



**Rowde C of E Academy**

**Literacy Policy**

**Date agreed: September 2020**

**Review Date: July 2022**

## National Curriculum Aims:

The statutory guidance of the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of study, states that: “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. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.”

Here the importance of the teaching of English is clearly shown and cannot be understated. At Rowde, our rigorous and engaging English curriculum, promotes high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for pleasure. This ensures our children meet the aims from the National Curriculum for English to ensure that all pupils:

- 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.
- 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 clearly explain their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

## Intent:

At Rowde C of E Primary Academy, we make the teaching of English the foundation of our curriculum. Our belief is that speaking and listening, reading and writing are the keys to all learning and our ability to communicate. We are determined to help our children develop into articulate and imaginative communicators, to support and enhance their thinking and understanding of the world around them through a broad, rich, and engaging English curriculum. We mindfully endeavour to ensure that children develop a lifelong, healthy, and enthusiastic attitude towards English, to equip our students with the necessary skills and passion to support them in their forthcoming secondary education. Our aim is to ensure that every child becomes primary literate and progresses in speaking and listening, reading, and writing. We have high expectations and ambition for all our children and want them all to achieve their full potential in English during their time at Rowde.

At Rowde, we recognise our moral duty to prioritise the teaching of literacy, and we provide a language-rich environment where English is not only taught in discrete lessons but permeates the whole curriculum. We aim to inspire an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and a habit of reading widely, often and for pleasure. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening and who can use discussion to communicate and further their learning. We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge-base in literacy, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. We believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society.

As in all curriculum areas at Rowde, our Literacy curriculum gives children a further opportunity to develop and understand our key values: respect, optimism, wisdom, determination, enthusiasm and love. Through the teaching and learning of English, and an exposure to a language rich environment, our children learn about themselves, their values, rights and responsibilities, and develop their ability to empathise and take multiple perspectives. In addition, it gives our pupils the opportunity to learn more about the World around them (our history, how it works, how we impact our Earth) and better understand their place within it. We strive to ensure our pupils have access to the limitless possibilities that are contained within literature.

Our ambitions for our students are summarised in the table below:

<i>At Rowde, we are effective communicators -</i>		
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can speak with confidence, clarity and fluency.</li> <li>• We recognise the value of, and understand how, to listen actively.</li> <li>• We are confident in the value of our own opinions and can express them to others.</li> <li>• We are open-minded and value the contributions of others.</li> <li>• We adapt our language for different purposes and audiences.</li> <li>• We can converse, sustain a logical argument and respond to others appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are confident and independent readers.</li> <li>• We read for pleasure.</li> <li>• We read fluently and with expression.</li> <li>• We read for meaning and can discuss and debate the books we've read.</li> <li>• We are knowledgeable about the purpose and organisation of books.</li> <li>• We can identify appropriate reading material to support us learn about a certain topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We write for a given purpose.</li> <li>• We write imaginatively and creatively.</li> <li>• We take ownership of our writing.</li> <li>• We see writing as interesting and enjoyable.</li> <li>• We can organise, plan and edit our written work.</li> <li>• We take time with our writing to ensure that we carefully consider our sentences and vocabulary, and the impact they will have on the reader.</li> </ul>

### Implementation:

English permeates the whole of the national curriculum and therefore the whole of the curriculum within Rowde School. With this in mind, we have high expectations of our students and ensure that they apply their English skills effectively, and to the same standard, in all curriculum areas not only in literacy lessons. At Rowde, we have specific expectations outlining how English is taught in the school as a whole and within the different year groups.

#### EYFS:

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is followed to ensure continuity and progression from entering our school to the English National Curriculum in KS1 and KS2. The EYFS Curriculum is divided into Prime and Specific areas of learning and development.

<b>Prime Areas of Learning</b>	<b>Specific Areas of Learning</b>
Communication and Language	English
Listening and Attention	Reading
Understanding	Writing
Speaking	

In EYFS, all aspects of English are taught. Children learn through play, speaking and listening activities, teacher modelling, group work and self-direction. As part of the EYFS provision, children take part in a daily phonics session that is then linked to the classroom continuous provision. They develop their conceptual understanding that mark-making and writing is a form of communication.

