



Torkington Primary School

English Policy

May 2026



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Date: May 2026

Reviewed: May 2028

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English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.

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

Taken from the New Primary National Curriculum.

Torkington Primary school has a clear, consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of English. We recognise that competence in English is fundamental to many aspects of life and is central to independent learning. We recognise the significance of proficient English skills as being a key factor in the academic and social success of our children both during their time at primary school and beyond into their adult lives.

Intent:

At Torkington we believe that all children should:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate
- be competent in transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- be competent in composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

Implementation

Implementation of the National Curriculum

In the National Curriculum for 5 - 11 year olds, English is developed through four key areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription & Composition
- Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

It is important to note that each is closely interrelated with the next, so it becomes increasingly difficult to consider one without the other(s).

Foundation Stage

At Torkington Primary School we believe that developing children' positive attitudes to literacy from the earliest stage is of paramount importance. We strive to foster these attitudes by using play, story, songs and rhymes



and provide lots of opportunities and time to talk with children about their experiences and feelings. The role of adults in supporting children is crucial to fostering their positive attitudes towards reading, writing and phonics we believe strongly that parents are our partners.

English in the EYFS is about children developing an interest and enjoyment of reading. Initially, they will be encouraged to develop reading behaviours, such as handling books carefully, holding books upright, turning pages and showing an interest in illustrations, understanding and joining in with stories, books, poetry and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, in both books and the environment. Through this children should develop a competency to read, a range of familiar words and simple sentences. Also in EYFS children take part in tales toolkit. This gives them the skills to understand how a story structure is formed. It also builds up on their descriptive language when forming a setting or character.

In the EYFS phonic skills are developed through highly focussed, short daily sessions using the recommended synthetic phonics programme 'Supersonic phonics friends'. Staff will use the programme to ensure the children use appropriate strategies to decode, blend, segment and read for meaning. We offer opportunities for parents to attend phonics workshops in order to further increase understanding of the strategies used in school.

Staff will:

- Recognise and value the role of parents/carers as prime educators in the pre schooling years and work together to develop their child's English skills through the EYFS
- Build on the child's prior knowledge and early literacy experience
- Use a variety of stimulating books including big books and IWB story books to engage and enhance the child's reading experiences. Staff will model reading behaviours and encourage children to discuss, comment, question and predict
- Make creative use of puppets, music, media and objects of reference to bring stories and themes to life.
- Create inviting and stimulating book areas, which pupils freely choose to access
- Develop an ethos for reading for pleasure through high quality daily story sessions, using a story telling approach, as well as IT and sensory Drama
- Environments will be rich in print and books, which will be used to creatively support and develop understanding of current themes, through continuous provision across topics, linking to areas of the classroom, inside and out, and displays
- Teach pupils to become confident and independent who read from a range of texts for pleasure and information
- Identify pupils who require additional targeted support and intervene at an early stage
- Use the Supersonic Phonics Friends to provide daily lessons in the systematic teaching of phonics. Children will learn strategies to decode, blend, segment and read for meaning.
- Introduce simple Guided Reading sessions when appropriate.

Key Stage 1

The principles applied in Foundation Stage for reading are viewed as being building blocks on which to develop the English skills of children further. As such, many of the structures also apply in Year 1 and 2. Children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds

Phonics

The evidence is clear that children learn to read best when they are taught using a robust programme of systematic synthetic phonics.

Reading: the next steps. Supporting higher standards in schools March 2015

Staff will continue to use the synthetic phonics programme 'Super Sonic Phonics Friends' to provide daily lessons in the teaching of phonics to ensure the children use appropriate strategies to decode, blend, segment and read for meaning. Children across Year 1 and Year 2 will be set for phonics to ensure they are working at their appropriate level of challenge and expectation. The groups and staff leading them will change regularly due to ongoing assessment and the identification of gaps in the children learning.



In 2012 a phonics screening check was introduced for pupils at the end of year 1. The check asks pupils to read 40 words, of which 20 are pseudo-words. This allows teachers to identify those pupils with a genuine grasp of decoding, and those in need of further support.

