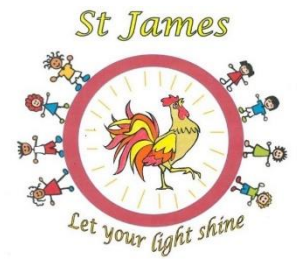


# English at Southam St James Handbook





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# STATEMENT OF INTENT

## Purpose:

At Southam St James, we believe that every child should have access to a stimulating and creative English curriculum. We aim to give every child the best possible opportunities to become a confident and literate global citizen. To do this, we believe every child must develop a love of reading to support their writing and language skills. That is why reading is at the heart of our school. This aligns with the National Curriculum's ambition to ensure that all pupils "read easily, fluently and with good understanding," and to enable them to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. We have a wonderful library that is regularly used by everyone and rich stimulating texts that have been clearly planned and selected, as well as enjoyable class books that we read each day.

We believe that children need to have regular and meaningful opportunities to write. Therefore, we ensure that all our subjects support our children to develop and embed their understanding of spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and in becoming creative. The primary aim of our English curriculum is to foster a love of literature and develop proficient communicators, readers, and writers.

## Objectives:

1. **Phonics and Reading:** Develop enthusiastic, fluent readers and cultivate a passion for reading through exposure to a diverse range of texts, ensuring pupils can decode texts efficiently and comprehend with depth.
2. **Writing:** Develop the ability to write clearly, accurately, and coherently, tailoring language and style for a range of contexts, purposes, and audiences.
3. **Spoken Language:** Enhance pupils' spoken language skills through varied opportunities for discussion, debate, and presentation.

## Inclusion:

Our English curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners. We adopt differentiated instruction strategies and provide appropriate support to ensure that every child can achieve their full potential. This includes:

- Tailored interventions for struggling readers and writers.
- Use of visual aids, audio books, and technology to support diverse learning needs.
- Professional development for teachers on inclusive practices and differentiation.

## Progression

We ensure a clear and structured progression of skills and knowledge from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 6, building upon prior learning and preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.



Key strategies include:

- Systematic synthetic phonics instruction in early years and Key Stage 1, as highlighted in the National Curriculum.
- Gradual introduction and reinforcement of complex grammatical structures and vocabulary.
- Regular assessment and feedback to monitor progress and inform instruction, ensuring that each pupil's learning journey is continuously supported and challenged.

## **Conclusion**

Our intent is to create a rich and supportive English curriculum that not only meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum but also inspires a lifelong love of language and literature. Through a commitment to inclusion and a focus on progression, we aim to equip all pupils with the essential skills they need to succeed academically and personally.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## Phonics

We follow the Little Wandle's systematic synthetic phonics programme. It is fun and well sequenced, therefore all our learners can access and engage in phonics lessons. We teach phonics five times each week for up to 30 minutes to help children become confident and fluent readers. In addition to phonics lessons, we provide targeted intervention to support every child in making progress.

The Little Wandle programme has a progression of GPCs and tricky words that we teach term-by-term. The progression has been organised so that children are taught from the simple to more complex GPCs, as well as taking into account the frequency of their occurrence in the most commonly encountered words. All the graphemes taught are practised in words, sentences, and later on, in fully decodable books. Children review and revise GPCs and words, daily, weekly and across terms and years, in order to move this knowledge into their long-term memory.

Children learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they can move from learning to read, to reading to learn, giving them access to the treasure house of reading. Our expectations of progression are aspirational yet achievable if schools maintain pace, practice and participation by all children. Children who are not keeping up with their peers should be given additional practice immediately through keep-up sessions.

### Reception

Throughout Reception the children will work through phase 2 to phase 4. Please use the link below to see a more in depth overview of the year.

[Programme-Overview\\_Reception-1.pdf](#)

### Year 1

Throughout Year 1 the children revisit phase 3/4 and then move on to phase 5, which they complete and then review. Please use the link below to see a more in depth overview of the year.

[Programme-Overview\\_Year-1-1.pdf](#)

### Daily Keep Up

We identify children for group or individual Keep-up support using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments (every six weeks), as well as assessment within the daily lesson to identify children in Reception and Year 1 who need either individual or group Keep-up sessions. To not let children fall behind we take action as soon as possible. We reassess after three weeks to check that these children have filled their gaps. Class teachers upload the new data for these children to the Little Wandle Assessments tracker website so that they are allocated the most accurate reading book level.