Children in EYFS are heard read by an adult. They also begin to take part in shared reading sessions that develop their ability to hear, read, discover, question and discuss books; as well as explicitly teaching vocabulary to ensure they develop a large repertoire of language.

#### KS1:

The Key Stage One curriculum builds on that of EYFS. It initially develops a more structured approach to learning through a range of different mediums and forms leading to a more formalised learning style.

In Year 1, the children take part in daily phonics and literacy sessions, at least once a week one of these literacy sessions focuses specifically on spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG). Children are developing their ability to learn to read, therefore reading and time to read is a key part of the Year 1 experience. As part of this, children in Year 1 are heard read by an adult. They also begin to take part in book club sessions that develop their ability to hear, read, discover, question and discuss books; as well as explicitly teaching vocabulary to ensure they develop a large repertoire of language.

Year 2 builds on the learning of Year 1 with additional expectation of the KS1 SATs leading to the Key Stage One Interim Assessment. The expectations of teaching in Year 2 are the same as Year 1 with the addition of a daily SPAG focus, and the expectation that book club takes place at least four times a week.

Joined, cursive handwriting is also taught through EYFS and KS1. This develops motor memory and supports the accuracy of writing. Children are taught to join with the expectation that by the end of Year 2 the majority of children have an accurate and fluent cursive script (see handwriting guidance for further details).

#### KS2:

As in KS1, the KS2 curriculum builds on the learning that has come before. In KS2, children have regular literacy sessions which include a focus on spelling, where children are exposed to a wide range of texts and begin to learn their features, enabling them to write accurately for a given purpose. Children also take part in daily book club sessions.

#### Reading:

“By making time to read, like making time to love, we expand our time for living.”  
- Rights of the Reader by Daniel Pennac.

Five essential components of reading instruction have been identified: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. As such, the teaching and learning of reading at Rowde, supports the development of these skills with the knowledge and understanding that reading is one of the most important predictors of later academic success and can support and improve wellbeing.

Broadly, reading falls into three main areas. To begin, our children focus on '**Learning to Read**' using phonic skills and decoding strategies to understand printed language. The teaching and learning in EYFS and KS1 will focus primarily in this area, with our structured and progressive phonics programme. Nevertheless, in addition to their phonics lessons, children will read daily and in all areas of the curriculum, to begin to develop their love for literature. This supports our ambition that **we read fluently and with expression**.

In succeeding years, the emphasis will shift towards children '**Reading to Learn**' and the teaching more towards engaging children with the nuances of textual form and the study of literary conventions. The children will be taught the necessary skills to accurately read for meaning and will explore a given passage at a deeper level using skills like inference and deduction. This supports our ambition that **we read for meaning and can discuss and debate the books we've read**. They might also focus on how the writer has constructed the text to create a specific effect, unpicking their choices of both grammar and vocabulary. We sincerely hope that throughout their time here at Rowde, we can introduce them to the amazing feeling you get when you are reading a book and cannot put it down; when you must go out and find the next book in a series, just so you know what happens.

To support the teaching and learning of reading, we use Collins Big Cat as a whole-school reading programme that supports children to learn to read and to love reading. Collins Big Cat supports a journey from phonics to fluency, from EYFS and across key stages, with levelled readers that systematically increase the level of challenge, vocabulary, and stamina as children work up through the bands. Authors, illustrators, genres, subject matter and formats are all carefully chosen to appeal to children and provide a wide-range of reading experiences. This supports our ambition that **we are confident and independent readers**.

The majority of reading is taught through book club sessions. In EYFS, book club takes a variety of different forms, including modelled and shared reading. In these sessions, the children experience and read a range of literature in different formats, using their phonic knowledge to blend sounds together; as well as talking about what they can see, recall what they have read and look at how basic punctuation is used when reading. To support the

development of vocabulary, children are given the necessary experiences to understand the text (e.g. sensory walks or the use of soundscapes and pictures as scaffolds) as well as learning the meanings of words they come across in their reading. This is further supported in phonic sessions, where the children identify real and alien words.

