranges expand to ensure they continue to engage with suitably challenging literature.

Once a child has read an appropriate book, they can take a quiz to assess their comprehension of the text. By passing this quiz, the student earns an allocation of words that are recorded in their profile.

The Accelerated Reader (AR) scheme provides our teachers with additional information to monitor students' reading practices and make informed decisions to guide their future learning. It also incorporates a reward system that acknowledges the child's reading achievements by recognising word counts and quizzes passed, among other elements.

A comprehensive set of reports reveals how much a student has been reading, the level of complexity of the texts, and how well they have understood what they have read. Additionally, vocabulary growth and literacy skills are measured, giving teachers insight into how effectively students have engaged with reading schemes and class instruction.

This has been found to be a great scheme to encourage children to read further for pleasure. We will create inter-class competition, individual prizes to celebrate those that have achieved in this scheme.

Weekly English Structure

In Foundation Stage and KS1, phonics teaching occurs everyday for 50 minutes at 9am, using the Read, Write, Inc. scheme of work. Pupils who have not secured their phonic understanding by the end of Y2 will continue to have phonic specific teaching throughout Y3, according to need. KS2 use reading lessons and guided reading to develop comprehension and inference understanding.

Dedicated grammar sessions occur in each year group, with the expectation that the pupils are then able to apply this in their work.

White Meadows employs researched techniques to explicitly teach the required spellings outlined in the National Curriculum, which specifies spelling expectations by year group. These expectations are aligned with national standards. Spelling practice occurs daily, with explicit teaching from the

teacher as directed in the school's progression documents, determined respectively to be appropriate for the children's stage of development.

Planning and Teaching

Lesson planning is conducted by class teachers under the supervision of year group leaders and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Sequences of lessons will generally follow the 'WM Learning Journey' and should be flexible enough to respond to the needs of the children; lessons must be adjusted to take this into account.

Working walls are utilised in every classroom to support the children's learning. These evolve over the course of lessons and are not intended to be merely decorative displays. Key vocabulary, images, modelling, and pupil explanations are all included to enhance understanding of writing. Working walls serve as part of the resource bank within the classroom and help to develop pupils into independent learners. Thesauruses and dictionaries are available in every classroom to support vocabulary and spelling development.

Marking and Assessment

Children should be involved in the marking of their work wherever possible, providing opportunities for them to reflect on feedback left by a teacher, particularly if there is a misconception. This feedback may take the form of questions designed to extend the children's understanding and encourage them to think critically about their work. Peer marking (in purple pen) is also implemented across the school, with children being taught how to act as critical friends to their peers. Each day, time is allocated for pupils to respond to both teacher and peer comments. There is an expectation that all work is reviewed by the teacher and acknowledged with at least a tick in green pen.

Attainment and progress data for reading and writing are recorded regularly on Sonar, the school's data tracking system. This data is often triangulated using

various methods, including standardised testing, Accelerated Reader (AR) testing, and other teacher assessments. SAT tests are administered for children to take at the end of Year Six.

Presentation

Children must be held to high expectations regarding the presentation of their work and taught to take pride in their learning. Every piece of work should include a date (in the top left-hand corner of the page) and a title (centred on the second line), both of which should be underlined using a ruler. Learning intentions and success criteria for a scheme of work may also be accurately cut and pasted in, to be referred to throughout the learning journey. For some continuous pieces of work (such as extended pieces in Years 5 and 6), a short date in the margin after the initial date and title will suffice.

When children make an error, a horizontal pencil line should be used with a ruler to cross out the unwanted writing. The expectation is that pupils will have developed their handwriting to a level where they can use a pen by the end of Year 2. However, for those pupils who find this more challenging, additional support with pencil handwriting will be provided in the form of interventions to help them reach this standard. Presentation issues should be addressed, either verbally or during written marking.

Evaluation and Monitoring

High quality writing and reading will be maintained through the following monitoring procedures:

- Lesson observations
- Book looks
- Planning monitoring and discussion
- Learning walks
- Data analysis

Teachers will be given appropriate feedback if any actions are required to maintain consistency and quality of learning. Staff development meetings will also be used to disseminate up-to-date developments in best practice reading

and writing teaching and the English lead will look for appropriate CPD to help develop staff confidence and competence in the teaching of mathematics.

Equal Opportunities

English at White Meadows is taught so that all pupils can succeed.

- Our expectations do not limit pupil achievement
- Targets are set with each individual pupil's next steps at the forefront
- Children are challenged and extended to increase their need for independent thinking
- Interventions take into account the level of understanding of the child and help them to develop appropriately