**The 2014 English Curriculum**

"The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the written and spoken word, and develop a love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment."

The new 2014 curriculum gives emphasis to reading for pleasure, grammar and the development of good handwriting and spelling. There is also an emphasis on children having books read aloud to them. As well as this there is a requirement for children to use discussion in order to learn, and be able to make formal presentations across other areas of the curriculum, particularly in English, maths and science.

“It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education."

The Programmes of Study include exhaustive spelling rules and guidelines for each year, as well as explanations of grammar which pupils are expected to know.

**Summary of English 2014 curriculum:**

* A much stronger emphasis on reading for pleasure (and also on using systematic phonics to teach children to read fluently);
* A focus on spelling including pupils being able to spell words on spelling lists for each key stage
* Grammar objectives are clear including correct use of the apostrophe
* An expectation that pupils master formal English through reciting poetry, debating and presenting work
* Learning poetry by heart

**Aims of the English curriculum**

• **Reading**: the programme of study for reading consists of word reading and comprehension. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school. Comprehension skills develop through pupils’ experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction

•**Writing**, the two key dimensions in the writing programme of study are transcription and composition. Pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription, that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphological (word structure) and orthographic (spelling structure) patterns of words. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

• **Spoken language**: Teachers should ensure the continual development of pupils’ confidence and competence in spoken language. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are key factors in developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding for reading and writing. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and poems, and to prepare their ideas prior to writing. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

**Summary of key points for different age groups**

**Key Stage 1**

**Year 1**

**Phonics:** This builds on phonics learning in Year R, ensuring pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar words quickly and accurately, teaching new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs).

Pupils should be helped to read words without overt sounding and blending after they have read them a few times, with extra practice if required. Those who are still working towards the early learning goals should follow the early years’ curriculum on reading, spelling and language, but the Year 1 programme of study for books they listen to and discuss, so developing their vocabulary and grammar.

**Reading**: teachers should ensure that pupils practise their reading with books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words. They should also ensure that pupils are taught how to read words with suffixes by helping them to build on the root words they can read already.

The number, order and choice of exception words taught follows the ReadWriteInc programme. Ensuring that pupils are aware of the GPCs they contain, however unusual these are, supports spelling later. Pupils should also read unfamiliar words, and learn the meanings to extend their vocabulary, read words with contractions, and re-read books to build up fluency and confidence. The curriculum says children should develop pleasure in reading by listening to a wide range of stories and poems at a level beyond which they can read independently, becoming very familiar with fairy stories, and learning by heart and reciting rhymes and poems.

**Writing**: Spelling will be taught alongside reading, with pupils understanding and using the concept of word structure. Pupils should learn to spell words containing the 40-plus phonemes already taught, common exception words such as the, and the days of the week. Prefixes and suffixes such as un- and -ing, -ed, and -est are also required, and there will be simple dictation of known words. Pupils should be taught to compose a sentence out loud before writing it, sequencing sentences to form short narratives, and to re-read for sense. They should also be beginning to punctuate sentences and be able to use words such as capital letter, question mark, sentence and full stop to discuss what they are doing.

**Year 2**

**Phonics**: By the start of the year, pupils should be able to read all common graphemes and common words including GPCs taught already, such as shout, hand or dream. They should be "secure" with common exception words such as you, could, and people.

Teachers should focus on establishing accurate and speeding word-reading skills, and ensure pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of stories, poems and books. With spelling, there are extra challenges as pupils learn there is no obvious connection between sound and spelling for some words, such as those with -le endings or silent letters. If pupils still need to catch up with reading and spelling by using the Year 1 programme, they should still be included in Year 2 work for comprehension so that they hear new books and vocabulary with their classmates.

**Reading**: "Pupils revise and consolidate the GPCs taught in Year 1. As soon as they can read words comprising the Year 2 GPCs accurately and speedily, they move on to the Years 3 and 4 Programme of Study. The teacher should also introduce new words in the context of what they are reading to help pupils learn new vocabulary. There should be discussions around poetry, stories and non-fiction, and pupils should continue to learn poems by heart.