Key Stage 1 and 2

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Oracy – (see separate oracy policy)

Children should learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works. Oracy is central to the curriculum, providing the foundation for reading and writing success. Our curriculum builds oracy through the key skills:

- **Structured Discussion:** Pupils participate in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and building on the ideas of others.
- **Formal Oracy:** Specific units are dedicated to formal presentations, debates (e.g., "Introduction to Debate" in Year 5), and oral storytelling.
- **Performance:** Pupils are taught to read aloud and perform poems and play scripts using appropriate intonation, tone, and volume.

Reading

Reading is a skill essential for life and at Torkington we want our children to leave school with a love of reading. Reading is a habit and that habit needs to be grounded in what we do at school. Children need to see adults loving books, so school staff are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children. This of course includes magazines, newspapers and online reading as well as traditional books.

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Whole Class Guided Read

Teachers read with pupils a range of texts focusing on comprehension and specific features in relation to objectives and content domains using the VIPERS approach. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader. Teachers demonstrate to the class by 'thinking aloud' the skills required to be a reader. For guided reading, the text chosen should be at a level slightly higher than the majority of the class and the teacher should plan differentiated questions around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment. Within whole class guided reading we use Reading Vipers (taken from the Literacy Shed) as a way of exploring the different content domains found in the National Curriculum, allowing children to break down questions into key skills and understand how they are required to approach a text.



We aim to have regular reading sessions outside of English lessons – a minimum of three times weekly in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of medium to teach reading, including newspaper articles, video clips, extracts from novels etc., covering a breadth of topics.

Class read

Every class across the school is read to by an adult on a regular basis, fostering a love for reading through exposing the children to high quality literature. Teachers follow a diverse reading spine to enrich culture with authors and poets that are cover a wide range of protected characteristics, genres and poetry.

Phonics

As of Autumn 2024 we follow the DFE validated phonics scheme ‘Super Sonic Phonics Friends.’ All children are assessed and then grouped according to phonetic ability. Children who take part in phonics receive a 30 minute sessions on a daily basis and are assessed regularly. A learning support phonic intervention programme is used as an intervention programme in KS2.

Independent Reading

Children engage in independent, sustained reading. It provides an opportunity for pupils to read and enjoy a range of texts and to apply reading strategies. Each class has a dedicated, exciting reading area containing a range of books and text types for children to access independently.

Every class should have a range of books including:

- Poetry / plays
- Fiction – the choice of books reflects the spread of interest and reading abilities across the class, for example picture books, graphic novels, etc
- Non-fiction – as wide a range as possible, including plenty linked to the subject areas being studied
- Books from a range of cultures and in a range of languages interwoven through all collections – it may be appropriate to have some ‘focus’ boxes of books too

Individual Readers

EYFS, KS1 and KS2: Children are heard reading independently by an adult or their peers on a regular basis, changing their books when required. Children work their way through the stages according to their ability, progressing to reading literature of their choice (checked for suitability by an adult where necessary).

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils’ vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. At Torkington specific reference to vocabulary is made through the word of the week display on working walls. In Ks2 children are encouraged to use vocabulary journals to record new words and their meaning. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and ‘language about language’ listed in the curriculum. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers’ creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.



Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG sessions)

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 all 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 by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Teachers should prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that they can consciously control sentence structure in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are. Pupils should understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. This involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.

SPAG skills and knowledge are taught regularly through the teaching of reading and writing. Age appropriate content is integrated into English lessons to ensure coverage of the content, as outlined by the National Curriculum from years 1-6. Where appropriate, the learning is made exciting and fun to ensure pupils are engaged with the learning and regular opportunities to use and apply their SPAG skills are provided. A whole school approach to spellings includes the use of the Nelson spelling scheme from year 1-6. This includes learning spelling rules and the words specified in the national curriculum lists for each year group and is taught through twice weekly sessions and consolidated through spelling homework. In every English lesson from Year 1-6 there will be a focus on spelling at the start of the session through Jumpstart. This will either be to introduce a new spelling rule or consolidate an existing skill. Through jumpstart we focus on retrieval practise of spelling rules through multi-sensory approaches and dictation.

Writing.

Our writing curriculum is built upon six core Oak National Academy principles to ensure high-quality education for all pupils:

- **Knowledge and Vocabulary Rich:** We explicitly teach powerful knowledge and a broad vocabulary to support independent learning.
- **Sequenced and Coherent:** Units are logically ordered so that new learning builds on prior knowledge.
- **Evidence-Informed:** Content and pedagogical choices are backed by educational research.
- **Accessible:** Lessons are designed to be inclusive, ensuring all learners can succeed.
- **Diverse:** Our curriculum reflects a wide range of voices and cultures, such as through texts like *'Coming To England'* and *'Anna Hibiscus' Song*'.
- **Flexible:** The framework allows for teacher autonomy to adapt lessons to the specific needs of their class.

