

Gawber Primary School

English Policy



'If reading is breathing in, then writing is breathing out.'

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1. Introduction

At Gawber Primary School, English is a core curriculum subject where every child receives specific daily English teaching. However, we recognise that in order to develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills effectively, children must be given a wide range of contexts in which to practice and consolidate their knowledge and understanding, which is why we place a strong emphasis on English within our wider curriculum also.

At Gawber, we take an evidence informed approach, and in response to current educational research, we view the acquisition of language and literacy skills to be of the utmost importance and instrumental in helping our children achieve in all areas of the curriculum. Our curriculum is constantly strengthening and adapting to ensure that recent educational research is informing best practice. As such, the teaching of English is of the highest priority at the heart of our curriculum. Access to high-quality texts within the English curriculum is central to our school's successful approach to engaging and supporting our children to become independent and motivated readers and writers.

We know that success in English has a direct impact on attitudes to all learning, to children's self-esteem and to their achievement across the whole curriculum. We aim to inspire a lifelong love of all aspects of the English curriculum by equipping our children with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and excel.

2. Aims

'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 language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.'

- National Curriculum: English programmes of study (2014)

Gawber School provides a bespoke and carefully planned curriculum where literature is at the heart of the subject of English. We know that exposing our children to a wealth of literature has profound effects on how they experience the world. The novels we have chosen provide scope for the exploration of worlds: real and imagined; far and near. The poetry we include works in many different ways and conveys a variety of emotions. The drama used provides our children with ways to discuss moral dilemmas or conflicts and discuss powerful moments in history. Texts (non-fiction and fiction) are chosen to complement our wider curriculum so that children immerse themselves in how it feels to be a reader for different purposes and therefore are able to write for a variety of reasons.

At Gawber Primary School, reading is at the heart of our whole curriculum. It is our intention that every child will be a reader. We understand how important it is that children are able to read so that they can access every stage of their education. Our intention is that every child not only loves reading, but knows how to read for different areas of the curriculum so that they move to the next stage of their education able to read for different subjects and eventually use this knowledge to enter the world of work, achieving the careers that they dream of.

From the very start of their journey with us, all of our children are encouraged to develop a love of reading. They are exposed to high quality texts and through a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, they are provided with the skills they need to decode confidently. Children who read regularly (or are read to regularly) have the opportunity to open the doors to so many different

worlds! More importantly, reading will give our children the tools to become independent life-long learners.

Our writing opportunities are always purposeful. Motivation for writing comes from several stimuli including a range of high-quality texts; exposure to inspirational authors; real experiences and moving pictures. Whether our children are writing to entertain, explain, persuade, inform, or discuss, their purpose is clear and meaningful. This provides our children with the necessary tools needed to be effective writers in other curriculum areas with the intention that they feel well equipped to continue to develop this knowledge long after their primary years.

At Gawber, the key aim is to ensure that children master the knowledge needed to succeed at every stage of their learning journey in English so that this can positively impact on their successes in other areas of the curriculum. We aim for the knowledge our children acquire to positively impact them as they move to the next stages of education and we aim for it to positively impact on their lives outside of the four walls of school also.

3. The teaching of Reading

Phonics

To ensure our children become accurate and automatic readers, we follow Read Write Inc, which is a validated systematic and synthetic phonics scheme. Reading books are closely matched to the graphemes taught and these 'decodable' books are also sent home for children to practise until they become fluent.

Our RWI sessions occur daily, with no exceptions, as the continuity and pace of the programme is key to accelerating the progress of our children's reading development. It is explicitly taught daily to EYFS, year 1, year 2 (who are not yet fluent readers) and only to children in Key Stage 2 who have not completed the programme. Children are grouped according to their phonic ability.

We follow the five underlining principles of 'Read Write Inc' in all sessions:

- Pace – children complete the programme as quickly as possible
- Praise – children are praised for what they do well
- Purpose – each activity within the programme has a clear purpose
- Participation – all children take part in all of the lesson
- Passion – we model a love of reading and writing

Through using RWI, we ensure that books are closely matched to the children's increasing knowledge of decodable words and red words. As children re-read stories, their fluency increases, so children are asked to practice what they have learned at home also. Every child takes a copy of the text they have been reading within their phonics session plus another book from the scheme, which matches their phonic knowledge. All children also choose a reading for pleasure book which they share with adults both at home and in school.