From Year 1, book club sessions are whole-class reading lessons that focus on a specific reading objective and skill. Through the teaching of the specific reading domains, the children are better equipped to read for meaning, make connections and understand author intent – all of which supports them to develop as authors themselves. At the beginning of each book club lesson, we spend time explicitly teaching vocabulary that the children need to understand the text. We recognise the difference in the language children are exposed to through reading and, as result, we explicitly teach tier two vocabulary (precise, high utility academic words found in text but not spoken language). Our book club sessions expose the children to a wide range of literature, including high-quality fiction, but also a range of non-fiction and poetry. This supports our ambition that ***we are knowledgeable about the purpose and organisation of books and can identify appropriate reading material to support us learn about a certain topic.*** From Year Two upwards, at least one of these sessions each week involves an element of recording, where children practise responding to different questions and prompts, ensuring that they find evidence from the text to support their conclusions.

The final element of reading in Rowde is '***Time to Read***'. Children are given some time during the day to read, either the book that they are currently reading or one from the class library. At Rowde, we have a strong reading culture – where children are given the time, opportunity, skills and resources, to develop a love for reading. In our reading for pleasure time, they can share books with their friends and be immersed in their own reading choices. This supports our ambition that ***we read for pleasure.*** Teachers will monitor and support the books the children are reading, so they are, most importantly enjoyed, but also at the appropriate level and from a range of authors.

Reading cannot solely be taught in school; it has to be taught in partnership with home. As part of the home school agreement at Rowde, the expectation is that children who are working through the coloured book bands are heard at home every day. In addition to the Big Cat books, in EYFS we offer a story sack lending library. These are quality resources contained within a cloth sack which include books along a theme and puppets or games with ideas of how to use them. This aids our ambitions around reading for pleasure, enabling even our youngest students to become immersed in a book, as well as supporting the children's communication and language development. When children move into upper KS2 or onto free reading books, the expectation is that they read every day and are heard read at least twice a week. Research shows that if children read for 20 minutes daily, it supports them in developing their vocabulary, can help their mental health (increasing empathy and self-esteem) and is a predictor of their success in later life.

## **Writing**

“Without language, one cannot talk to people and understanding them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savour their songs.”

- Nelson Mandela.

At Rowde, we are determined to help our children to develop into articulate and imaginative communicators. We want children to enjoy writing with the eventual aim for them to be able to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. We want children to acquire a rich vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to use spelling rules and patterns to spell words confidently. This supports our ambition that ***we take ownership of our writing.*** In our writing lessons, the children are exposed to high-quality models, with the teacher demonstrating the writing process and ensuring that they are given time to think and generate their ideas before finalising their sentences.

Where possible, our writing units connect to our learning in other curriculum areas. We focus on topics that will capture the children's interest and give them a clear purpose to their writing. This supports our ambition that ***we see writing as interesting and enjoyable.*** In KS1 and KS2, our writing units have two components. Firstly, we spend time co-constructing a text. In our sentence stacking lessons, we start by initiating our thinking and generating our ideas

for writing. We will focus on a specific feature (or lens) which could be connected to the ideas of writing (using our senses and what the characters might think, say and do), a specific grammar focus or a writer's technique (for example: similes, personification, alliteration). Over the course of the lessons, we build a text and the children develop their understanding of the key components and important features of that text-type. In this first phase, the children are guided and supported, with vocabulary and ideas at the heart of every learning chunk. This supports our ambition that ***we write imaginatively and creatively.***

The second phase is when the children apply the skills they have developed to their own version of the text. They will try to use the same features (or lenses) as their steps to success and write, at length, independently. Once completed, it is in this second stage of writing that the children are given time and taught the skills to edit and improve their work. Focusing on three tiers, the children will revise, rewrite and reimagine parts of their writing. This supports our ambition that ***we can organise, plan and edit our written work.***

