



# Crowcombe and Stogumber Church of England Primary Schools

## English Curriculum Policy

*'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it' – (Proverbs 22:6)*

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annual	October 2023	Tom Flynn	October 2024

### Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Janis Dean	<i>Janis Dean</i>	November 2023
Head Teacher	Kate Lewis	<i>Kate Lewis</i>	November 2023

## Aim of the Policy

The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing enable children to organise and express their own thoughts and feeling and to access the knowledge and ideas of others. Our aim, however, must be to lead children beyond the level of skills and basic competence in English. If we can foster a love of books and an ability to appreciate literature, our children's lives will be enriched.

## Statutory requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

## Our school vision and values:

**“Together let us, love, encourage, achieve and flourish”**

**Generosity**

**Optimism**

**Determination  
Courage**

**Curiosity**

Our school vision and values are promoted throughout the school and used during the English curriculum to promote positive experiences. In the lessons, we promote positive values and learning behaviours often referring to stories from the Bible to highlight good moral conduct or where good teaching and learning has been shown. We recognise that every child is unique and created and loved by God.

## Philosophy

At Crowcombe and Stogumber C of E Primary Schools, we strongly believe that English is a significant life skill that is essential to participating fully in society. We aim to develop the abilities of all children in our school to communicate their ideas effectively in speech and in writing and to develop a confident attitude towards reading.

We aim to develop the following in all children:

- A strong command of written and spoken English
- A passion for reading which includes reading for fluency and comprehension
- A strong awareness of audience and purpose of writing and the ability to make deliberate language choices to meet these
- An interest in words and their meanings
- A fluent handwriting style
- An understanding of age-appropriate grammar and the ability to apply this in their writing
- The power of imagination and creativity within writing

To achieve this Crowcombe and Stogumber C of E Primary Schools will:

- Provide a language rich environment across the curriculum
- Develop a love of books, reading for both pleasure and purpose
- Teach the main components of reading and writing (phonics/spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation) within lessons

- Promote confidence in children to express their opinions both orally and in writing across a range of subject matters
- Support all children in our care to achieve their own learning outcomes and then identify and support pupils who may require additional support to reach these goals with carefully selected interventions

## Crowcombe and Stogumber's Curriculum

We use the National Curriculum programmes of study for English as a basis for our English curriculum in key stages 1 and 2. The reception class follows the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Every child will experience a daily English lesson. This could include a combination of discrete phonics or spelling, whole class guided reading and writing lessons. Additional time is also given to handwriting, individual reading, group reading and reading for pleasure (reading and listening to stories, poems and non-fiction texts).

When planning and teaching the English curriculum the following elements are considered:

- Adaptation to meet the needs of all pupils including careful planning of work to include a range of teaching strategies and scaffolding
- ICT and cross-curricular links made where appropriate
- Regular opportunities for feedback across all the subject content
- Using achievable targets with all the children to ensure individualised progress is made

### Spoken language

The EYFS framework, National Curriculum for English and The EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) reflect the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. **“Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised”** (EEF, Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1).

Therefore at Crowcombe and Stogumber spoken language underpins our whole English Curriculum. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Opportunities are given at both schools to develop speaking and listening skills in all areas of the curriculum. Children are given opportunities to share and discuss topics, to engage in class and group discussions as they work and explain what they have learned to a range of audiences. We value role-play and drama as excellent ways to develop speaking and listening skills and children are engaged in such activities as ‘hot-seating’ and ‘speaking in role’ across many of the curriculum subjects. Staff realise how important their role as language models for children is and aim to be a good role model of spoken English and good role models as communicators. Children have a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their skills through drama, assemblies and various leadership roles with external opportunities including local radio and youth parliament.

### Reading

In the EYFS statutory framework, reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading.

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

- Decoding (ability to translate written words into sounds of spoken language)
- Comprehension (the ability to understand the meaning of the language being read)

Reading is complex and for many children, learning to read is a challenging undertaking. The Reading Rope (see appendix 1), captures the essence of this task. Consequently, our teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions and therefore different focuses within the teaching are needed for each. As the EEF states, **“both decoding and comprehension skills are necessary for confident and competent reading, but neither is sufficient on its own”** (EEF, Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1).

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words.

Phonics is therefore emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers). There is a focus on sharing books with children and hearing individual children read, as soon as they start in Reception, which is supported with other reading activities throughout the EYFS curriculum. Word recognition skills are developed systematically in the Early Years through the teaching of synthetic phonics. Phonics is taught daily in EYFS and KS1 and as appropriate in KS2. Phonics is taught using the DfE's approved phonics teaching programme, Pearson Bug Club Phonics. The children access a range of phonetically decodable books which align to phonemes and graphemes taught and ensure children access books in line with their phonological awareness. With phonically decodable books children should be accessing 90% of their book independently and we aim to track this through group or individual reading at least 3 times a week. Children should re-read their book 2-3 times (to build fluency) and this is tracked on a central record. The class teacher will decide when a child is ready to progress onto another stage. Furthermore, all children accessing phonics across the school are assessed throughout the year and this is recorded using Phonics Tracker.

