



# **Thomas Hickman School**

## **English Policy**

### **Intent – Implementation -Impact**

**This policy was adopted by the Full Governing Board**

**SLT Member Accountable for Review**

**Deputy Headteacher – Quality of Education**

**Date of Last Review**

**Sept 25**

**Date of next review**

**Sept 2026**

**Signed: .....**

**Date: .....**

**Alan Sherwell - Chair of Governors**

Version	Summary of Changes	Date	Author(s)
Sept 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the heading 'English Planning' there is now an example of a Long Term Plan for Poetry and a LTP for a year group.</li> <li>• Under the heading 'Oracy' there is now explicit mention of Voice 21.</li> <li>• A subheading of 'fortnite of phonics' has been included under the main heading of 'Reading (including phonics).</li> <li>• A subheading explaining to use of DreamBox has been added.</li> <li>• A subheading explaining VIPERS as part of the THS Reading Workout.</li> <li>• Explanation of the Cloud Base System (Reading Cloud)</li> <li>• Explanation of Reading Eggs / Reading Eggspress under the heading 'reading at home.'</li> <li>• Reading for Pleasure now contains the 50 recommended reads for each year group.</li> <li>• Reading for Pleasure now contains information about author zooms and visits.</li> <li>• Writing – an explanation of the upcoming EEF programme to raise attainment in Yaer 5.</li> <li>• Spag – The policy stated that SPAG was taught discretly 'when appropriate.' We have changed this to ensure that SPAG is taught weekly.</li> <li>• Handwriting – Updated to the scheme 'Letter Join.'</li> <li>• Removed a section where the children complete a 'presentation promise.'</li> </ul>	21.07.25	Claire Osborne

## **Intent**

Thomas Hickman School is proud to be part of a richly diverse community and, in keeping with our philosophy, we want all our children to flourish in a safe, happy and stimulating environment. Within the context of our contagious and courageous 'Flying Start' curriculum, our integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading and Writing is designed to teach our children to speak and write fluently so they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and, through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.

Providing our children with a stimulating, language-rich environment which reflects the community to which we belong will enable them to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Developing the fundamental skills of language as a means of communication gives our children access to the rest of the curriculum and provides vital skills for future learning and living.

*"...English...gives pupils access to the rest of the curriculum and is fundamental to their educational success."*

(OFSTED Research Review Series: English, 2022)

## **Curriculum**

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

Building on the aims of the statutory frameworks and considering the unique context of Thomas Hickman School, we want our children to:

- be interested in books and read for pleasure and for information, both in school and at home – learning to read and reading to learn;
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage;
- have an interest in words and their meaning and a growing vocabulary, including a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing as well as other areas of their learning;
- have fluent and legible handwriting;
- understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell confidently, fluently and with understanding;
- develop an awareness of purpose and audience for both written and oral language and develop an understanding of how purpose and audience can dictate form and language choices;
- be able to reflect on and accurately evaluate their own and others' contributions, feeding back sensitively and acting on advice as appropriate;
- write confidently in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to a range of situations;
- be confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works (i.e. grammar, spelling and punctuation);
- plan, draft, revise, edit and publish their own writing;
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, demonstrated through making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

# **Implementation**

Quality texts, which both complement and deepen the understanding of each Field of Study, are selected to inspire children's speaking and listening and reading and writing. Whilst our English curriculum is not genre-led, we do not underestimate the importance of children developing an understanding of the form, purpose, audience and language features of different types of writing. This is even more imperative given the increasing amount of time our children spend using digital communication technology.

In addition to the main text chosen to inspire each unit, resources such as: digital texts, picture books, paintings, songs, poems, lyrics, TV programmes, film and media clips are also used as a stimulus to engage our children throughout the curriculum.

As they grow throughout the school, children will craft their own English Anthology; this will be created from 'publishing' pieces of writing selected from work children have written either in English lessons or in other curriculum areas. The pieces to be included will be guided by adults but, ultimately, will be the child's choice. The anthologies will be kept in school and moved up with the children but there will be opportunities for the children to share them with their adults at various points throughout the year. The anthology will be presented to children when they leave Year 6 as a record of their writing journey throughout the school.

In English lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1 & 2, the writing form is frequently prescribed and modelled in order to develop children's knowledge base. However, at least one opportunity each term will be given for children to choose their own written response to a stimulus e.g. in response to a school trip or a given stimulus, and children will be guided through the planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing process for whatever type of writing they choose to do. In line with Reading and Maths, children will also undertake a completely independent piece of writing each term to give them the opportunity to apply the new skills and knowledge they have developed. This piece will be chosen carefully by teachers so that it enables children to draw upon their learning and show the best of what they can do without requiring them to apply skills to which they have not yet been exposed.