Our early reading leader works closely with staff to support the delivery of phonics, ensuring our children are provided with the best quality delivery of the RWI sessions. All staff who are deployed to deliver the programme receive accredited training and are highly skilled in its delivery.

Team teaching, regular coaching and regular training takes place. The early reading leader meticulously undertakes assessment, tracks pupils' progress, and ensures that pupils are moving through the phonic stages at the expected pace. Children are regularly assessed for their knowledge of speed sounds, reading accuracy, and reading speed. They are then regrouped by the early reading leader, who works with the reading team to determine next steps for groups and identify any pupils needing 1-1 tutoring.

Language comprehension

At Gawber, we have a focus on language comprehension through age appropriate, engaging texts chosen carefully by our expert staff. During their time at Gawber, children become increasingly confident in comprehending different texts in order to access all areas of the curriculum. We know how important the understanding of reading for purpose is. Children at Gawber learn how to read and write for different subjects, audiences and purposes.

Ways in which to comprehend texts are taught explicitly in reading sessions and applied across the curriculum. All children access whole class reading sessions where the comprehension of high-quality texts is the focus. We encourage our children activate their prior knowledge when reading, knowing that in order for children to make sense of what they are reading, they must first become familiar with their existing knowledge, drawing on this and making links to the wider world.

Children see and hear high-quality texts from a range of genres which have been carefully chosen to complement the writing curriculum as well as other areas of the learning at Gawber. Text choices have been determined in partnership with teachers to ensure that texts will engage and meet the needs of each individual cohort. Leaders ensure that pupils access age-appropriate texts that develop their vocabulary and comprehension, especially if their own decoding skills are less developed. Leaders have established a poetry spine and pupils hear a poem a day to promote rhyme and rhythms for all children.

Gawber promotes reading in all areas of the curriculum, knowing that in order to fully access our carefully planned broad and balanced curriculum, they must be able to fluently read and comprehend.

Reading Aloud

Children hear adults reading aloud daily. This could be during learning time but also in the protected time of 'Reading for pleasure.' Reading for pleasure happens regularly throughout the day – whether that's listening to the class story or hearing the poem of the day. This shared experience gives our children access to a wider range of texts, broadens their reading experiences, models exemplary reading behaviours and introduces them to new vocabulary. Children at Gawber mimic these reading behaviours when reading aloud to their peers, when modelling to younger children and when reading to an adult. Adults listen to children read regularly and all are trained by our leaders in how to read aloud effectively.

Poetry

At Gawber, we have a core set of poems and poets for each year group. Children hear and enjoy poetry every day. Using Pie Corbett's poetry spine, our children develop a love for language through their consistent exposure to different types of poems - those that elicit a strong response, that withstand repetition and extend vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum. There is an expectation that each term, children learn and perform a poem, helping to develop their

fluency; their understanding of intonation; their understanding of complex vocabulary; their understanding of rhythm and rhyme and promoting the love of language.

Assessment in reading

Our early reading leader assesses phonics using the RWI assessment system. From this, children are grouped so that the teaching can be tailored towards the needs of our children. Once off the RWI programme, children continue to change their books regularly with assistance from adults. All children read with an adult in school, with this logged in a reading record to track how this is progressing. Pupils in all year groups who are behind age related expectations- particularly the lowest 20% - read more regularly than this with adults as defined in the school's intervention planning. Salford reading tests are used across school to determine the reading fluency age and comprehension age of the children, enabling staff to closely monitor those who may not be meeting age related expectations so that small step progress can be tracked. Children in Y2 and KS2 access summative assessments so that teachers can track the understanding of comprehension. However, there is an expectation that staff use their expertise to formatively assess in each session and react appropriately depending on the needs of the children.

4. The teaching of writing

Teaching writing from EYFS to Y6

Gawber School provides a bespoke and carefully planned writing curriculum where literature is at the heart of the subject. We know that exposing our children to a wealth of literature has profound effects on how they experience the world. The novels we have chosen provide scope for the exploration of worlds: real and imagined; far and near. The poetry we include works in many different ways and conveys a variety of emotions. The drama used provides our children with ways to discuss moral dilemmas or conflicts and discuss powerful moments in history. Texts (non-fiction and fiction) are chosen to complement our wider curriculum so that children immerse themselves in how it feels to be a reader for different purposes and therefore are able to write for a variety of reasons.