## Year 2

Following the Little Wandle Spelling allows us to build on children's knowledge of the alphabetic code and teaches them how to spell with confidence. The programme provides a seamless link from the core Little Wandle programme to teaching spelling in Year 2.

Before starting with the spelling content, we complete Year 1 Phase 5 assessments to highlight any gaps that need covering and to identify any children that need further interventions- using the Rapid Catch Scheme.

<b>Autumn 1</b> 5 weeks: Phase 5 review	<b>Autumn 2</b> 5 weeks: Bridge to spelling	<b>Spring and Summer</b> 20 weeks: Spelling units
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## Rapid Catch Up

Every child in Year 2 or above who cannot read at age-related expectations needs urgent targeted support so that they can access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible. Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up is a complete catch-up programme that mirrors the main phonics programme but has a faster pace. It has been created to help children catch up quickly. By the end of the programme, children should be reading with enough fluency and accuracy to access the curriculum in class, and to read with enjoyment and understanding. Children will be assessed, and this will determine which phase they are taught. They are taught individually or in groups. The children will be taught a 3 x times a week, lasting 15 to 20 minutes.

Day 1	20-minute phonics lesson
Day 2	20-minute phonics lesson
Day 3	Review day: A quick review of teaching from days 1 and 2 10-minute phonics lesson plus 10- to 15-minute Reading practice session. In Phases 2 and 3, you will use the blending practice books for this session.



# Reading

## Overview:

Reading is embedded within the whole school curriculum and takes place in all lessons, as well as through class story time. High quality texts are used as a stimulus to develop speaking and listening, reading, and writing skills. In addition, children take part in whole class daily reading lessons where fluency, extended and close reading are focussed on. All teachers have received training by Chris Such and have begun implementing this structure from years 2 to 6 from Summer 2024.

We are committed to enabling children to become motivated and independent readers. We ensure that children are encouraged to read a range of genres every year; this includes class novels, books linked to topics, free reading books and guided reading texts. While children are learning to read, we teach using Little Wandle and books that are matched to their phonics stage and later onto a reading book band match to their level. Once children are confident readers, they move onto carefully selected free reading books.

## Reading Lessons: Reception and Year 1

Each half termly assessment determines the level of book that the children will read. The children will always be reading at their secure phonic level. This means they will not be reading books that contain the GPCs they are currently learning in the phonics lessons.

A child being taught Phase 3, for example, will be reading Phase 2 books for much of the time. They may be ready to read a Phase 3 book towards the end of their Phase 3 lessons.

The fluency assessments for Phase 5 Set 3 onwards are a crucial component in assessing children's reading accuracy, speed and stamina.

The children gain enormous benefit from the Reading practice sessions: they learn to use their phonic knowledge to read longer words and challenging texts.

Children read each book three times in the Reading practice sessions to help them gain fluency.

Each read has a specific focus:

- Read 1: decoding
- Read 2: prosody
- Read 3: comprehension

The children all take a book home to read with their parents/carers, this supports their reading development and engages families. These books are changed weekly.



## Reading Lessons: Years 2 – 6

Children have daily reading lessons which last 20 minutes. Each session has a particular focus. The three focus areas are:

1. Fluency Read
2. Extended Read
3. Close Read

Year Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 2	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Fluency Read
Year 3	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Close Read
Year 4	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Close Read
Year 5	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Close Read	Extended Read	Close Read
Year 6	Fluency Read	Extended Read	Close Read	Extended Read	Close Read

### Session 1: Fluency Read

In practice (how to run a lesson):

1. Teacher reads the text aloud while pupils listen, slightly over exaggerated to make sure that natural sense of prosody is slightly exaggerated. (1-2 mins)
2. Discuss the tricky vocabulary and give a summary of the text (where appropriate). (3-4 mins)
3. Teacher reads for a second time while children follow along using a ruler or finger. (1-2 mins)
4. Children in mixed attainment pairs take turns to read 3-4 times each, partner follows with a ruler, teacher 'floats' and supports. (10-15 mins)
5. Text is performed by the whole class, volunteers or selected children. (4-5 mins)
6. Text is discussed and comprehension checked/deepened. (3-4 mins)

Pupils who struggle to decode- teacher has a small group and do echo reading instead of partner reading, doing a sentence at a time. If a child is at reception level reading then it would be good for them to do phonics work but if there isn't adult capacity for this then follow the teacher echo reading suggestion.

### Planning:

1. Choose a chunk of text that will take 1-2 minutes to read.



2. Work out which words children are likely to need explain and, where necessary, find pictures. (Max 5 words)
3. Plan discussion/questions.