At Thomas Hickman School, we understand that children learn best when there is a genuine purpose to their learning. Therefore, whenever possible, the writing that children are asked to produce, will have an authentic purpose and audience e.g. they will never be asked to write a 'recall' recount of a trip or experience but rather use the trip as a stimulus for their writing.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

As per the revised EYFS curriculum, there is a key focus on the prime areas of learning (Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal Social and Emotional Development) in order to fully develop readiness for literacy skills. Through immersion in a print-rich environment, THS promotes a reading culture and develops children's speaking and listening skills through the use of the ShREC model. In addition, children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent their own ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult-led and child-initiated activities;
- In the summer term of Pre-School (for those who are ready), and from week 1 in Reception, children have daily discrete phonics sessions.

## **Key Stage 1 (Y1 and 2)**

Children are given opportunities to learn to:

- speak confidently and listen to what others have to say;

- read and write independently and with enthusiasm and stamina;
- use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

### **Key Stage 2 (Y3-6)**

Children are given opportunities to learn to:

- adapt the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences;
- read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning within them;
- explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

All teachers of early reading use Read, Write, Inc. (which is a validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme) in order to teach children to read effectively and efficiently. Year 5 and 6 children learn through RWI's 'Fresh Start' programme. The Phonics and Reading Leaders support teachers to quickly identify children who are not keeping up with their peers and ensure that targeted support is put in place through 1:1 tutoring.

From Year 1 – 6, children have a daily whole class English lesson. Classroom environments, which reflect our school's diversity, promote a reading culture and help to develop speaking and listening, with a particular focus on modelling and expecting correct prosody.

Research shows that spelling, and grammar and punctuation skills are best taught when driven by quality texts. Teachers use these texts as a model of excellence, supporting children to analyse them in detail before providing opportunity for them to 'have a go' at practising the skill and then expecting them to apply the skills when writing for a particular purpose and specific audience. Teachers model the writing process to children, explicitly sharing their thinking to encourage children's metacognition. In this way, children develop their understanding of the text alongside the techniques expert authors use to achieve their purpose. They are also provided with clear models to promote sustained composition and given many opportunities to apply their writing skills to other curricular areas. Children also benefit from discrete reading, spelling, grammar and handwriting sessions as necessary for their developing needs. To encourage 'Reading for Pleasure', and further develop accurate prosody, there are opportunities every day for children to read independently and to be read to by an adult.

## **English Planning**

We carry out the curriculum planning for English in three phases - long-term, medium-term and short-term. The National Curriculum in England (2014) and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) detail the objectives and coverage for each year, or phase in the case of KS2. Our medium term plans detail the main teaching units for each term and outline the driving and supporting texts along with linked poetry and non-fiction and the specific spelling, punctuation and grammar which will be the focus for that unit. These units are linked to each Field of Study through the chosen text, providing opportunities for reinforcement and enrichment and many opportunities for children to be immersed in a range of high-quality texts. These plans define what we teach and ensure purpose and balance.

***Example of LTP Poetry overview:***

Each year group has been assigned three poetry types to teach as a writing unit in English through the academic year. Please see below for an outline. Further details to support teacher's when planning each poetry unit are provided in this document.

	<b>Free Verse</b>	<b>Visual</b>	<b>Structured</b>
<b>EYFS</b>	Short list poems	Simple shape poems	Reciting rhyming poems – nursery rhymes and
<b>1</b>	Alphabet List poem	Shape poem / concrete poems	Riddles
<b>2</b>	Poems using onomatopoeia and alliteration	Diamantes	Acrostic poems
<b>3</b>	Poems using similes		Limericks
<b>4</b>	Poems using metaphors		Question & Answer poems
<b>5</b>	Narrative poems		kennings Haikus
<b>6</b>	Poems using personification	Blackout poetry	Cinquains or Tanka Rhyming Couplets Rhyming couplets – themed

**Poems for children to perform off by heart**

Please select one to explore with the children and get them to recite from memory during an academic year.

(Highlighted poems are the poems chosen for the academic year 2023-2024)

