



Potley Hill Primary School English Policy

INTRODUCTION

At Potley Hill Primary School, we accept the fundamental principle that English is key to improving learning and raising standards; it enables pupils to gain access to all subjects studied in school, to read for enjoyment and information, and to communicate effectively. Crucially, we believe that literate pupils will ultimately emerge as confident and articulate communicators, fully prepared to enter the wider world. We aim to develop in our pupils the ability to communicate effectively in writing, speech and to listen with understanding.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014), and in the Communication, Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

READING

Intent

At Potley Hill, it is our intention to enable our children to read confidently, fluently and accurately with strong understanding. We aim to support children to learn to read and understand the importance of reading; in order to do this, children are encouraged to read a wide variety of genres and exposed to a variety of rich texts. We intend that our pupils will be both independent and reflective readers who can read fluently and for meaning. It is our aim that children use a variety of reading skills to enable them to access all other areas of learning. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

Implementation

Pupils start their reading journey by focusing on individual phonemes, digraphs and trigraphs, and common exception words within the different phases. We follow the accredited phonics scheme 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised.' As children learn to read, they will follow a reading programme (Big Cat Books) which provides 100% decodable texts, so children are able to practise and apply their phonic knowledge in a book matched closely to their level, and what is taught to them in their phonics lessons. This will systematically increase the level of challenge, vocabulary and stamina as the children work up through the phases. We have carefully selected books that will appeal to children and provide a wide range of reading experiences. Through reading these books, children will experience success independently which is both important and necessary when learning to read. When children finish learning phonics, benchmarking is used to assess children's fluency and comprehension progress and then children are placed on a book band accordingly. During these schemes, children also have access to our school library and classroom reading corners to enrich their reading repertoire. After this, children become rainbow readers, and are able to choose all their reading books freely.

As children progress through the school, they will participate in Guided Reading sessions at least four times a week. These sessions are a mixture of Book Talk and comprehension sessions, where children's skills in the key reading domains are developed and deepened. Children have regular opportunities to apply their reading skills independently, and the expectation of regular home reading supports children in developing their fluency.

Children are exposed to a rich variety of genres through a daily 10-minute whole class reading session where teachers share a class book with the children.

The enjoyment of reading is promoted through reading aloud and in independent reading times as well as providing the children with high-quality, appealing, diverse books in classroom book corners and a welcoming library environment. The library is maintained by a librarian and children's support. New and requested texts are ordered regularly to ensure the library has an up-to-date selection of books and authors.

Developing a love of reading

To ensure children leave us with a life-long reading habit and a love of books, reading for enjoyment is prioritised across the school and books are central in our classrooms and teaching.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, e.g. 'World Book Day'- where children are immersed in storytelling. Other opportunities might include library visits- where the children are encouraged to take books out, author visits, cosy reading nights and individual class reading challenges to promote reading.

PHONICS AND EARLY READING

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Potley Hill 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 programme, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We begin teaching phonics in Reception, 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 Potley Hill, 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 Potley Hill, we value reading as a crucial life skill: it is our intention to enable our children to read confidently, fluently and accurately with strong understanding. We aim to support children to learn to read and understand the importance of reading; in order to do this, children are encouraged to read a wide variety of genres and exposed to a variety of rich texts. We intend that our pupils will be both independent and reflective readers who can read fluently and for meaning. It is our aim that children use a variety of reading skills to enable them to access all other areas of learning. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

Implementation

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics daily.
- Each lesson has a revisit and review, a teach and practise, followed by a practise and apply.
- Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help the children retain their learning from the week.
- Teaching begins in Week 2 of 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 Phase 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 an adult fully trained in the phonics scheme. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures and resources, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning and keeps up with the programme.
- We timetable phonics interventions for any child 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 them and their peers does not widen. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these at pace using the Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up 7+ programme

Teaching reading in Reception and year 1

- 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 similar ability
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments
 - 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 of the Autumn Term. 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.

Phonics home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Library books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
- 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.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every adult 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.
- Using the Little Wandle programme and resources ensures teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Phonics leader and SLT regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

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** is used:
 - every five 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 the Phonics leader and 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.

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 catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments where necessary.

WRITING

Intent

It is our vision that all children will learn to become writers by being given exciting and inspiring stimuli, and opportunities to be supported and challenged. We believe that this encouragement will enable them to become confident, capable writers who will develop a genuine enthusiasm for writing. They will use writing to express themselves and communicate with others, and will write independently for a range of real-life purposes. We want our children to have a deep understanding of how our language works, enabling them to make effective choices and have greater control over their writing.

