

Heptonstall J&I School

English Policy



Written: October 2024

Review Date: July 2025

Intent

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Communicate for a range of purposes, listen effectively and show an understanding of what they hear.
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding.
- Use a range of spelling strategies and apply them in their independent work.
- Experience a range of text types and genres.
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Enjoy using language in different contexts and have the confidence and ability to do so.
- Enable children to be articulate speakers and good responsive listeners in a variety of situations.
- Develop a fluent, legible handwriting style and take care with presentation of their work.

Implementation

Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum. Currently in Key Stage One and Two we have a more creative way of planning our English lessons, working from the objectives outlined in the New National Curriculum 2014. This ensures lessons are creative, imaginative and relevant to the needs of the children at Heptonstall. Lessons are linked to the classes' current topics and may be cross-curricular when suitable.

Teaching and Learning

English lessons are undertaken daily in Years 1-6 with Foundation Stage incorporating their English teaching within short morning sessions, through provision and topic related opportunities. In addition to daily English lessons, all children in Y1 take part in daily Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) lessons (for approximately 40 minutes) which are suitable to their reading ability. Children in Y2 who are no longer on the ELS phonics programme follow the ELS Spelling Programme 3 x per week and take part in comprehension sessions 2 x per week. KS2 receive daily reading and comprehension sessions through the FREDs Teaching reading programme. Interventions, including ELS, are in place for children in Y2 and KS2 who need more support with phonics. At least once a week in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 there is a dedicated Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar session. Handwriting is taught weekly in Years 1 – 6, with letter formation being taught during ELS phonics sessions for the Foundation Stage.

Commented [FP1]: Megan to change if needed

Speaking and Listening

We give children a range of purposes for speaking and listening. We encourage pupils using a variety of different sized audiences to contrast purpose. Speaking and listening will sometimes be taught discretely, but more often it will be taught within other areas of the National Curriculum, and as the new National Curriculum 2014 highlights, such activities will be embedded throughout teaching and learning.

All classes deliver half termly assemblies to the rest of the school and examples of where speaking and listening might occur within the classroom are as follows:

- Stories, songs & poems.
- Storytelling.
- Describing events, observations and experiences.
- Giving reasons for actions.
- Explaining ideas and opinions in discussion and responding to others.
- Planning, predicting and investigating in small groups.
- Presentation to different audiences.
- Reading aloud.
- Imaginative play and role play.
- Drama.
- Hot seating.
- Listening to tapes and CD's.
- Rights Respecting School Council.
- Circle time.
- Use of Talk Partners

Reading

We believe children need to have the skills and confidence to deal with printed language critically and should also be encouraged to read for pleasure.

At Heptonstall we aim to:

- Provide children with experience that will lead to a rich and varied language development.
- Help the child develop visual perception and discrimination of the written word.
- Teach the child skills necessary to become a fluent reader.
- Encourage the child to understand the deeper meaning of texts.

At Heptonstall children begin their reading journey through the teaching of the validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS). We follow the ELS progression and sequence, allowing our children to build and practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst developing their understanding of the 'code' of our language GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support each child's journey to becoming fluent and independent readers. Children accessing our phonics programme are assessed

once per half term to make sure that any necessary interventions are put in place to ensure children are given every opportunity to 'keep up, not catch up'

The discrete teaching of reading skills is undertaken daily in EYFS and Year 1 in ELS sessions and daily in KS2 during the reading comprehension sessions (FREDs), as well as frequently featuring in our text-based English lessons. Once children are off ELS scheme decodable books they move on to the colour banded Oxford Reading Tree scheme. Half termly teacher assessment and termly summative reading assessments allow us to accurately monitor where children are on the scheme. Where necessary, children are benchmarked to check the accuracy of where they are on the reading scheme. Children are expected to read a minimum of 4 times during the week at home and 2 times to an adult at school.

Commented [FP2]: Need to decide what we are doing?

Shared reading

Shared reading is where the teacher works with the children to model fluent, expressive reading; the use of effective reading strategies and to encourage response to texts. Shared reading enables children to access and enjoy rich, authentic texts which are slightly beyond their independent reading level. All teachers have a daily story time in class when they read texts from their repeated text library to their pupils.

Reading Fluency

At Heptonstall, we have identified the two main components of reading: word reading and comprehension. We believe that for our pupils to be successful in word reading, it is important that they develop their reading fluency. This is why ensure we teach weekly reading fluency lessons to all pupils so that they can learn how to read with accuracy, automaticity and prosody. Our teachers have received CPD so that they can effectively model fluent reading to pupils. Each class also has a repeated text library, this enables our children to become familiar with a variety of texts and become fluent in reading them.

Love of Reading

At Heptonstall we promote a love of reading. This is carefully planned for through curriculum based learning opportunities and extra-curricular clubs, activities and enhancements.

Each class forms part of our Heptonstall School 'book club'. This means we visit the school library once per week to choose a book of choice to promote our love of reading. Each child can take their book of choice home for the week to share with their family before returning it the following week to discuss, share with their peers and swap for a new book.

We also offer opportunities throughout the school year such as Stay and Read sessions, Buddy reading, World Book Day Celebrations and visits from authors to promote our love of reading.

Writing

Children are taught writing skills in daily English lessons and are given regular opportunities to apply and practise these skills through our creative curriculum. We develop the skills of:

- Write in a variety of contexts including in discreet literacy lessons, through the creative curriculum, through topics and cross-curricular writing.
- Study language through shared texts.
- Learn compositional skills.
- Learn the importance of planning and drafting writing.
- Develop children's spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.