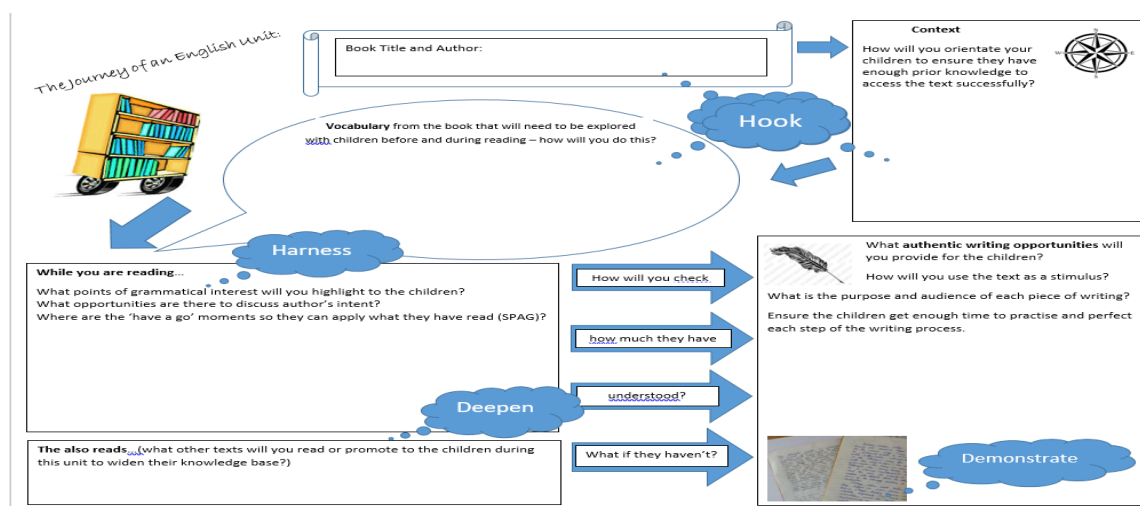
EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<i>Two Little Dickie Birds</i>	<i>Now We Are Six</i> by AA Milne	<i>Buckingham Palace</i> by AA Milne	<i>On The Nong Ning Nang</i> by Spike Milligan	<i>Life Doesn't Frighten Me</i> by Maya Angelou	<i>The Tyger</i> by William Blake	<i>In Flander's Fields</i> by John McCrae
<i>Humpty Dumpty</i>	<i>I Opened A Book</i> by Julia Donaldson	<i>The Moon</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson	<i>The Crocodile</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson	<i>Please Mrs Butler</i> by Allan Ahlberg	<i>The Tale Of Custard The Dragon</i> by Ogden Nash	<i>Meeting Midnight</i> by Carol Ann Duffy
<i>Twinkle Twinkle Little Star</i>	<i>Tippy Tappy</i> by Michael Rosen	<i>The Rhythm Of Life</i> by Michael Rosen	<i>The Adventures of Isobel</i> by Ogden Nash	<i>The Quangle Wangle's Hat</i> by Edward Lear	<i>The Highwayman</i> by Alfred Noyes	<i>The Way Through The Woods</i> by Rudyard Kipling
<i>Hot Cross Buns</i>	<i>The Morning Rush</i> by John Foster	<i>Plum</i> by Tony Mitton	<i>Nature Trail</i> by Benjamin Zephaniah	<i>From A Railway Carriage</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson	<i>The Charge Of The Lightbrigade</i> by Alfred Lord Tennyson	<i>The Jabberwocky</i> by Lewis Carroll
<i>Incy Wincy Spider</i>	<i>Caterpillar</i> by Christina Rossetti	<i>Fruit Picking</i> by Jack Ousbey	<i>The Book</i> by Michael Rosen	<i>Sick</i> by Shel Silverstein	<i>Still I Rise</i> by Maya Angelou	<i>McCavity The Mystery Cat</i> by T.S Eliot
<i>Sing a Song of Sixpence</i>	<i>Here Is The Seed</i> by John Foster	<i>See Me Walking</i> by Clive Webster	<i>Leap Like A Leopard</i> by John Foster	<i>Mr Moore</i> by David Harmer	<i>Words Are Ours</i> by Michael Rosen	<i>Ozymandias</i> by Percy Bysshe Shelley

**Example of LTP English Planning:**

Year 1	Autumn	Spring	Summer
	<p><b>FOS: BIRDS THROUGH TIME (Childhood past and present.)</b></p> <p>Text 1: Once there were giants by Martin Waddell (2 weeks) <b>linked reads: The Great Big Book of Families; Living with Mum and Living with Dad; Now we are six (poem).</b></p> <p>Text 2: How to greet a gran by Donna Aspy Bhatt (2 weeks) <b>linked reads: My Grandma and Me; When Grandma Gives you a Lemon Tree; If all the World Were</b></p> <p>Text 3: Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox (2 weeks) <b>Linked Reads: 10 Little Fingers, 10 Little Toes; Memory Bottles; When I was Young.</b></p> <p><b>Autumn 2:</b> Text 4: Website <a href="http://storymuseum.org.uk/learningresources">storymuseum.org.uk/learningresources</a> and British Council learn English kids- Little Red Riding Hood (2 weeks) <b>Linked Reads: The Elves and The Shoemaker; Walk with a Wolf; Hansel and Gretel (2 versions).</b></p> <p>Text 5: The three little pigs (ladybird first) and The True Story of the Three Little Pigs and Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes (2 weeks) <b>Linked Reads: Other Revolting</b></p>	<p><b>FOS: London's Calling (Bright Lights, Big City)</b></p> <p>Text 1: Coming to England by Joella Benjamin (2 weeks)</p> <p>Text 2: Katie in London by James Mayhew (1 week)</p> <p>Text 3: Beginning History: The great fire of London &amp; The Great Fire of London – Emma Adams (2 weeks) Toby and the Great Fire of London</p> <p><b>Poetry: Performance Caterpillar by Christina Rossetti (1 week)</b></p> <p><b>Spring 2:</b></p> <p>Text 4: London's children's map by Guy Fox (Plus a range of tourist leaflets) (1 week)</p> <p>Text 5: The Tower Bridge Cat by Tee Dobinson (1 week)</p> <p>Text 6: The Queen's knickers &amp; The King's pants (2 weeks)</p> <p>The Lion and The Mouse and Clever Rabbit and the Lion</p>	<p><b>FOS: Children of the revolution</b></p> <p>Text 1:</p> <p>Text 2: The disgusting sandwich by Gareth Edwards</p> <p>Text 3: Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper</p> <p>Text4: How I grow / The Tiny seed</p> <p><b>Summer 2</b></p> <p>Oliver's Vegetables by Viviane</p> <p><b>Poetry: Riddle for a piece of fruit</b></p> <p>Look for Non-Fiction books about seeds / growing</p> <p>Text 7: Isadora Moon goes to school</p> <p><b>Performance poem: Here is the seed by John Foster</b></p>