Implementation

We follow the Hampshire HIAS learning journey structure. Children have frequent opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, and will write both independently and in groups, with peers or their class teacher. To inspire children's writing, we use carefully selected narratives, non-fiction texts, poems, videos and life experiences. Children are given opportunities to share their work by reading it to others and displaying it around the school. To ensure standards are kept high, spelling and phonics are also taught in discrete lessons throughout each week – as well as being embedded within daily English lessons. Neat presentation and handwriting skills are expected, practiced and valued throughout the school.

What does writing look like at Potley Hill?

- A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset
- Children and adults have a shared understanding of what success will look like for each genre/outcome.
- All children should know the audience, purpose and outcome of their writing
- Each term will include opportunities to write both fiction and non-fiction
- Writing is displayed and celebrated around school
- We provide stimulating hooks into new units of writing
- Writing is taught as a carefully sequenced activity
- Writing is live modelled by the class teacher to enable children to see the full writing process
- Grammar is sequenced following the National Curriculum and embedded throughout writing units
- Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking, which children respond to
- Where appropriate, writing is linked to project questions in order to promote engagement
- We ensure progression in knowledge, complexity of tasks and expectations year on year
- Genres are chosen to match the writing expectations from the National Curriculum and build on prior learning
- We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write independently and for extended periods

- Editing and reviewing form a large part of lesson time
- Peer marking is encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing

Teachers use the curriculum overview documents to ensure that all oracy, reading, writing and grammar objectives are covered over the year.

Teachers model writing skills and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. Children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions at the end of a unit, applying their taught skills to an unsupported piece of writing.

English Working Walls are a feature of every classroom and reflect the current unit of work and the learning journey.

SPELLING

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's creativity. We use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins, structure and meaning of words.

In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, high-quality systematic synthetic phonics is taught in discrete daily sessions following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds revised programme. In Year 2, and when children have achieved age-related expectations in phonics, they will follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds spelling programme 'bridge to spelling'. In KS2 children move onto the Jane Considine Spelling Programme. This programme has a weekly investigative lesson where children explore the different rules of spellings. These are taught in a range of ways to ensure children can apply the different spelling rules to unknown words. Consolidation of the rule happens across the week in short bursts to ensure retention. 3-4 spellings from the statutory word lists are also focused on each week, with children and teachers discussing the 'tricky' bits and creating different ways to help them remember these, for example mnemonics and illustrations. Spelling ability tests and dictations take place periodically to track progress.

HANDWRITING

At Potley Hill Primary School, we take pride in our pupil's handwriting. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resources and Lesson Planners as the basis of our handwriting policy, alongside Little Wandle's handwriting resources and class teacher targeted provision, as this covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Objective

By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy, joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style, and using continuous cursive letters from KS2, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.



Expectations

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the appropriate style for their year group in all their handwriting, whether

on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a pencil. When they reach Year 4, they will be allowed to use a berol style handwriting pen.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place.

Key Stage Teaching

Early Years

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting



Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

As children enter Key Stage 1, our teaching focuses on:

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- introducing and strengthening handwriting, learning and practice
- numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice



Lower Key Stage 2: Years 3 and 4

Handwriting lessons continue in Key Stage 2 where the focus is on improving the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting, and developing cursive



Upper Key Stage 2: Years 5 and 6

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught in upper key stage 2 including:

- reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum
- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills

By the end of their handwriting lessons in Year 6, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters.