Sometimes writing is planned so that children can follow the process through incorporating modelling, scaffolding, independence, re-drafting and producing a final draft.

As well as being taught separately in Year 2, 5 and 6, SPAG skills are incorporated into writing sessions.

Modelled Writing

Teachers at Heptonstall model the writing process regularly during English lessons so that children can learn how to write. Teachers and teaching assistants model how to structure sentences, use SPAG effectively, think imaginatively and write for different audiences and purposes using the cursive handwriting script – providing children with an excellent writing example to learn from. This approach to writing raises standards and children's confidence as it encourages them to all strive for excellence.

Spelling

Pupils in KS1 are taught spelling rules through English lessons. Pupils in Y2 who are no longer on the ELS Phonics scheme are taught spelling rules through the ELS Spelling Scheme 3 x per week. In KS2 children are taught spelling rules via a spelling lesson every week. Teachers use Spelling Shed on a rolling programme to provide pupils with spellings that are suited to their ability. They receive these on a Friday as a part of their homework but also get the opportunity to practise their spellings in school for at least half an hour per week. Progress is measured via a weekly spelling test on a Friday and progress is also shared with parents.

Year 1 Phonics Check – preparations for the phonics check begin early in the year, with pupils' knowledge of their sounds being assessed on a daily basis during ELS sessions. Practise tests and pseudo words are used throughout the year in the build up to test check. Provision is put in place for Year 2 pupils who did not take or pass the check when they were in Year 1. Extra provision continues for children in Y3 who did not pass the phonics screen in Y2.

Commented [FP3]: When are spelling tests done – needs to be the same day across each class for consistency

Handwriting

Here at Heptonstall, children are taught pre-cursive handwriting from year 2. All adults model the correct use of pre-cursive/cursive handwriting when modelling writing and each class displays a 'Handwriting at Heptonstall' poster for the children to refer to from year 2. In EYFS, as part of the EYFS framework, and during Year One, adults model the correct formation of letters through the use of the ELS letter formation rhymes. In year 2 pupils are taught how to correctly form pre cursive letters using lead in and lead out stokes. From year 3, pupils are taught to join up their handwriting.

Vocabulary

At Heptonstall we place great emphasis on ensuring our pupils are given access to high quality vocabulary at an age-appropriate level. All classrooms have a word of the week wall where there is a new 'tier 2' word displayed. This is a word that is not common in everyday dialect but is considered as a sophisticated word. Research suggests that pupils very easily pick up 'tier 1' words as they encounter them often. It also suggests that children easily learn 'tier 3' words which are words that are subject specific words as they tend to be repeated in lessons. 'Tier 2' words however, as they are used less frequently, there is a lack of understanding of them. As well as the word of the week display, classrooms have working walls for English as well as all other core subjects and these all feature a vocabulary section.

Inclusion

At Heptonstall our pupils with special educational needs are provided with the same quality first teaching as the other pupils. Where children have needs that affect their writing and reading abilities, personalised support is put in place. This could be an intervention that plugs specific gaps in writing/reading or it could be extra reading time with the teacher/ TA.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and quality of teaching in English. As well as this, the subject leader will support colleagues in their teaching, inform staff of any current developments in the subject and provide lead and direction for English in the school. Monitoring takes place in the form of deep dives, learning walks and book looks and the subject leader will provide feedback to all teachers to highlight strengths and identify areas to develop. The subject leader will draw upon expertise from across The Family of Learning Trust to carry out monitoring and moderation.

Impact Assessment:

The main source of reading assessment in EYFS and KS1 is the ELS Phonics Scheme. Children are assessed during the 5th week of each half term to allow for

identification of gaps and inform future interventions. Children throughout school are also tested three times a year using NFER assessments and are also withing Y2 and Y6 assessed using optional past SATs (Standard Assessment Test) with Y5 being assessed with a SAT paper from the summer term. In addition to these assessments, teachers keep an ongoing record for each child, on Target Tracker, in relation to National Curriculum expectations. These records are used along with the tests in order to form an overall judgement.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants aim to listen to every child in their class reading at twice a week and aim to record this in the pupils' reading records via Boom Reader in order to ensure good communication between home and school. We use gap analysis reports to identify gaps in pupils learning and provide them with meaningful next steps to fill these gaps. Teachers and TAs also identify the children that do not read at home and prioritise reading with them.

When marking a piece of writing, feedback is thoughtful and provides children with next steps to progress. Children are given the opportunity to act on this feedback at the start of the next session to show impact. Children are provided with a writing target bookmark that has their unique target on it. This bookmark is transferable so children can move it onto the page they are writing on. When children provide enough evidence of achieving their target, teachers set them a new one to ensure continuous progress.

When assessing writing half termly, teachers use the assessment tick lists which are in line with the new curriculum and end of key stage expectations. Teachers update their assessment information and judgements are recorded each term on Target Tracker.

Moderation of Writing

Every term teachers moderate writing samples in staff meeting sessions, led by the senior leadership team. A variety of anonymous writing samples, covering different text types at different levels, are assessed in conjunction with colleagues using the writing assessment ticklists. Strengths and areas for development of the writing sample are discussed and a writing judgement is agreed. This allows the staff at Heptonstall to show consistency and accuracy with the way they assess children's writing. SLT file these samples for the teachers and student teachers to refer to when necessary.

Resources

All teachers will provide a language rich environment for their pupils. In order to promote and create a love for reading we have a vibrant, well-resourced library which all pupils can visit. Teachers are also encouraged to take their classes into the library for whole class reading sessions.