All elements of English (reading, writing and spoken language) are heavily intertwined at Gawber, and we provide our children with rich opportunities to use the language and vocabulary skills that they have acquired in focused English sessions as well as across the curriculum. In EYFS and KS1, the Read Write Inc programme is used to provide our children with the key transcriptional and compositional knowledge they need to become confident and fluent writers. We firmly believe in ensuring that our children gain fluency in transcription as soon as possible so that their working memory can be freed up to focus on composition.

At the end of KS1 and in KS2, children use the 'Talk for Writing' approach, enabling the children to orally imitate the language needed for a particular type of writing, before reading, analysing and eventually writing their own piece. Using the idea of 'talk' is an integral component in our writing curriculum that is woven into all areas of learning so that children are confident when articulating and structuring ideas. The progression of spoken language is prioritized throughout our whole curriculum and children are given ample opportunities to continually develop their competence and confidence in spoken and listening skills. For example, at Gawber, our children often use discussion in order to learn; they elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas. Adults model selecting the appropriate registers for effective and clear communication and use a 'my turn-your turn' structure to encourage children to speak audibly and fluently in all areas of learning.

Through their writing, our children use the knowledge of the spoken and written word combined with their knowledge of other areas of the curriculum to produce writing for a specific audience and with a specific purpose. We are keen to ensure our children are given real purposes for writing.

Progression in writing

Leaders have carefully mapped out the key knowledge needed by the end of each year group so that staff are aware of what constitutes successful writing, not only at the end of each Key Stage, but also at the end of each year group. Therefore, staff are aware of what 'readiness' for each year group should look like.

Leaders have also mapped out the small steps within each year group that builds on the prior knowledge. Objectives have been determined for each year group at each level of accomplishment – working towards the expected standard in each year group; working within the expected standard for each year group; working at greater depth within the standard of each year group. By doing so, staff have the ability to monitor the progress of each child and help them to reach the next stage of their development in writing.

At Gawber, leaders have also carefully mapped out a progression in writing genres, ensuring our purposes for writing are clear and knowledge regarding these purposes builds as children move from year group to year group.

From the end of KS1, the expectation is that children who are secure in the key knowledge for Year 2 begin to explore these genres for writing by attempting to write for a given purpose. In EYFS and Y1, as the focus is fluency and transcription, the focus is not that children are required to write for a genres but that they are exposed to these through their reading and language comprehension sessions. In these sessions, children explore purposes for writing in greater detail than in their RWI writing sessions. By the end of KS2, we expect Gawber children to have obtained a wealth of knowledge regarding how to write for different purposes and that they are all successful in doing so, meeting at least the age-related expectations.

Purposes for writing are as follows:

- To entertain
- To Inform
- To discuss
- To persuade
- To describe

Dictation

The use of dictated sentences features heavily in the RWI programme and so children are exposed to this method of teaching from EYFS. At Gawber, we firmly believe that dictation is a key process to use in helping children to understand how to compose sentences, whilst also allowing them the opportunity to focus on the key elements of sentence writing, avoiding cognitive overload.

The method of dictation is also used once the children have completed the RWI programme and is used across the curriculum when applicable. Children in KS2, who are not yet writing at age related expectations, may make use of dictation to aid their development in writing.

5-minute SPaG sessions

In KS2, as children begin to build their knowledge punctuation and grammar, 5-minute sessions deliberately designed to revisit this knowledge are taught daily. This allows teachers to check that children are retaining knowledge from their own and from previous year groups and plug and gaps in knowledge that may emerge. Leaders have carefully mapped out this knowledge alongside staff so that all areas of the English curriculum are able to be monitored. Leaders have also provided

teachers with examples and explanations of each area to ensure that there is consistency in the delivery.

Spellings

Children accessing the RWI programme learn spellings linked with the sounds/ words for the focus of their learning. Leaders have carefully mapped out the expectations of sounds, spelling patterns and key words for the whole school in a progression document that all staff use to ensure that children learn the sounds, spelling patterns and key words for their year group. Children no longer accessing RWI, access short spelling sessions that focus on a particular spelling pattern. They learn the rules of this pattern and take home a list of spellings to learn along with an explanation of the spelling rule. Children are tested on the words sent home but are also given a 'mystery spelling' where they are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of the spelling rule in an unfamiliar word. Staff are then able to establish if the child has managed to gain knowledge of the rule rather than just memorise a list. Children are also given key words from statutory spelling lists to learn regularly. These are available in the classroom for children to use in their independent writing across the curriculum.