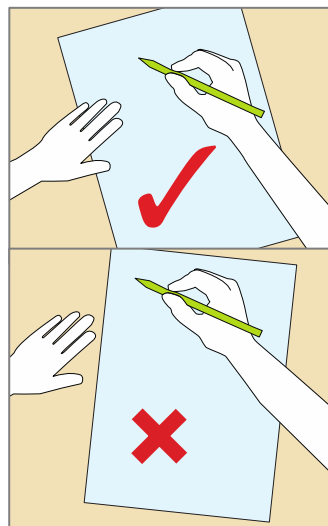
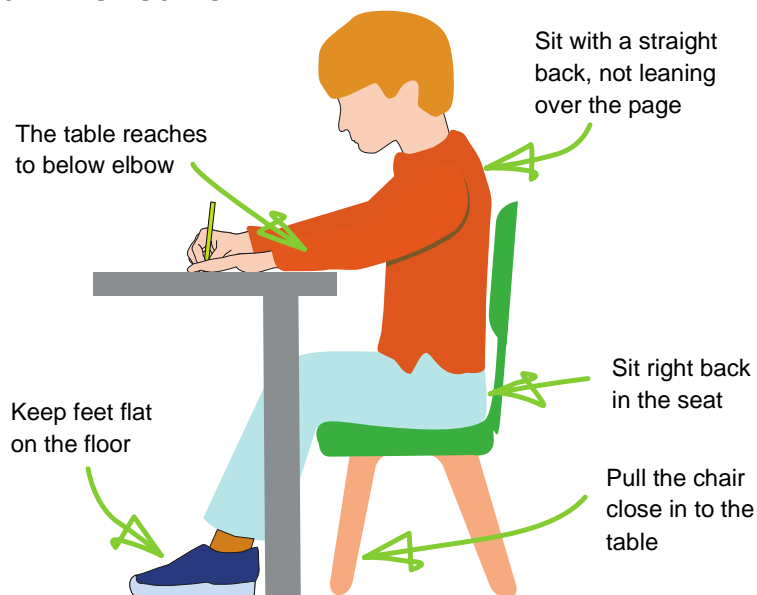


Additional intervention sessions are used for children who may still find handwriting difficult. Our aim is to focus on children 'keeping up', rather than 'catching up'.

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

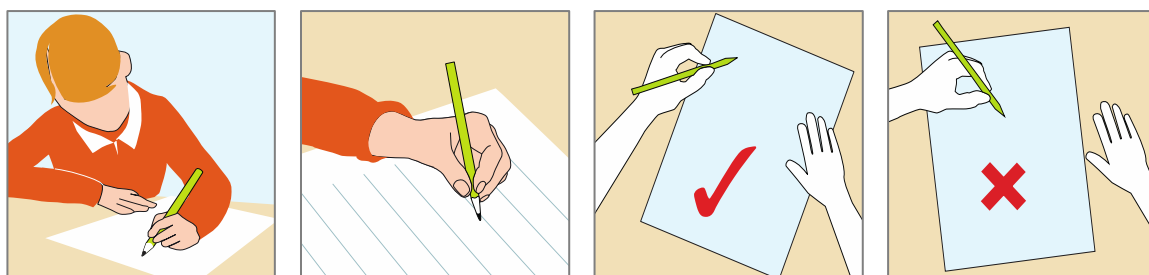
SITTING POSITION



Left-handed children

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers can demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, if needed.

- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

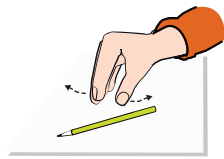


Paper position for left-handed children.

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right- and left-handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:

Right-handed pencil grip



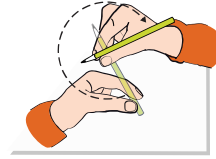
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,

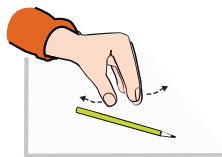


Spin it round...

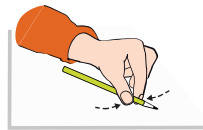


and grip.

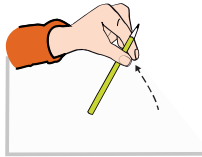
Left-handed pencil grip



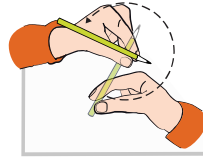
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



and grip.

ORACY

We believe that the ability to both speak and listen well is essential for children to be able to articulate their feelings, opinions and ideas. Alongside this, we encourage children to value the thoughts and views of others, and treat them with respect and integrity through their choice of words and how they respond.

We teach the skills of Oracy using the four domains set out by Voice 21: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social & emotional. Through a combination of teacher modelling, games and activities rich in talk, our children are given the opportunity to develop these important lifelong skills.

We believe that oral language has a key role in classroom teaching and learning and that our pupils' understanding and creativity can be fostered by discussion and interaction. Pupils are encouraged to use talk partners/trios within English and across the curriculum to share and magpie ideas from each other when thinking about vocabulary use and creating sentences. Across the curriculum children use speaking and listening skills to work in small groups or partners and collaborate with others.

What does oracy look like at Potley Hill?