Our writing curriculum develops progressively and ensures that children are taught how to write narrative, poetry and range of non-fiction texts. Our children revisit and consolidate their skills through different units which have a high-quality model and cover the four main purposes of writing: writing to entertain, writing to inform, writing to persuade and writing to discuss. In EYFS and KS1, the children will focus mostly on writing to entertain (story, description and poetry) and inform (recount, letter, instruction). In KS2, they will continue to practise these skills, looking at more complicated texts like newspaper reports and biographies, but then also writing to persuade (advert, letter, speech) and discuss (argument, review). This supports our ambition that ***we write for a given purpose.***

### **Speaking and Listening**

At Rowde, we understand that the ability to speak and listen is fundamental to pupils' language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum, as talk underpins learning and thinking. Our ambitions for speaking and listening are supported in all of our lessons and through consistent and appropriate teacher modelling of dialogue (turn taking, offering opinions, inviting a response), listening, our core values and how to participate appropriately, including when we disagree.

At Rowde, we provide a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening, supporting the pupils by providing clear structures for tasks which require the pupils to learn through talk and encouraging and empowering our students to have a voice (which is listened to) and take responsibility for decisions made in the classroom. This begins in EYFS and Year 1, where children learn the key skills of turn-taking, listening and how to respond appropriately in certain situations. Through role-play scenarios, playing with their peers, and our continuous provision, the children acquire the key skills they need to access the curriculum in subsequent years.

From here, in Year 2 and beyond, pupils have a variety of opportunities to use talk for learning. These will not occur in every lesson but teachers are expected to incorporate them over a period of time (across each week).

For example:

- Playing an active role in directing their own learning: e.g. making decisions about how to approach a task, selecting appropriate resources.
- Engaging in speaking and listening in a variety of groupings and settings: e.g. working collaboratively on an investigation during group work, reporting findings as a newscaster, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to the school, taking part in class debates.
- Developing their speaking and listening skills in our book club sessions: reading out loud as an individual and a larger group, sharing and discussing their opinions in response to a text, making recommendations to a friend based on what they've read for pleasure.
- Using language creatively and imaginatively: e.g. through drama, role-play, hot seating, storytelling.
- Demonstrating what they know and evaluating their understanding: e.g. explaining a certain method to concept to a peer, presenting to the class, giving peer feedback to a learning partner.

### **Phonics**

Phonics supports children in both reading and writing and we believe that phonics teaching should be systematic, discrete, interactive, practical, engaging, multi-sensory and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. At Rowde, teachers use Letters and Sounds to support their teaching, which aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right; as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. At Rowde, we have a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven. Phonics is taught

in daily sessions, and these lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive learning opportunities to engage the children. These learning opportunities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

The national expectation is that children reach Phase 3 in EYFS, Phase 5 in Year 1 and Phase 6 in Year 2. Phonics continues into KS2 when necessary both through whole class, group and individual interventions. Phonics at Rowde is assessed daily through formative assessment and the children's ability to apply their understanding in different contexts. In Year 1, phonics is tested using the National Year One Phonics Screening Check. This is administered in June with a mock Phonics Screening Check done in February. If children do not pass the check in Year 1, it is retaken in Year 2.

### **Spelling**

At Rowde, we recognise the importance of children learning and understanding the spelling rules and patterns rather than just learning how to spell increasingly difficult words. When spelling, we expect our children to:

- Use their phonic skills effectively when blending phonemes for reading and when segmenting phonemes for spelling.
- Have an interest in words, their meanings and their origins, developing a growing vocabulary both for speaking and writing.
- Write with confidence and creativity, and a 'have a go attitude' to their spelling, while developing the skills to self-edit, correct and improve.
- Be imaginative, creative and challenge themselves.

Each class has at least one spelling session a week, and spellings linked to the phonics and spelling rules that the class are looking at are sent home to be learnt and practised. As part of the Rowde home school agreement, it is an expectation that children practise their spelling at home, and they are tested once a week in school. We encourage the children to use these spelling lists as a further opportunity to develop their vocabulary, ensuring that they check their understanding of the word meaning and have the skills to use a dictionary to do so. The expectation is that once a spelling rule has been taught it is then applied in the children's writing.

