



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

English Policy

Person Responsible:	English Subject Leaders
Date Adopted:	Summer Term 2023
Date of last review:	Summer Term 2026
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2029

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the agreed expectations for the provision of English at The Hermitage Schools.

The English Policy has a central role within the school's curriculum and should be referred to by all members of the school community to ensure consistency.

This policy covers the following areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

RATIONALE

English is at the center of our curriculum, and we are committed to providing a consistent, whole school approach to raising standards in English across all subject areas.

AIMS

We aim to fulfil all requirements of the National Curriculum (2014) and The Writing Framework (2025) to ensure that children can:

- Communicate effectively through clear, confident spoken language.
- Enjoy and appreciate a wide range of literature within a rich and stimulating reading environment.
- Develop strong phonological awareness so they can read accurately, fluently and with increasing independence.
- Acquire and apply a broad and ambitious vocabulary drawn from across the curriculum.
- Read a variety of texts confidently, critically and with understanding.
- Write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leave primary school meeting, and where possible exceeding, national expectations.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Children's language acquisition and the development of effective speaking and listening skills are vital to their success across all areas of school and home life. To support this, we ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their oracy skills throughout the school day. We do this by:

- Using the Oracy Framework to support children in developing the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social–emotional skills needed for successful discussion, confident speech, and effective communication.
- Maintaining high expectations of staff to model accurate spoken language and introduce rich vocabulary.
- Embedding partner talk and explicit oracy skills within Guided Reading sessions (including Read Write Inc (RWI) and Destination Reader).
- Using ‘Language Stems’ to encourage children to speak in full, well-structured sentences.
- Drawing on core texts to promote discussion and exploration through talk for reading strategies, such as drama, role play, and collaborative dialogue.
- Providing opportunities for performance, enabling children to present, speak, and perform confidently in front of an audience.

READING EYFS AND KS1

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Within our EYFS we build the foundations for children’s reading through teaching phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the foundation for reading. It develops children’s ability to be able to recognise and work with the sounds of spoken language.

Activities include:

- Picking out words that rhyme
- Being exposed to and joining in with rhythm and rhyme
- Identifying syllables in a word through counting, clapping etc.
- Noticing sound repetition (“Susie sold six salami sandwiches”)
- Being aware of the individual sounds in a word

PHONICS

Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics is used to teach all children their Phonic knowledge and skills. Through RWI, we aim for all children to:

- Reach the expected standard of the phonics screening check.
- Develop reading fluency and read with comprehension.
- Develop co-operative behaviour and articulate their ideas and understanding.
- Spell and write with confidence.

Phonics is taught through daily lessons in Reception, Year 1 and, if required, in Year 2. Children are grouped based on their RWI assessments and 1:1 coaching takes place for the lowest 20%.

GUIDED READING

We continue to use RWI Phonics to support children with Guided Reading. The children read a book over 4 days within their Guided Reading lessons and then take the same book home along with a book bag book to read. The children will participate in whole class reads, paired reading and comprehension questions.

In Year 2, children who have completed the RWI Phonics scheme will move to daily reading lessons based on Destination Reader. The key Destination Reader principles are: creating a quality experience; promoting enjoyment; increasing reading mileage; building firm foundations; developing thinking and understanding; making talk more central.

READING – KS2

PHONICS

Whilst we expect that all children will be able to use phonics to read, we appreciate that there may be some children who need additional attention. There may also be areas of difficulty to focus on for a whole year group.

To ensure that we fill any gaps in knowledge we will ensure that:

- RWInc Phonics is used as an intervention (see Intervention Policy).
- We teach additional phonics knowledge as and when necessary, during English lesson starters.
- We hear these pupils read regularly and work with them weekly on phonics.
- Children who did not pass their phonics screening by the time they enter Year 3 will be prioritised for interventions.

DESTINATION READER

Daily whole class reading lessons are based on the key Destination Reader principles: creating a quality experience; promoting enjoyment; increasing reading mileage; building firm foundations; developing thinking and understanding; making talk more central.

Destination Reader teaches the key reading strategies: predicting, inferring, asking questions, evaluating, clarifying, making connections and summarising. Our reading lessons involve whole class teaching, independent reading and a celebration/evaluation of progress towards developing the reading strategies. Teachers model the key strategy using Think Aloud and there is plenty of time for the children to practise the strategy through paired or independent reading.

Throughout the week, children focus on their core text, reading as pairs, applying skills to a variety of texts including unseen texts and completing a written comprehension.

Destination Reader encourages children to be independent with adults facilitating the learning. Clear modelling of the strategy, in addition to partner practice at the beginning of each lesson, supports the children in feeling confident to practise the strategies during the independent sessions.

READING FOR PLEASURE

At both The Hermitage Schools, we have dedicated libraries for the children to visit weekly, as well as book areas within all classrooms, so children are able to absorb themselves in books. We strive to encourage children to read for pleasure to benefit not only their reading attainment and writing ability, but also develop their comprehension and grammar, and their breadth of vocabulary. Studies have shown that positive reading attitudes give children greater self-confidence, general knowledge, a better understanding of other cultures, increase community participation and a greater insight into human nature and decision-making.

ASSESSMENT FOR READING

Each child, on entering the schools, will be assessed according to their reading ability. Once assessment has been made, children will be allocated an appropriate level banded book. At The Hermitage Junior School, once children are confident and fluent with a reading age of above 12, they then make their own reading choices from the library and class bookshelves. At The Hermitage Infant school, children who are completing the phonics scheme will have half termly assessments and be allocated phonics groups. Children who have left phonics will be assessed by class teachers and appropriate books sent home.