Handwriting

Leaders have established the following handwriting priorities at Gawber: letter formation and pencil grip in the early years; orientation, size and spacing in Y1; joining in Y2 and writing fluency in LKS2. In UKS2, children are clear about the standard of handwriting that is appropriate for a particular task and be taught to use an un-joined style when it is appropriate to do so. The RWI method for handwriting is adopted across school and modelled by all adults.

Leaders are aware of left-handed writers and work with staff to ensure these children are appropriately catered for. For example, swanneck left-handed writing implements are available for children to use. Leaders are also aware of left-handed staff members. Modelling of handwriting is always done with the appropriate hand depending on which hand a child may write with.

There are opportunities to assess handwriting speed using DASH in LKS2 to ensure children are able to write at the appropriate speed for their age-related expectations. Interventions are carefully planned across school to ensure that all children can meet age related expectations by the end of KS2.

Assessment and Moderation

The RWI assessment process is adopted and used to assess the accuracy of transcription in EYFS and Year 1. By the end of Year 2, children begin to produce extended pieces of writing for assessment using the teacher assessment framework. Leaders have carefully mapped out a progression of assessment criteria for each year group adopting the Year 2 and Year 6 TAF as the model for this. All staff in KS2 use these criteria to assess their children after each writing unit. Staff are supported by the writing lead, who is the Lead Moderator for Barnsley Local Authority, in assessing accurately so that 'spotlight' children can be highlighted and intervention can take place quickly. The writing lead conducts moderation of each year group in the summer term to determine the accuracy of the writing gradings.

As Gawber Primary School is part of Barnsley Local Authority, it sees the benefit of being part of the LA moderation process and utilises the knowledge gained by the writing lead from Standards and Testing Agency training to constantly review assessment processes to ensure they are as accurate an effective as possible. Gawber works with other schools (from Barnsley LA as well schools from other LAs) to standardise collaboratively.

5. Spoken Language

At Gawber School, children are taught to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others. Through their own reading and listening, others can communicate with them too! At Gawber, we understand that speaking, reading and writing are not only the objects of study, but the means in which a subject is learned.

With regards to the oracy curriculum, the expectations for each year group has been progressively planned to ensure that knowledge builds incrementally, allowing our children to continually learn and improve their oracy skills. This knowledge has also been carefully matched to areas of the writing curriculum so that teachers are able to tailor their teaching of writing using oracy as an effective tool for understanding both the spoken and written word.

Teachers have worked with leaders to carefully map out all of the opportunities available for children to develop their spoken language skills across the curriculum. Children at Gawber are given ample opportunities to develop their oracy skills in all areas of the curriculum. Our pupil progress oracy documentation is used track children who may not be meeting the age-related expectations for oracy so that we can make appropriate interventions of support. For example, our experienced practitioners use WellComm to quickly identify areas of concern in language, communication, and interaction development in order to ensure early targeted intervention. We also work closely with the Speech and Language Team to provide our children with SEND with targeted interventions that suit their individual needs. At Gawber, we are acutely aware that the development of oracy is integral to the development of the understanding of the written word.

6. Use of Standard English

All staff endeavour to always use Standard English and accurate grammar in resources, their own speech and on classroom displays. It is vital that pupils are exposed to consistent use of Standard English and accurate grammar, to support the progress of literacy skills across the curriculum. Staff understand that they are able to correct themselves or each other to model correct Standard English in front of the children. Staff also endeavour to correct the children where necessary, maintaining high expectations in the use of SE across school.

7. SEND

Children with SEND are quickly identified at Gawber and School Focus Plans are put in place to support the needs of these children. Where a need regarding reading, writing or spoken language is identified, leaders are aware of the targets and work alongside the SENDCo to ensure these are relevant and achievable. Leaders provide support for staff in order to find ways in which to support children with SEND.

Agreed strategies to use for children with SEND in reading:

- Pedagogy and content adapted to suit the needs – children are assessed and grouped according to their ability – homogenous groupings
- Decodable books whilst on RWI then age-appropriate books
- For those working more than 2 years behind, adapted sequencing to plug earlier gaps
- Additional phonics teaching for the lowest 20% and any children needing additional support
- Pre reading of texts and vocabulary
- Less demand on written answers
- Use of multiple choice
- Children accessing reading electronically
- Using the same high-quality texts but shorter extracts to lower cognitive demand
- Daily one to one reading