## Session 2: Extended Read

- Developing reading stamina
- Learning the patterns of English orthography (patterns) through text experiences
- Building up experiences of:
  - Vocabulary
  - Background knowledge
  - Text structure
  - Sentence structure

All of these are developed via a wealth of text experience.

In practice (how to run a lesson):

It can be split into two parts:

- a. Continuous reading (pacey)
- b. Brief discussion to build comprehension

### a. Continuous Reading (all the time for the sessions in year 2, 3 and most of 4)

#### i. Teacher read-aloud (majority of the time)

- Teacher reads while the pupils follow (ideally with their own copy of the text)
- Key words might be initially chanted for accountability- do a signal to let the class know they are saying the next word. Do this every two or three sentences at first to ensure children are following along with text. This would be slowly phased out after a few weeks.

#### ii. Silent Reading (years 4, 5, 6) (up to half the time of reading in this session- in year 6)

- Pupils silently read sections of the text- give a specific stopping point
- Section length is managed carefully
- Section length increases with pupils' reading capability
- Simple tasks are available for quick finishers though re-reading is encouraged e.g. write a summary of what they have read, read text again and make sure summary matches (Discourage competition in terms of finishing speed)
- Very weak readers may be supported through small-group teacher reads aloud while others read silently

### b. Brief Discussion to Build Comprehension

- Roughly 2/3 reading and 1/3 discussion- need to be disciplined with this
- Ensuring pupils are making sense of the text, explain/asking e.g. vocabulary, background knowledge, sentence structure, text structure



- Central focus is still reading experience
- Routine needs to be developed so children don't lose their place in the text when answering questions e.g. 'finger freeze- eyes on me'
- Summarising and re-reading

### **Planning:**

- Choose a text, this may well be the same text in many lessons as you progress through it.
- Read it and make notes (what you want to ask/focus on) either on the text or on somewhere else.
- Questions to ask and points to explain depend entirely on what you think your pupils will need help with to understand and appreciate the text.

## **Session 3: Text Discussions**

### **In practice (how to run a lesson):**

Central aim: discuss texts in depth

Method:

- a. Short bursts of reading
  - b. Deeper discussion and questioning- roughly 1/3 reading and 2/3's discussion
  - c. Some responses to text in writing
1. Read a chosen section of text (or linked extracts)
  2. Choose method of reading to suit the text: teacher-led, paired oral, silent read
  3. Ask questions that provoke pupils to think about the language choices and themes you wish to discuss
  4. Give all pupils the chance to respond and then scaffold their responses- think, pair, share, MWBs, Pose-Pause-Pounce-Bounce
  5. Reflect in writing

### **Planning:**

1. Choose a text with aspects worth discussing in depth that this might be something already read.
2. Decide how this text is going to be read.
3. Identify aspects that will need explaining (e.g. vocabulary, text structures, etc).
4. Create questions based on languages choices and themes.
5. Where appropriate, pick questions for pupils to respond to in writing (summarising the previous discussions- not an assessment). Responses can be shared verbally, on whiteboards, written on paper.

Example Plan 1:



1. Teacher-led read
2. Question 1: What does the author mean by ...? Think, pair, share
3. Question 2: What does xxx think about x? How does the author show this? MWBs
4. Question 3: What purpose is the xx (punctuation) serving in this sentence? Think, pair, share
5. Question 4: How does the author make you feel xxx for the character? Why might the author have done this? Think, pair, share

#### Example Plan 2:

1. Silent read
2. Explain some vocabulary
3. Why does you think xxx has done xx? P-P-P-B
4. First the author makes us feel xx towards xxx. Then the authors shows us xxx being xx. Why do you think the author has done this? Think, pair, share
5. What impression does the author give of xx and how xx is perceived? Written response in books

#### Questions to think about when planning:

How can I get pupils to better understand this story?

What do I need to explain or remind them about? (definitions, places, history, etc)

What themes run through the text that can be explored?

What language choices has the author made? What were they trying to achieve?

#### Things to bear in mind:

- Some texts don't provide enough depth
- Finished storybooks allow for deeper discussions
- Allow for detours, but keep central themes in mind
- This looks different depending on the text, the age group and the individual class
- You can alternate reading with discussion
- Consider text-specificity, centring the author and the power of might
- Avoid OTT praise and build from call and response (puts too much pressure on others)
- Experiment with what works

#### Reading Books- Year 2 +

In Year 2 the children will continue to work through any new sounds and read books matched to these sounds. Once they have completed this they will have a fluency assessment. If the children can read 90 words a minute, they will have a reading age assessment to see which book band they should start on. If they cannot yet read 90 words a minute, they will work their way through the Big Cat Little Wandle Fluency books from level 1- level 10.