All children are expected to read five times a week at home and have this recorded in a reading record book. Parents are actively encouraged to listen to their children read and sign their reading record book at least once a week.

We have a fully stocked library, and children are actively encouraged to visit it on a regular basis. The Hermitage Infant School has volunteer librarians who support the children in finding new books and signing them in and out. The Hermitage Junior School's computerised system allows children to sign books in and out independently. Our aim is to nurture children's love of reading.

A key focus for us, as teachers, is to prioritise the bottom 20% of readers. Our aim is to close the gap between those children and their peers. Members of the outside community volunteer each week to hear priority readers as a way of motivating and supporting our children.

WRITING

TRANSCRIPTION

Children are taught to form letters correctly using *Letter-join*, our whole school handwriting scheme. This supports their understanding of the different handwriting 'families'—groups of letters that are formed using similar movements. Pupils take part in daily handwriting lessons, with a strong focus on correct posture and pencil grip so that they are always *Ready to Write*. Handwriting begins with print in Reception and develops progressively through the schools towards a fully cursive style. For further details, please refer to our Handwriting and Presentation Policy.

COMPOSITION

All children are writers, and it is essential that they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their writing skills. While we recognise the importance of high standards in spelling, grammar and punctuation, we also ensure that pupils are able to write confidently across a variety of genres. To promote engagement and purpose in writing, we teach through a Core Text approach.

To secure high quality teaching and learning, teachers model writing strategies through whole class demonstrations, guided writing sessions, and individual modelling. Each half term, teachers plan a sequence of rich writing experiences across both fiction and nonfiction. Throughout these units, children are encouraged to use ambitious vocabulary, high quality texts, and a range of sentence structures (including Alan Peat sentence types) to support their development as effective and expressive writers.

WRITING - EYFS

Our emphasis in Early Years is on building strong foundations for writing by developing the skills children need for both transcription and composition. We want to ensure children get off to the best possible start, giving them the greatest chance of later success in writing. Children have access to a wide range of writing opportunities within their learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. Play and active learning are essential to children's development, helping them build confidence, improve personal development and their communication and language as they explore, solve problems, and relate to others. Children learn effectively through leading their own learning, which is facilitated and extended by adults. They take part in RWI Phonics, targeted handwriting to develop pencil grip and correct letter formation and 'Drawing Club', an adult-guided approach, to further support early language and writing development.

WRITING – KS1

SPELLING, GRAMMER AND PUNCTUATION

Common Exception Words (CEW) are organised into themed 'streets', which are then grouped into larger 'houses'. The blue street contains eight spelling houses for Year 1 CEWs, and the red street contains eight spelling houses for Year 2 CEWs. Teachers introduce individual houses according to each child's stage of learning. These houses are displayed in classrooms to support children in applying them during writing. Parents and carers can also access the CEW houses through Seesaw, topic webs, and the school website.

Once children are secure in their phonics knowledge and skills, they progress to learning spelling patterns and word endings using the *Read Write Inc. Spelling* programme. Punctuation and grammar are taught alongside CLPE writing sessions through a combination of guided and shared writing.

Sentence level teaching is a key priority in the early stages of writing. Children learn how to construct sentences first orally, and then apply this understanding in their independent writing.

COMPOSITION

Power of Reading, developed by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), underpins the teaching of writing across the school and supports the selection of core texts. Children engage with a wide range of high quality texts, giving them exposure to rich vocabulary and varied sentence structures.

Through a sequence of carefully planned activities, pupils work with the teacher to explore and analyse model texts before progressing to innovating sections or creating their own independent pieces.

As children gain greater automaticity in their handwriting, they are increasingly able to concentrate on generating ideas, make thoughtful vocabulary choices, and improve the accuracy and effectiveness of their grammar.

WRITING – KS2

THE WRITING PROCESS

Destination Reader, developed by Hackney Services for Schools, underpins the teaching of writing across the junior school and supports the selection of core texts. Children engage with a wide range of high quality texts, giving them exposure to rich vocabulary and varied sentence structures.

At The Hermitage School, we teach children that writing is a continually evolving skill. After a long write, children will be encouraged to undertake an editing lesson where key areas for improvement are highlighted by the teacher. Teachers will share excellent work produced by the children to inspire others to emulate their skills. Focus of editing lessons will be appropriate to individual classes and whilst there may be trends across a year, editing will not be identical in each class. The editing lesson is designed for children to experiment with the writing process and feel that they can make changes, take risks and change their mind.

SPELLING

Spelling is taught daily through the RWInc Spelling programme which teaches the children age related spelling patterns through an exciting and visual teaching programme. Teachers teach through a variety of modelling techniques, after which the children are then able to practise their new spelling knowledge. In order to expose the children to a broader range of spellings, teachers may include supplementary sessions to the RWInc Spelling sessions. These may include activities looking at the relationship between meaning and spelling and the understanding of the role of morphology and etymology play in the spelling and meaning of words. A high priority is given to spellings within writing and editing lessons.

PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

Punctuation and grammar skills are taught within writing sessions as part of the written process. We believe that it is only through the written process that the application of grammar and punctuation skills can be taught. Our Destination Reader sessions also contribute to the children's understanding of the author's use of language and application of grammar. Skills are consolidated with games and homework (Years 5 and 6). All teaching staff are expected to use the correct terminology to ensure that there is consistency across the school.