Writing is taught as a structured process where pupils learn to write for various purposes and audiences. At Torkington we follow from the writing framework, plan, draft, edit, and publish cycle within our Oak academy units. Through Narrative and Descriptive: Pupils develop storytelling and descriptive skills through units like *'Sherlock Holmes'* and *'The Iron Man'*. When writing Non-Fiction, children have clear instruction is provided for non-chronological reports (e.g., *'The Titanic'*), explanation texts (the digestive system), and biographical writing (Charles Darwin). Interweaved within the writing units ensure that pupils develop technical Accuracy, Grammar, punctuation, and spelling, focusing on devices like fronted adverbials, relative clauses, and expanded noun phrases to enhance meaning.

The curriculum follows a carefully mapped sequence from Year 1 to Year 6, ensuring clear progression in all three strands.

- **Unit Structure:** Each unit identifies necessary **prior knowledge requirements** to ensure pupils are ready for new learning.
- **Cross-Curricular Links:** Units often link to other subjects, such as Science (the digestive system) or History (*'The Titanic'*), to provide a rich context for English.



- **Assessment:** Regular monitoring through "hot tasks" and writing trackers ensures pupils are meeting age-related expectations for each text type.

Writing is developed through:

Shared Writing

This provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate writing, including the thought processes that are required. Teachers should make explicit references to genre features, as well as word and sentence level work within the context of writing. Pupils contribute to the class composition by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups or using individual his is also the time when children are given the opportunity to discuss, verbalise and refine ideas before committing to print. With knowledge of text type from shared reading sessions, children should be able to generate a list of features that they would expect to use in any writing genre about which they have learned. This can be used by teachers and children alike as one way of assessing children's writing and their understanding of the purpose and organisation.

Guided Writing

Children are given the opportunity to work as part of a small group to complete a piece of writing with the support and guidance of their teacher and peers. The group work together to begin a piece of writing and then continue independently whilst the teacher moves around the group and supports with individual needs as they arise. It is important that guided writing sessions are used with the range of abilities represented across the classroom and are planned carefully according to children's targets to promote progression in writing skills for all children.

Independent Writing

Children should be given the opportunity for a range of independent writing activities which clearly link to whole class writing objectives. These tasks will need an identified audience, clear purpose and should cover all aspects of the writing process. Children should be given the opportunity to self-assess and peer-assess writing developed by the class as a whole as part of the teaching sequence leading up to creating an extended piece of writing. Ideally, time to mark pupil's writing should be built into future lessons to allow children to go through their work with an adult, learning from their misconceptions and setting targets for future pieces of writing. As a school, we encourage cross-curricular writing opportunities where possible, using our rich and varied curriculum as an engaging stimulus for the children.

Handwriting and Presentation

At Torkington, children are taught to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. We believe a cursive style with correct letter formation must be taught as early as possible. **(see Handwriting policy)**

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Interventions to Accelerate Learning

In addition to the provision in class for all children (quality first teaching), the school provides interventions for targeted and individualised provision. Targeted provision is the responsibility of the class teacher.

Individualised provision is the responsibility of the Special Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCO). The precise interventions are guided by the needs of the child concerned and are organised as part of the overall 'provision map' in school.

Targeted interventions could include:

- Grammar for Writing
- Phonics Intervention
- Spelling support
- Handwriting intervention

Impact

Assessment is carried out in accordance with the whole school Assessment policy. The class teacher will then complete the writing tracker in front of each child's English book to show if the child has met the objective for



that text type after each hot task. This assessment is used to inform planning, set targets and monitor progress made by both the class teacher and English Leader. Every half term a selection of writing samples are collated by the English lead for assessment and monitoring purpose.

Monitoring

The monitoring and evaluating of the English policy is the responsibility of the English Team who are responsible to the Governors for the development of English throughout the school. This is to be achieved in a variety of ways outlined in our Teaching and Learning Policy. Regular audits also take place of the quality, range and types of English stimulus materials and links to other curriculum areas.

This policy will be reviewed every two years as part of our policy review cycle.