Our focus on teaching spelling embraces the knowledge of spelling conventions, patterns and rules. Our teaching of spelling includes common exception words, high frequency words, statutory words from the curriculum and personal and topic spelling. Particularly in KS2, the teaching of spelling is often combined with handwriting. Through spelling lessons, children are taught and encouraged to use a range of multi-sensory approaches to learn spellings, as well as focusing on the specific pattern or rule. For example:

- Look, say, cover, write, check
- Segmentation into sounds/syllables
- Finding shapes of the word or drawing an image around the word
- Writing spelling in pyramids
- Rainbow writing the words in different colours
- Creating memorable 'silly sentences' or mnemonics

Spelling is assessed, as in all areas, consistently through formative assessment of spellings in context. Teachers observe and monitor the children's application of their spelling strategies in their independent writing, as well as through their attainment in the weekly spelling tests. In addition, spelling is assessed throughout the year when the children complete the NFER tests.

### **Punctuation and Grammar**

At Rowde, we aim for children to acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language. We understand that explicit knowledge of grammar is extremely important, as it gives us more conscious control and choice in our language. Children are exposed to the yearly statutory requirements from the National Curriculum and are given opportunities to consolidate and apply their learning through our progressive curriculum. Each of the daily literacy sessions contains an element of punctuation and grammar, which is taught in context and is applied directly to the text the children are currently writing. Through our writing sessions, children are consistently developing their understanding of punctuation and grammar through the lenses and success criteria in our sentence stacking lessons. This supports us



achieve our ambition that ***'we take time with our writing to ensure that we carefully consider our sentences and vocabulary, and the impact they will have on the reader'***.

### **Handwriting**

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. At Rowde, handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically.

In EYFS, the children begin by using activities to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. From here, they learn how to correctly hold their pencil and learn how to scribe letters using cursive script. This gives a solid basis for them, in KS1, to continue their progression, including leaving spaces between words accurately. By the end of KS1, children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words using a cursive style.

During KS2, the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 6 be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible hand for finished and published work; a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc. In KS2, the children are encouraged to write with pen and take pride in the quality of their written work across the curriculum.

### **Impact:**

The impact of our Literacy curriculum on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. With the implementation of the literacy journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children are becoming more confident readers and writers and, by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar to them and the teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills.

In order to measure the impact of our curriculum effectively, we use a two-tier approach to assessment. Firstly, through ***assessment for learning*** (or formative assessment) teachers use a range of strategies to take a snapshot of learning within the lessons and then adapt subsequent sessions and learning experiences accordingly so that all children make progress. This can come from marking the children's work, quizzes or retrieval practise, verbal responses to questioning and through peer and self-assessment. In reading, daily progress is monitored through book talk planning and observation notes, as well as book band colours in the Collins Big Cat scheme.

Secondly, is the process of ***assessment of learning*** (or summative assessment), which is a more formal record of the children's learning against age-related expectations and exemplification materials. Within reading and writing, children in Year 2 and 6 are assessed on the Interim Assessment Framework. They will also complete Standard Attainment Tests in reading. Children in Year 3, 4 and 5 complete the NFER spelling and reading assessments. Final independent writing pieces for a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry inform the assessments of writing in each class. Writing is assessed using the Steps and monitoring progress against the age-related expectations of their year group. Phonics is assessed at the end of each phase in EYFS and KS1, using phonic screeners and to ensure progression onto the next phase.

Underpinning our rigorous monitoring of children's learning is a system of moderation. We moderate our judgements during Key Stage and Whole-School staff meetings, to ensure we are consistent and see the progression of teaching and learning across the school. In addition, during data and pupil progress meetings, all assessments of reading and writing are scrutinised, monitored and moderated during data meetings.

By having such a continuous cycle of assessment, we can ensure that we meet our ambitions and that children leave us with the skills, passion and knowledge necessary to continue to excel in their secondary education. As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum at Rowde, cross curricular writing standards are high and skills taught in the English lesson are transferred into other subjects; this shows consolidation of skills and a deeper



understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and grammar objectives. We hope that as children move on from us to further their education and learning that their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.