## The Journey of a Unit

Senior leaders have mapped out what the 'journey' of each unit should look like. After reading the lead and supporting texts in full, teachers should use their formative assessment alongside the MTP to make any adaptations to the 'journey' to accurately reflect the needs of their cohort. Teachers will always 'have a go' at all the writing tasks for themselves, before completing their short term plans, so they are clear on their expectations of what they want the children to produce and the input they will need to provide to teach the necessary skills. This will also support teachers in identifying both aspects of the focus text which will need deeper analysis as well as the opportunities for using other texts and mediums as inspiration.



Below is an explanation of each part of the journey, outlining its purpose.

**Context:** Research shows that comprehension is directly impacted by understanding of the world (Daniel Willingham, 2018) and the context of what is being read because writers often leave out information, relying on prior knowledge to 'fill in the blanks'. To enable children to fully benefit from the chosen book, it is important that they are familiar with the context so this will need to be explored if the setting, characters, style etc. of the

book will be unfamiliar to them. This in itself could provide further opportunities for both reading and writing for purpose.

*Vocabulary:* Research (Solomon King, 2018) suggests we need to know 95% of the words in a text in order to effectively comprehend its meaning. Therefore, teachers will pre-teach challenging vocabulary so that children are confident and comfortable with it when they come across it in the book. Teachers will also encourage discussion about the vocabulary choices the author has made to reinforce the concept of author intent. This vocabulary will be identified before starting the unit and shared with support staff so they can better support the children. Vocabulary can also be sent home via Google Classroom as appropriate to enable children to practise reading the words and using them in context. Throughout the unit and beyond, teachers will encourage children to use the new vocabulary in order to help them retain it.

*Authentic Writing Purposes:* Children write better when they are writing for genuine reasons for a 'real' audience. Teachers will use the class text as a 'springboard' for the writing opportunities they present to the children and ensure that children understand the purpose for which they are writing. Children need to know the bigger picture to enable them to see how they are building up to a piece of writing. All adults working in the class should have a clear understanding of the purpose of the writing and how this is being built up over the unit in order to provide appropriate support as necessary. This will be reinforced by the teacher's own 'have a go' piece of writing.

*Link to other Reading:* Children's understanding develops quicker when they are able to make connections between their learning. Therefore, teachers will provide fiction and non-fiction books which link to the class text and their Field of Study, for the children to choose from. These should be displayed in the classroom and the teacher should plan opportunities for the children to explore these texts or borrow them if appropriate.

*Explore Grammatical Points of Interest:* By knowing the text well, teachers will be able to share with the children the way in which language, punctuation and grammar has been manipulated by the author **as they are reading**. Teachers will choose specific techniques or objectives for the children to 'have a go' at in order for them to practise the skills they will need to apply in their own writing.

Class teachers complete short-term plans, using the '5-minute lesson plan', to outline the specific Learning Objectives for each lesson and detail how Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, and Speaking and Listening objectives are integrated, as well as giving the details of 'the journey of the lesson'. Lesson plans are updated daily in response to teacher's formative assessment and this is reflected in the plan for following lesson as it details how the lesson will meet the needs of all children through use of reasonable adjustments and additional resources, including adults. Teachers use their assessment and feedback books to record particular needs for those who may need extra support or additional challenge.

## Oracy: Speaking & Listening

"A language-rich environment is one in which adults talk with children throughout the day." (The Reading Framework, 2023)



### **What is oracy?**

Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language.

## ***Why a focus on Oracy?***

In school, oracy is a powerful tool for learning; by teaching students to become more effective speakers and listeners we empower them to better understand themselves, each other and the world around them. It is also a route to social mobility, empowering all students, not just some, to find their voice to succeed in school and life.

Through a high quality oracy education students learn through talk and to talk. This is when they develop and deepen their subject knowledge and understanding through talk in the classroom, which has been planned, designed, modelled, scaffolded and structured to enable them to learn the skills needed to talk effectively.

## ***The Oracy Framework:***

The deliberate, explicit and systematic teaching of oracy across phases and throughout the curriculum will support children and young people to make progress in the four strands of oracy outlined in the Oracy Framework.

Thomas Hickman School are taking part in the Voice 21 Oracy programme. Voice 21 is on a mission to **transform the learning and life chances** of young people **through talk**, so that all children can use their voice for success in school and in life.

At Thomas Hickman School we recognise the importance of spoken language in children's development across the whole curriculum and that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. We support our children to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life, through a broad range of opportunities, including debates, class assemblies, talk partners, reading buddies, drama activities and performances for 'live' audiences, and through adults modelling effective use of language and engaging children in meaningful exchanges.