Once they have completed the fluency books (if required) the children will move on to the book band white. The children are able to take these books home and changes them when they need to.

## **Reading for Pleasure**

Daily story time occurs at 3:00 (unless the children are in PE and then it is swapped to another point in the day). Classes have reading stations where children are able to choose a variety of materials to read. Children have weekly homework of reading at least three times a week, providing opportunities for children to discuss texts with their parent/carers.

Each year group visits the local library several times throughout the year, they will often hear a story and then have time to select a book to borrow. We always celebrate 'World Book Day', either dressing up in pyjamas and hearing bedtime stories or dressing as a chosen book character. We regularly have opportunities sharing stories between year groups. During the last week of every half term- the year group buddies (Year 6/Year 2, Year 5/Year 3, Year 4/Year 1) (Year R with Year 5 in Autumn 1, Year 4 in Autumn 2, Year 3 in Spring 1, Year 2 in Spring 2, Year 1 in Summer 1 and Year 6 in Summer 2) meet and read with each other for 20 minutes.

Children are encouraged to take part in different reading-based competitions and recently our children have been involved in designing book covers for external competitions and our year 6 class took part in the 500 word story competition.

We are in the process of developing our classroom reading areas and setting up reading challenges across the school to promote the reading of a range of texts.



## Writing

In our school, we are passionate about developing enthusiastic and creative writers; children are given the opportunity to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, not only within our daily English lessons, but across the curriculum.

We follow the Ready, Steady Write scheme from EYFS all the way through to year 6. We use high quality texts to inspire and teach writing across a range of genres. Writing is well planned with clear sequencing of skills and progression to develop every child's learning.

Children develop their skills in spelling, handwriting, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation and are taught how to edit and re-draft their writing. Our aim is to nurture every child to be confident and fluent writers.

Through daily lessons (Years 1 - 6) and (2 - 3 focussed inputs a week in Year R) Ready Steady Write empowers teachers to provide high-quality teaching of writing through high-quality literature. These detailed units of work centre on engaging, vocabulary-rich texts, with a wealth of writing opportunities within and across the curriculum. They provide:

- Clear sequential Episodes of Learning
- Vocabulary learning and contextualised spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Wider reading for the wider curriculum
- Example Texts linked to writing outcomes
- A wealth of supporting resource

Our English curriculum is developed around a sequence of high quality age-appropriate texts, using Literacy Count's Ready Steady Write units of learning. We use each book to create opportunities to:

- develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to use and apply across the wider curriculum, through sentence accuracy sessions;
- explore the Writing structure and features of different genres, identifying the purpose and audience;
- plan and write an initial piece of Writing with a clear context and purpose before evaluating the effectiveness of Writing by editing and redrafting.

Building on this foundation, we teach literacy using a range of strategies which include:



- Group Discussion – Children discuss and interrogate new ideas in a small group or whole class setting. They listen to and value each other's ideas whilst taking on board feedback so as to improve their own explanations.
- Partner Talk – Children work in partners to discuss their ideas. They are able to explain their ideas about texts they have read and prepare their ideas before they write.
- Questioning – Teachers use a range of questioning strategies to establish children's current understanding and develop their learning.
- Modelled Writing – Teachers model Writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the Writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the children to utilise in their own work. This happens daily, through sentence accuracy
- Shared Writing – Teachers use the ideas from the children to create shared pieces of Writing. This enables the children to see the Writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.
- Editing – All children are signposted to regular opportunities for reviewing and editing their own and the work of others.
- Working walls – Teachers and children regularly update working walls to ensure learning is documented within a unit of work.

Class teachers ensure that the Writing process is clearly evident on working walls, with modelled examples being available to all pupils as the sequence of lessons develops.

### **Working Walls and Table Resources**

Each class is expected to develop an English working wall which adapts daily with teaching. Displays should model the writing process and scaffolds needed for children to apply to their own writing. Spellings, handwriting and supporting phonics materials should also be displayed within the classroom to aid children's writing. Sentence accuracy checkers are available to all children, both in their books and in the environment. Staff will model the expectations throughout the curriculum.