**Writing**: In Year 2, pupils move towards more word-specific knowledge of spelling, including homophones. The process of spelling is emphasised, that is, that it involves segmenting words into phonemes and then representing all the phonemes by graphemes in the right order. (Pupils do not need to be taught the terms ‘grapheme’ and ‘phoneme’.) Pupils should do this both for single-syllable and multi-syllabic words. There is an emphasis on reading whole books, rather than extracts, to help pupils understand how different texts are structured and increase vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

**Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)**

**Overview**: As decoding skills become increasingly secure, teaching should be directed more towards developing the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently.

They should be developing their understanding and enjoyment of stories and poetry and learning to read silently to themselves. They should also be developing their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction books about science, history, and geography.

Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy by this stage and with good sentence punctuation. Teachers therefore should be consolidating pupils’ writing skills, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology.

Joined-up handwriting is now expected to be the norm.

Pupils should become more familiar with using language in more situations including formal presentations and debate.

**Reading**: Teaching comprehension should be taking precedence over teaching word reading directly. Any focus on word reading should support the development of vocabulary. Teachers should ensure that when teaching pupils to read longer words, they are supported to test out different pronunciations. They will attempt to match what they decode to words they may have already heard but may not have seen in print: e.g. in reading technical, the pronunciation /tetchnical/ might not sound familiar, but /teknical/ should." Pupils should still be listening to and discussing a wide range of texts and learning poetry by heart. They will also be identifying recurring themes and elements in literature, and preparing poems and scripts to read aloud. There is emphasis on retrieving and recording information from non-fiction books.

**Writing**: Pupils will " increase the legibility and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant.." There is more emphasis on spelling new prefixes and suffixes, including dis-, mis-, re-, sub- inter-,ch- and their meanings and origins.

Pupils should be writing for a range of real purposes and understand the skills and processes essential to writing, such as thinking aloud to collect ideas, drafting, and re-reading to check meaning. Grammar is to be taught explicitly, including possessive apostrophes and using and punctuating direct speech. Pupils will start to learn about some of the differences between standard and non-standard English.

**Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)**

**Overview**: By the end of Year 6, pupils’ reading and writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in Year 7, across subjects and not just in English, but there will continue to be a need for pupils to learn subject-specific vocabulary.

They should be able to reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing in selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Teachers should prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that pupils can consciously control the structure of sentences in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are. This involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.

Pupils should be reading accurately and most words should be effortless. They should be able to write down their ideas quickly with "broadly accurate" grammar and punctuation.

Teachers should continue to emphasise pupils' "enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing.

**Reading**: There should be no need for further direct teaching of word reading skills for almost all pupils. If pupils are struggling or failing in this, ensure that the reasons are investigated. It is imperative that pupils are taught to read during their last two years at primary school if they enter Year 5 not being able to do so.

Reading to pupils should still include whole books, so that they are introduced to books and authors they might not choose themselves. They should also apply the skills of information retrieval and get feedback on the quality of their explanations and contributions to discussions. They will be discussing how authors use language, précising longer passages, and providing reasoned justifications for their views.

**Writing**: Pupils should be encouraged to use dictionaries and a thesaurus, spell some words with "silent" letters such as knight, continue to distinguish homophones and learn some spellings specifically (many of these are listed). Handwriting should be developed, with an understanding of how good it needs to be for different tasks.

An extensive section on composition includes an awareness of how grammar and vocabulary choices can change and enhance meaning, and the use of structures such as headlines, bullet points and underlining. Pupils should ensure they use a consistent and correct tense throughout a piece of writing, and ensure subjects and verbs agree.

They will be performing their own compositions "using appropriate intonation and volume so that meaning is clear". Pupils' grammar knowledge will include how using the passive voice affects the presentation of information, the use of expanded noun phrases, and modal verbs or adverbs.