Oral skills are directly taught, modelled and sensitively encouraged in whole class and small group settings throughout the curriculum and during wider and extra-curricular activities. Interactive teaching approaches and a variety of communication strategies are used to engage all children in order to raise standards. As a 'no hands-up' school, teachers use a range of strategies for children to feedback their understanding to ensure 100% participation in lessons. These include, but are not limited to, the use of Talk to your partner (TTYP) to engage every child in discussing every question, choose two, lolly sticks, word waves, 'popcorn' and choral response.

Our aims for learning and teaching within speaking and listening are to enable children to:

- Listen to and make sense of what they hear;
- Follow verbal instructions, with or without non-verbal cues;
- Understand what good listening is;
- Know how to respond during discussions, conversations and when information is given or asked for;
- Use communication, including talk, to communicate their needs and to develop and express their ideas;
- Develop the skills of turn-taking and working collaboratively with others;

Teachers plan opportunities across the whole curriculum for all children to play an active part in presentations, group discussions, debates and drama activities. Digital recordings and photographs are a means of capturing progress and keeping records. Drama is a useful way to improve speaking and listening skills and it also boosts attainment in reading and writing, as well as building children's confidence and esteem. Children are encouraged to appreciate drama both as participants and observers, learning how to be a good audience.

# Reading (including phonics)

In Nursery and pre-school, children are read to regularly in order to foster a love of stories and a desire to be able to read for themselves. Adults often re-read stories so the children can join in with rhymes and repeated phrases. Alongside this, children are encouraged to hear and distinguish sounds in the environment to develop their phonological awareness.



In the summer term of pre-school, children who are showing a strong phonological awareness will begin to learn the set 1 sounds through the RWI for Nursery programme.

Our children learn to read effectively and quickly using the **Read, Write, Inc. Phonics** programme. The programme teaches children to:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud fluently and with expression
- Apply the sounds they learn when writing words
- Acquire good letter formation

Children rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly and learning is consolidated daily. Children have frequent practice in reading common exception words (high frequency words with irregular spellings) known as 'red words'.

In order for children to gain confidence and believe, early on, that they are readers, they need to experience success. Therefore, children are provided with books which are closely matched to their increasing phonic knowledge and include only the common exception words they have been taught. Re-reading and discussing these books supports children's fluent decoding and understanding.

Children are grouped homogeneously, according to their progress in reading. Children are assessed every half term by staff who are trained to undertake the RWI assessments; this is monitored by a member of SLT to ensure consistency. Children's progress is tracked to give us an indication of their progress relative to their starting points. Children who join THS throughout the year are assessed as soon as possible so they can be appropriately placed and their progress tracked accordingly. Once all children have been assessed, they are regrouped according to the sounds they can read and the words they can decode as well as their speed of reading. If a RWI teacher believes a child in their group has made significant progress and could move up a group in between assessment points, they should inform the phonics leader who will arrange for the child to be assessed and placed appropriately.

Pupils who are making slower progress and those with identified SEND are supported for however long it takes until they can read. Leaders will identify any child who is 'stuck' or at risk of falling behind, whatever their age, and assign a one-to-one tutor to deliver the RWI tutoring programme daily, in addition to their phonics lesson. One-to-one tutors are fully trained and tutoring is monitored regularly by SLT with progress being tracked regularly.

The RWI programme has detailed lesson plans so reading teachers can focus on preparing their lesson and ensuring that they have the resources ready for each activity as they understand that every second counts in our bid to get every child reading. The lesson plans provide the guidance but our reading teachers use their formative assessment to ensure that they deliver lessons which are carefully matched to the needs of the children in their group. Each reading teacher will have a copy of each child's most recent assessment to enable

them to address any gaps in knowledge. Every activity is thoroughly prepared and has a clear purpose which reading teachers explain explicitly to children at the beginning of each activity so children understand what they are learning and why.

To ensure effective teaching of the RWI phonics programme, THS is committed to a continuous cycle of Professional Development. We subscribe to the Ruth Miskin portal so staff have constant access to development materials and a fully committed consultant who is available to support us both remotely and through annual development days. In addition to this, the Phonics and Reading Leaders monitor lessons regularly and offer in the moment coaching to ensure reading teachers are step perfect and enabling the children to make maximum progress. The Phonics Leader uses assessment data and monitoring as well as feedback from reading teachers to plan weekly practice times which are attended by all reading teachers. If a Reading Teacher cannot attend any practice time, the Reading Leader prepares an online pathway so they can catch-up with the focus for that week. At the practice time, reading teachers watch a CPD video and then work with a partner to walk through the steps for that part of the lesson and the practise the steps, taking it in turns to ensure each person is step perfect. The Reading Leader is available to support and coach as necessary.

We hold regular information sessions for parents so they know how their children are being taught to read and the best ways for them to support. One way in which we achieve this is hosting a **'Fortnight of Phonics'** where parents and carers are invited to attend their child's phonics kesson.