- Focus on fluency
- Use of age-appropriate books
- Dyslexia friendly texts
- Scribe used where necessary to record responses
- Paired discussions of longer answers
- During whole class reading – select appropriate parts to read
- Inference groups as additional support
- Small group interventions
- Use of Kagan to support LA children (mixed ability groupings)
- Access to a C-Pen
- Use of coloured viewing strips when reading texts
- 1:1 support and helicopter support from adults when needed
- Story time and whole class reading – using high quality texts to allow pupils to experience texts and develop vocabulary beyond their reading ability
- RWI QR codes and website links sent home for lowest 20% to practise at home

EYFS specific examples –

Additional QFT and 1:1 reading, small group reading daily, smaller phonics group led by the class teacher for the lowest 20%, RWI videos sent home specific to individual children's current reading level and next steps

Agreed strategies to use for children with SEND in writing:

- Pedagogy and content adapted to suit the needs
- Pre reading of any texts used
- Coloured paper/ dyslexia friendly texts/adapted font and lined paper
- Word cards to support writing sentences
- Spelling tables to help with HFW/ Common exception
- Vocabulary mats
- Grammar prompts
- Colourful semantics
- Word prompt sheets
- Key vocabulary displayed
- Differentiated by expectations not demand
- For those working more than 2 years behind, adapted sequencing to plug earlier gaps
- Removal of barriers to writing such as:
 - Matching activity*
 - Missing words*
 - Sticking activities*
 - Scribes*
 - Talking tins*
 - Angled writing boards and equipment such as pencil grips to support the physical aspect of writing*
- Differentiation by outcome
- Dictated sentences for those not able to compose fluently yet and need to focus on transcription
- Opportunities to orally rehearse
- Opportunities for peer support when editing and redrafting

- Visual prompts for sentence needs
- Assistive technology – iPad, laptop, etc.
- Manipulative to support writing – e.g. sticks for finger spaces
- Paired writing
- Use of Kagan to support LA children (mixed ability groupings)
- Reminders and writing prompts
- Tick and fix sentences
- 1:1 support and helicopter support from adults when needed
- Red words taught using red rhythms
- Emphasis on spelling using phonic knowledge – Fred Fingers and sentence structure
- Scaffolded prompts to support writing structure

EYFS specific examples –

All writing modelled before children write. Repeated oral rehearsing of what is to be written. Visual model of writing on working wall. 'Write from the Start' interventions followed by letter formation interventions as needed. Chunky 3-sided pencils. Mark making area and 'funky fingers' area to develop fine motor skills for writing. Mnemonics and letter formation RWI sheets on tables.

8. English across the curriculum

At Gawber, we are keen to ensure that modelling a love of writing happens throughout the day, maintaining the same high standards in English across all curriculum areas. We equip our children with a strong command of the spoken and written word across all areas of the curriculum, encouraging our children to understand how they can write effectively in all areas of learning. Strategies taught in our reading and writing lessons are then used when children read and write in other subjects.

We ensure that all children are provided with opportunities to widen their vocabulary and gain a secure knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language by integrating this across our curriculum. This then ensures that our children move onto the next stage of their education as competent writers, able to take on the challenges of secondary school subjects.

Extra-curricular activities are planned with the development of English in mind. For example, Debate club provides our children with the ability to become competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

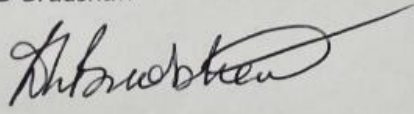
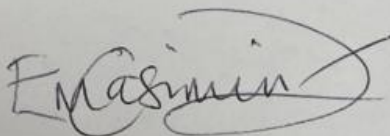
Children are provided with opportunities to celebrate when they have furthered their learning regarding the English curriculum, sharing stories they may have written at home with their peers in class for example. The school's 'Amazing Me' initiative is used to support this, as is the use of 'Children's University', where the school can monitor any clubs children may access that help further their English education.

Eventually, we aim for Gawber children to become adults who are able to write effectively for the jobs they dream of acquiring.

9. Marking and Editing

Across the school, children's work is live marked where possible so most marking takes place within the session. This way, we can give instant feedback to children. Dialogic and whole class feedback ensure children understand strengths and next steps.

The key knowledge document is used to aid the corrections made in the independent writing produced by children in both core and noncore subjects. There is an expectation that key spellings and punctuation are corrected in accordance with the ability of the child. Children are given opportunities to act on verbal and written feedback by editing their own work.

Person responsible for the policy	Rachel Knox
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Headteacher signature	D Bradshaw  30.1.24
Governor for writing signature	 Malcolm Wainwright.