## **Inclusion**

### **Children with English as an additional language:**

We believe it is vital that children who have English as an additional language have English modelled accurately by all staff at school. Collaborative work with peers (where English is their first language) is essential and EAL children should be provided with consistent opportunities for this verbal interaction. All teachers include a range of strategies to support children with EAL which includes:

- Teacher and peer modelling and consistent use of visual support
- Repetition and recasting of language features
- Word banks and scaffolded speaking and listening activities
- Resources that include images to secure language understanding



- Use of technology to support interpretation of Example Texts

Teachers work with the SENDCO to best meet the needs of individuals within their classes. Children who are new to English are assessed and support is put in place by the SENDCO to help them make rapid progress.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs:**

Some children experience learning difficulties, which affect their progress in English. Class teachers inform the SENDCO if they are concerned that a child may have underlying learning difficulties. Some children then receive SEN support. This may include:

- scaffolds and supports to develop writing ideas and language acquisition
- technology to support the generation of ideas, develop words banks and plan and write
- explicit instruction, including the modelling of sentences, paragraphs, planning and editing – with opportunities for the children to practice modelled techniques
- a focus on cognitive and metacognitive strategies to help children articulate their learning
- flexible groupings to ensure peer support and appropriate level of challenge

Confident and competent writers:

Children are given opportunities to deepen their knowledge in writing and to effectively draw upon their reading when constructing texts. Writing groups and differentiation. Lesson plans for Ready Steady Write include appropriate challenge and these are considered when delivering lessons.

## **Spellings**

At Southam St James Primary School, we follow the Twinkl's Spelling scheme to teach spellings effectively. The children have a weekly spelling session where the new spelling rule is introduced, and time is given to go through the words they are learning and their meanings. This structured approach ensures systematic progression and helps solidify retained memory, allowing students to build a strong foundation in spelling that supports their overall literacy development. The children have weekly spelling tests to reinforce their learning, and misspelled words in their work are corrected to promote accuracy.

## **Handwriting**

In EYFS and Year 1, we teach letter formation using our formation phrases, which make a link between the mnemonic and the letter. As per the Department for Education guidance we do not teach cursive. Handwriting is an identified area that we are continuing to develop, we follow the Twinkl Handwriting scheme to ensure there is clear, sequenced progression across the key stages which can be delivered in a succinct manner. From years 1-6 all classes have a weekly timetable 20-minute slot to



learn formation and practise their handwriting. Letter formation is a focus when marking and opportunities to correct formation are being developed.

## **Speaking and Listening**

We value the importance good speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and give children opportunities to develop these skills through a range of activities including; word games, group and whole class discussions, reciting poetry, debates, drama and role play.

## **Associate to The Royal Shakespeare Company**

We are a Royal Shakespeare Company Associate School, which provides the children with specialist workshops, tours and performances both to watch and to take part in.



## **IMPACT**

The innovative practices used across Southam St James provide a strong foundation and opportunities for children to collaborate and develop social skills both indoors and out. This curriculum design ensures that the needs of individual and small groups of children can be met within the environment of quality first teaching, supported by targeted, proven interventions where appropriate. In this way it can be seen to impact in a very positive way on children's outcomes. High quality visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and provide opportunities for developing fluency, reading for pleasure and writing for a purpose. Children have opportunities to share their learning with each other, their parents and carers and other learners through school-based exhibitions, performances, competitions and events. Developing their independence and motivation as learners and their sense of responsibility as future citizens is at the heart of all our teaching and learning. As a result, we have a community of enthusiastic writers who enjoy showcasing their developing literacy knowledge and skills. They are confident to take risks in their writing, and love to discuss and share their ideas.

## **Assessment**

Teachers draw upon observations and continuous assessment to ensure children are stretched and challenged and to identify those children who may need additional support. Formative assessment of Writing and Reading is completed through teachers' daily feedback to inform future planning. Teachers use the children's everyday writing and adapt models and input to meet their current needs. For writing teachers also complete a Reflecting on Unit outcomes document after each half termly unit, to identify next steps and the subsequent units are amended to include these focuses. Daily sentence accuracy work is carefully monitored to ensure children are constructing sentences both coherently and accurately. Termly staff meetings allow for whole school moderation of writing to deepen understanding of standards.

Subject leaders will analyse termly data and address areas for curriculum development. Children's attainment, progress and barriers to learning will be discussed in half termly Pupil Progress Meetings with senior leaders and clear actions to work on will be planned together, to support pupils and staff in closing gaps.