All children stay in a RWI phonics group until they have completed the programme. Any child who falls behind the expected progress will also receive 1:1 tutoring on a daily basis to help them keep up with their peers. As children move through year 3 and 4, any who have still not completed the programme will continue to have daily lessons and 1:1 tutroing under the RWI programme.

Any children in year 5 and 6 who are working below the expected standard in reading will have a phonics assessment to consider whether they would benefit from the RWI Fresh Start intervention. This is specifically designed for older struggling readers. The timetale is arranged to enable these children to receive daily intervention to help them make rapid progress in their reading. As with RWI, assessments are carried out regularly to ensure children are placed in the most appropriate group.

Children who are assessed as not needing phonics intervention as they are able to decode but rather struggle with their fluency are prioritised for regular reading with an adult. Adults understand that fluency is not simply reading at speed but is children reading with prosody. As well as class teachers modelling this fluency, expression and intonation daily, children who require intervention in this strand will have additional modelling from the adult running their intervention. Children will be given opportunities to re-read texts both during their intervention but also during lessons in the classroom to support their fluency and understanding.

### ***DreamBox: (Year 5 and 6)***



DreamBox Reading Plus is an adaptive online reading development programme designed to accelerate progress, improve results, and build engagement. Students begin with a baseline assessment which places each student on a personalised learning path adapted to their strengths and skills gaps to maximise progress. As a school, we have purchased licences to support those children with a scaled score of 98-99.

#### Benefits of Reading Plus

- An efficacy study proved that students using Reading Plus significantly progressed more than non-users.
- Students are offered choice and control to self-select texts aligned with their interests from a vast

online library.

- Regular challenges and initiatives motivate students, encourage reading for pleasure, and celebrate successes.

### **Reading Workout (Comprehension)**

Reading is taught both discretely and as an integral part of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to become confident, enthusiastic, reflective and independent readers. They experience print in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes and read for enjoyment, information and interest. Whole class reading develops listening skills, a love of stories and reading for pleasure. There is teacher-led reading of a class book or novel every day for every class during their 'reading workout', and children also have regular opportunities to read independently for sustained periods of time appropriate to their stage of reading.

Lessons cover 'VIPERS' to ensure that children have a balanced reading education.



VIPERS is an acronym used in UK primary schools to represent key reading comprehension skills aligned with the National Curriculum's reading content domains: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explaining, Retrieve, and Summarise/Sequencing. It's a method to ensure teachers ask a range of questions and students are familiar with them, focusing on understanding the text rather than the mechanics of reading.

### ***Our aims for learning and teaching within reading are to enable our children to:***

- read for and with other children and adults in a variety of situations;
- share personal preferences and opinions about books;
- understand the features of a book and how it works;
- have an interest in words and their meanings;
- use a range of strategies, which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression;
- use appropriate reading strategies to find and interpret information;
- reflect on their reading and offer a personal response to a wide range of texts;
- understand the impact of form and language on the reader;
- use inferential skills to find meaning beyond the literal;
- appreciate the tools of the writer and the techniques used to involve the reader in the text and to build these strategies into their own writing;
- appreciate the work of individual authors, illustrators and publishers;
- use a range of resources, including classroom materials, the school and local library and ICT for a range of reading materials.

The print rich school environment encourages children to interact with displays & follow instructions and signs, promoting functional language. Books are also displayed and promoted around the classroom and the whole school learning environment. The school library provides reference and reading materials for children and teachers, and each class has a weekly opportunity to visit the library so the children can change their books and

learn how to engage successfully with the library environment, including learning how to find both fiction and non-fiction books which they might be interested in. All library books are catalogued on 'Reading Cloud.'

### **Reading at home**

Children who are on the RWI phonics programme are given books to take home which are closely matched to the sounds that they know and contain the common exception words which they have practised in school. We do not expect parents to teach their children to read, that is the teacher's job, but we do ask for parents to give the children the opportunity to practise and 'show off' their reading at home. Children should read each book multiple times as this will improve their fluency and aid with expression and understanding. Teachers ensure that children who are still learning to read have appropriate videos available to them so they can watch them regularly at home and practise the sounds and strategies they have learnt in school. These videos are updated each half term to reflect the current learning for the group the child is in.

Children who have completed the RWI programme can choose from a range of reading books offered by their teacher which have been banded together to enable children to build vocabulary and stamina over time. Teachers ensure that children are offered books which are engaging and cover a range of interests relevant to the children and also that they are age-appropriate. The selection will include a range of genres and styles of book.

### ***Reading Eggs / Reading Eggspress:***



All children at THS have a login to Reading Eggs / Reading Eggspress. This is used as an online reading platform for homework.

Reading Eggs is a web-based learning program designed to help children ages 2-13 learn to read. It uses interactive games, songs, and activities to make learning engaging and fun. Reading Eggs is designed to be self-paced and easy to follow, with lessons, e-books, and assessments to support children's reading development.