- Use of class discussion and talk partners/trios
- Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs
- Use of sentence-stems to scaffold oral responses in class
- Questioning across the curriculum
- Reciting and reading aloud
- Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's learning
- Re-telling and role-play
- Opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing
- Debating
- Collaborative work and reporting back following group work
- Presenting in front of an audience – class assemblies/productions

Children who require extra support in speaking and listening are referred to a Speech and Language therapist to further assess their needs.

We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect or other language is of prime importance. All staff members are role models who promote Standard English and take care to sensitively correct children's misconceptions with language.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ENGLISH OPPORTUNITIES

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. Extended writing is expected to be produced across the foundation subjects to showcase the children's transferrable skills.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

At Potley Hill Primary School, assessment of children's ability in English is expected to be carried out during lessons in order to help inform future planning and teaching.

Formative Assessment

In line with our assessment policy, each teacher continuously assesses attainment for each child against the key objectives for their year group, taken from our progression of skills in Reading, Writing and Oracy, and inputs it on Arbor.

Summative Assessment

In addition to the formative assessment undertaken throughout units of work, teachers will use termly summative assessments supplied by NTS to reinforce their judgements and provide further opportunities to identify gaps in pupil learning and tailor future lessons. Together with ongoing assessment, teachers make a teacher assessment and talk through the progress of their pupils at termly Pupil Progress Meetings. This ensures that children not making the expected progress can be identified and targeted support given to those who need it.

Reporting to Parents

Two Parent Consultations are arranged during the autumn and spring terms, where parents can look at their child's work and discuss their progress. Written reports are completed before the end of the summer term. Teachers use the information gathered from the range of assessments they undertake to help them comment on individual children's progress.

Marking

Marking of English books should be completed in line with the Potley Hill Marking, Feedback and Presentation Policy.

HOMEWORK AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS

We see parents as important partners in the process of developing children's literacy skills.

- They have an important influence on children's language before they come to school
- They provide valuable support at home in helping children to become readers and writers
- They offer a useful audience for children in their development as speakers and listeners, readers and writers as the children move through the school (e.g., phonics, reading, SAT's revision)

We therefore encourage parents to play their full part in their children's education by:

- Involving parents in the school's reading programme from the moment their child starts school
- Updating the guidance for parents as their children move through school so that they can continue to offer appropriate support
- Giving parents termly outlines of the curriculum areas in English that each year group will be studying

- Welcoming offers of help from parents to assist in school by listening to children read
- Providing homework in accordance with the school's Homework Policy and encouraging parental support

MONITORING

The English Subject Leader regularly works alongside other teachers, including the Phonics leader, in order to improve teaching and learning. This may take the form of planning and exploring a range of activities to address a concept, or coaching where they can support teachers in their own classrooms.

Regular formal observations and book/planning checks are used to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of English throughout the school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Where necessary, the English Subject Leader attends courses to support their own professional development and disseminates training to staff, including Hampshire Core Provision. In other circumstances, the English Subject Leader organises training and coaching opportunities for teachers and support staff. The focus for these sessions are determined by the priorities outlined in the School Improvement Plan.

INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Every child is given the opportunity to be included in all aspects of school life and in all areas of the curriculum. Teaching and learning in the school ensure that all children are set suitable learning challenges. A broad range of teaching styles are adopted in response to diverse learning needs. We make every effort to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and for groups of children. We aim for Potley Hill Primary School to be an ideal learning environment for nurturing and developing the whole child.

Our ethos for inclusion is supported by our Equalities Policy. We ensure that equal opportunities in English are addressed as follows:

- Pupils with special needs have equal access to the English curriculum through the use of differentiated learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual needs.
- Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through a wide-ranging curriculum across the years, including use of texts across different cultures.
- Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of the English curriculum and that planning incorporates a range of genres appealing to both genders.
- Opportunities to address issues of gender, race etc are provided through discussion, appropriate gender texts and resources.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Some children may be working at a level above or below that of the rest of their peer group, or may need special assistance to accomplish particular tasks. Children with SEN (including low and high attainers) are taught within the daily English lesson and lessons are differentiated so that all children can access and make progress in their learning. Potley Hill Primary School aims to support and challenge every child.

Where children are thought to need additional help, teachers go through a referral procedure consistent with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Parents are informed of any decisions made.

Children with Educational, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) or who are identified as having specific educational needs (SEN Support), where applicable, children's Personal Plans incorporate suitable objectives that meet their specific English needs. These children receive out of class interventions where they have sessions with an LSA to address the targets set out in their Personal Plans.

Reviewed: February 2024

Next Review: February 2026