



## Our Approach to Teaching English (Power of Reading & Literacy and Language)

At Whitehall Junior School, we are committed to providing our pupils with a well-rounded education. Our curriculum is planned in a logical and well-considered way, to enable pupils to build upon their skills and have a secure knowledge base from which connections in learning are made. We use 'beautiful' resources from credible sources to enrich our lessons.

### What is the big picture for English?

Children should feel empowered by reading and writing. All children need to leave Key Stage 2 literate; able to express their views and ideas verbally and on paper. They should be able to use a range of styles, knowing when each is appropriate and develop a lifelong love of reading.

### What is magical about it?

It is a window into the mind of each child. It gives pupils the opportunity to freely and creatively express themselves. Words give power.

### Why is English an important subject to learn?

Literacy impacts on the whole curriculum and a child's whole life; all pupils need to be literate for their future life chances.

If English was not taught in school, children would miss opportunities to explore their ideas about the world they live in and worlds they seek to create or imagine. They would miss the opportunity to create something beautiful and something of which they can be proud.

*'You can make anything by writing.'* - C.S. Lewis

*'I write to discover what I know.'* - Flannery O'Connor

*'Words are a lens to focus one's mind.'* - Ayn Rand

### What do we love about English?

- The creativity! The ability to express ourselves and to delve into what we really think.
- The chance to write in different styles, formal and informal, considering purpose and audience.
- The power of words!
- The opportunity to delve into another time or place.

### How do we want our pupils to talk about English?

- Enthusiastically, proudly sharing what they have written, articulating their thoughts.
- To demonstrate creativity and originality.
- To demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of writing.
- To understand and identify the features of 'good' writing (WAGOLL).
- To demonstrate an understanding of the use of grammar in writing and how it can change the meaning in texts.
- With a broad, well developed vocabulary which is suitable for purpose and formality.
- With an understanding of etymology, understanding the meanings of words and able to replace synonyms.

## Our approach to teaching English

Week 1 Power Reading	of	Each week – Starters: word, text, punctuation, sentence, dictionary skills each week and in this order. Focus on vocabulary that will be found within the text, immersion within the text, prediction skills, drawing inferences (making connections to knowledge they already know). Comprehension, linked to the text/genre, wherever possible, is taught every Friday.
Week 2 Power Reading	of	Each week – Starters: word, text, punctuation, sentence, dictionary skills each week and in this order. Focus on characters/setting descriptions and some writing within modelled genre. Comprehension, linked to the text/genre, wherever possible, is taught every Friday.
Week 3 Power Reading	of	Each week – Starters: word, text, punctuation, sentence, dictionary skills each week and in this order. Focus on building writing towards the final piece/outcome. Comprehension, linked to the text/genre, wherever possible, is taught every Friday.
Week 1 Literacy and Language	and	Fiction focus: The main story is introduced via a discussion of texts that contain a similar theme. Literacy and Language uses a three-layer text approach to teach reading and writing. Firstly, children are introduced to the characters, setting and plot through a series of images and audio clues. This is the 'bare bones' of the story. Next, evidence gives children more information about the characters, setting and plot. Children learn how language can be used to change or develop readers' understanding of texts. Finally, children read the full story, focusing their attention on the subtleties, nuances and their own interpretation of the text.
Week 2 Literacy and Language	and	Fiction focus: Children compose a new text in a similar style. There are opportunities for planning, oral rehearsal, drafting and editing. The teacher models composition of the text, deepening children's understanding of the writing process.
Week 3 Literacy and Language	and	Non-fiction focus: Children explore examples of a non-fiction text, focusing on: audience, purpose, form and style. They then plan and draft their own piece of writing.
Comprehension		Each week, one English lesson is dedicated to developing children's comprehension ability. The age-correlated Nelson Comprehension textbook is used across the school. There are three texts within each unit. All comprehension lessons begin with a vocabulary warm up in which children use a dictionary to define the tricky words they will encounter when reading the text. During the first week of the cycle, the teacher leads the comprehension session, modelling to children how to answer the questions. Usually, one particular viper (see 'Our Approach to Guided Reading') is the main foci for the session. During the second session, the focus is on class and paired discussion of the answers. In the final week, children work independently to answer specific comprehension questions in their English books.
Writing		Each term, the children complete three pieces of assessed writing which are assessed using the year group's specific writing target card. For those children working below expectation, the target card appropriate to their ability is used.

	<p>During assessed writing, the children plan, draft and edit in a genre they have recently been taught in English lessons.</p> <p>Writing is taught in a variety of ways. Teachers regularly 'live write' for the pupils and conduct shared writing lessons. 'Slow writing' allows pupils to write with specific grammar foci, enabling them to develop and practise new skills. We allow opportunities for 'free writing' to instil a passion for writing.</p>
Handwriting	<p>The Nelson Handwriting scheme is used across the school. Weekly lessons should take place in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, year groups can choose how regularly they teach handwriting based on the needs of the year group.</p>
Spelling	<p>The 'Shakespeare &amp; More' spelling scheme is used across the school. Every Monday, all children have a 30-minute spelling lesson to be introduced to the spellings for the week. Each Friday children have a spelling test. The children all complete the Schonell spelling test to determine their starting point within the spelling scheme. The majority of the class will be working on the spelling lists that correlates with year group expectations.</p>