### **Reading for pleasure**

All children have the opportunity to visit the library on a weekly basis and are encouraged to take home a library book each week to share at home. Children are welcome also to borrow books from the class reading corner and the teacher's reading trolley, as well as the reading trolleys which belong to non-class based staff, including the deputy head and head teacher. We believe that children should have a choice in their reading materials and have the right to change their minds if the book they have chosen does not appeal to them.

Adults are encouraged to actively engage children in informal 'book talk' to both validate their experiences and provide recommendations: this means that adults need to have up-to-date knowledge of current children's books by regularly engaging in reading children's literature and be pro-active in ensuring that the choices available to the children in their class are relevant and of a high quality.

Teachers regularly update their book corners to remove any damaged or unused books and should rotate the stock to give children a fresh choice, although popular books can remain within the selection to give all children the chance to borrow them should they wish. It is also important that books which have been shared as a class are then available for the children to choose independently as many children enjoy re-reading the same book several times – this should not be discouraged! Children should also be exposed to a range of fiction and non-fiction reading materials including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, graphic novels, comics, poetry and historical fiction.

The school partake in reading for pleasure activities daily, this includes Magazine Monday and Fiction Friday.



Classrooms proudly display the up-to-date 50 recommended reads for their yeargroup. Children and staff are encouraged to ensure that they read these titles throughout the year.

We also engaged in author visits and author zooms.

## Writing

At Thomas Hickman School we want our children to develop as independent, enthusiastic and expressive writers, who are able to write in a meaningful way. We encourage children to regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others. Children are encouraged to develop both their gross and fine motor skills to prepare them for the experience of writing. Children benefit from meaningful experiences to write about as well as being immersed into a subject before being expected to write about it. Immersion in reading, talk and preparation for writing is essential to the writing development process.

When at the emergent stage of writing, children are encouraged to mark-make as a way of representing their ideas and are then encouraged to read this back, demonstrating an understanding that text carries meaning. In conjunction with regular phonics activities, children can then progress to the use of symbols and recognisable letters in their mark-making. Other skills that will be developed include writing from left to right and grouping symbols or letters in order to represent a word. The compositional and transcriptional skills are taught alongside the creative aspects.

Children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts, using quality texts as a model, and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Writing is taught through various strategies:

Teachers use **modelled writing** as a way of teaching the writing process and giving children an insight into what the thought process might be like for a writer. They model writing at a level which demonstrates their high expectations of all children and encompass all the features the children will need to use to be successful in their own writing. Through their modelling, they demonstrate the processes of re-reading to check their writing makes sense and the decisions a writer makes regarding language and punctuation choices, 'Thinking out Loud' to make these choices explicit. This is teacher-led writing without contributions from the children who are actively listening to the teacher-expert modelling the writing process.

**Shared writing** is led by the teacher as the expert writer, with contributions from the children. This is teacher-led writing with children watching and contributing ideas after opportunities to share their thinking with a talk partner. Shared writing is not exclusive to English sessions and can also be used effectively within foundation subjects. The emphasis may be on the generation of ideas, grammatical awareness, spelling and phonics, compositional, transcriptional, presentational and text-level skills or other key strategies needed in writing. During shared writing, when the teacher encourages the children to generate many ideas, these will be recorded to act as a bank from which the children can select during the drafting of their own writing.

Throughout the school, children need opportunities to develop their confidence and practise their writing skills independently. All writing activities have a purpose and high-quality writing will be promoted through book making, publication or presentation to another audience. The time children are expected to sustain their writing for will increase as they progress through the school and will be appropriate to both their age and stage of writing.

Our aims for learning and teaching within writing are to enable our children to:

- Explore a variety of writing activities;
- Use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to a reader;
- Write in a grammatically accurate way;
- Develop an increasingly wide vocabulary suited to the purpose and audience;
- Understand and use the conventions of written language;
- Use teacher modelling as a means to understand the writing process;
- Understand how writers can have an effect on the reader;
- Incorporate ideas and skills of other authors into their own writing;
- Collaborate with others during the writing process;
- Draft and redraft, making changes as appropriate;
- Use ICT as a tool for writing;
- Use spelling and punctuation accurately and with confidence.

The school environment celebrates quality writing through displays of work in both handwritten and typed form as well as signs and labels. All classrooms have purposeful working walls and are well-equipped with resources to aid writing on the help your-self which children can access independently.



As a school we also stay up-to-date with CPD opportunities. We always explore ways to improve teaching and learning. We are taking part in a major research project to explore the impact of Shakespeare's works and RSC teaching approaches on Year 5 pupil writing, and give teachers innovative tools to improve it.

Rehearsal Room Writing is a major research project, funded by the Department for Education's Accelerator Fund, exploring the impact of Shakespeare's works and RSC teaching approaches on Year 5 pupil writing

## **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is taught using the objectives outlined in the Revised National Curriculum (2014). It details the expectations for the teaching of grammar and the agreed terminology (from the NC glossary) which must be used by each year group. Spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are embedded within English lessons but will also be taught discreetly once a week. Grammar objectives to be covered each term are outlined on the English Overview.

When spelling becomes automatic, children can concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's self-image. In order to help children become more able spellers, confident to use an increasing range of vocabulary in their own writing, the teaching

of spelling at Thomas Hickman School is as investigative as possible. We aim to use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins, structure and meaning of words and their parts, the shape and sound of words, the letter patterns within them and the various ways they can learn these patterns. Teachers use Twinkl resources as a starting point and adapt them to suit the needs of their children. All children should be exposed to their year group spelling rules and strategies, regardless of their current reading attainment.

In Reception and KS1, daily phonics is the key to the children's learning of spelling. Children are taught to blend sounds to read and segment words into their sounds to spell, using 'Fred Fingers'. At the same time, they learn words which are not phonetically regular (Red Words) understanding that the 'tricky letter' is not spelt in the way we would expect from its sound. Phonics continues to be taught as both whole class revision and as an intervention, until all children are secure in both knowledge and application.

At THS, we teach children to apply rules and spelling patterns to the ambitious vocabulary choices they are making and, if they are unsure, to have a best try, using a dictionary after finishing their first draft to check any words they are unsure of if this is age appropriate. During the assessment of children's work, adults will support children to correct spellings appropriately, in line with the 'Assessment and Feedback' policy.

The explicit teaching of spelling takes place in discrete lessons weekly. Each year group will use the 'Twinkl' overview to ensure full coverage of the spelling objectives as listed in Appendix 1 of the National Curriculum. Teachers can adapt the order they teach the objectives to enable links to be made with their Field of Study or English Unit but must ensure each objective is explicitly taught and that children have a chance to investigate the words which follow the rule and those which are exceptions, including all of the words on the National Curriculum Statutory word list which contains words with irregular spellings which are not covered in our chosen phonics programme. Not only will this provide opportunities for over learning but will also develop the children's vocabulary and help them to gain an interest in the English language, developing an understanding of the origins of words and how they are built up from their parts.

Teachers can use the resources provided or develop their own resources to provide children with a range of activities through which they can explore the spelling rules and patterns which contribute to the complexities of English spelling. A weekly list will be sent home with an expectation that children will learn the spelling pattern or rule; this may be through over-learning activities such as Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check or providing the spellings in the form of handwriting practice, or may be a more investigative approach such as finding or sorting words which fit a particular rule or pattern. Teachers should also provide an opportunity for assessment by way of a spelling test or dictation and keep a weekly record of scores which will need to be shared with the English lead half termly.

It is an expectation that **all** children will be exposed to their year group spelling rules and word lists in order to avoid the gap widening for children who are working below the expected standard. However, as with all learning activities at THS, reasonable adjustments should be made to spelling lessons and homework to meet the needs of individual children within a class. Although the expectation is that most children will have the same, age-appropriate spelling lists, this might mean that children with SEND will have different, or fewer, words. Both class and home-learning activities should be appropriate to each child's starting point and should also take into consideration any child who shows an aptitude for spelling by ensuring sufficient challenge in the words they are provided with.

It is important that the spelling rules being taught are consistently embedded and therefore, teachers should ensure that their feedback to learners makes reference to incorrect spellings when those spellings fall under an objective which has already been taught, with an expectation that the child makes their corrections independently before seeking adult support.

## **Handwriting**



Letter-join is a comprehensive, whole-school handwriting scheme that blends traditional and digital resources to teach handwriting to children. It aims to help pupils develop neat, legible, and efficient handwriting, typically focusing on continuous cursive writing from Key Stage 2 onwards, though earlier introduction is encouraged if a child is ready.

Children will be provided with pencils and paper and will be taught how to sit in the correct position on a chair at a table in order to practise their handwriting. From year 1, children will have handwriting books to practise their letter formation and relative letter sizing under guidance from the adults and will be taught in line with National Curriculum expectations. Children will be reminded about these techniques in all lessons where there is a writing element to give them the best chance to show their best handwriting.

Children who have achieved a consistent, joined style with accurate letter formation and appropriate sizing will be given a pen licence and will write in pen in all lessons except maths. In year 6, all children will be expected to write in pen to prepare them for the transition to secondary school.

Teachers have consistently high expectations for children's handwriting and presentation in all lessons and will consistently model the correct letter formation, size and joins as appropriate to each child's stage of development. This will be done through 'live marking' as set out in the assessment and feedback policy and any children who need additional support in this area will receive targeted intervention so they can catch up quickly with their peers. Teachers will ensure that their handwriting both on the board and in children's books is a model of excellence.

## **Impact**

We intend our well-constructed, well-taught English curriculum will lead to good results over time.

Our aim is for children to complete the Read, Write, Inc. phonics programme as quickly as possible, by the spring term of year 2 as a minimum, to enable them to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level. This will allow them to read both for information, in order that they can access the rest of the curriculum, and for pleasure.

Our ambition is for our children to achieve *at least* in-line with expected national assessments in each Key stage and make good progress from their relative starting points. Furthermore, we are committed to our children achieving *at least* in line with national assessments in combined Reading, Writing and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

Our ambition is for all our children, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND to acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed and soar in life and to make at least good progress from their individual starting points during their time at THS.