Once a child has progressed beyond phonics they will enter our Accelerated Reader (AR) scheme. AR is used as a motivational tool as well as to track what a child is reading with regular book quizzes. Children are able to borrow a wide range of both narrative and non-fiction books including poetry. Children read daily in class with opportunities to read aloud and discuss with adults.

We wish to encourage a love of books and of reading. We aim to provide a rich reading environment in all our classrooms. We have developed a Reading curriculum with high-quality texts for each year group to be shared and used as part of our teaching across the curriculum. Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech.

Each school has a library area and a focused author is selected in each class each half-term or term to help create a reading culture. We have a display in each classroom promoting our chosen author. This includes other titles that could be enjoyed. Reading is taught using shared, guided and whole class reading and children will have an opportunity to develop the core skills of retrieval, prediction, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. We have a class reader that is read aloud by the teacher which could be used during guided reading or as reading for pleasure. These books form a part of our reading curriculum. Our class readers and guided reading is reviewed each year to ensure we are taking into account children's interests and successes. Reading is an important part of the wider curriculum and we use a range texts to support our teaching in these areas.

To enhance and enrich our reading offer, we provide opportunities to immerse children in reading with theatre trips, author visits and sharing libraries.

## Writing

In the EYFS statutory framework, writing consists of two dimensions: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech before writing).

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

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

Our teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, draft, revise and edit and publish their writing. These skills are vital in order to understand the process of writing and are incorporated into our curriculum throughout every year group.

## Composition

Writing composition is taught using our own writing structure, following the sequence of immersion, imitation, innovation and invention. Children are given opportunities to write across genres in fiction, non-fiction and poetry. We recognise the need to provide excellent examples of modelled writing by teachers and stimulating shared experience as a stimulus for children's own writing. We recognise too, the need to provide children with plenty of good quality reading experiences in each genre before children are asked to write themselves, and the importance of opportunities to talk and discuss before writing. We try to ensure children have a purpose for writing which is clear to them. Opportunities are also made for extended writing sessions in other areas of the curriculum.

We also value the importance of children practising writing skills on a daily basis. We provide a wide variety of reasons and purposes for writing and in the Early Years provide many opportunities for child-initiated and role-play writing. In the EYFS children practise their writing skills every day. We encourage children to have a go at writing as soon as possible and to use their phonic skills and knowledge to spell.

In addition, interactive whiteboards and visualisers are used to annotate texts and to show and model writing features as well as to teach proof-reading and editing skills. We frequently pair children as response partners in order to help them play a part in their own and others'

editing and redrafting this involves the use of 'editing pens' to make amendments clear to both the child and their teacher.

### Handwriting (transcription)

The EEF state **"fluent writing supports composition because pupils cognitive resources are freer"** (EEF, Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2). Handwriting is taught throughout the school as required. Children need to have a fluent, legible style and therefore we use a cursive script, based on the Twinkl Cursive Looped handwriting style. Handwriting is taught using a cursive script, not least because the school recognises the value of a fluid handwriting style but to also enhance spelling skills and give opportunities for children to "flow" when writing. Good presentation of all writing is encouraged all the way through the school in every book. We use the computer font **Twinkl cursive looped** throughout the school when printing sheets or for displays except for EYFS where a pre-cursive script is used, **twinkl light**.

To begin, print letter formation is taught in EYFS for individual letters. In EYFS, our scheme aims to help children to develop their fine and gross motor skills and pencil control as a precursor to effective handwriting: to show good control and coordination in large and small movements, to move confidently in a range of ways while safely negotiating space, to handle equipment and tools effectively and to safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques. When ready, children begin to learn to sit correctly at a table, to hold a pencil comfortably and correctly, to begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction and of the correct size relative to one another, to start and finish letters in the right place, to form capital letters and the digits 0-9 of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.

When children are ready (usually in Year 1) we teach the children to recognise and form the letters written in a cursive script. We begin to ask children to understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families', to start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and to use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

The children are taught how to form individual cursive letters with lead ins and lead outs with joining cursive taught once this is mastered (usually in Year 2). When children are ready, they are taught and expected to write using the cursive technique. Children have daily opportunities to practise letter formation starting with their name and date. Children are encouraged to use a cursive style in all their work, and by the end of key stage 2 to have progressed to developing their own unique style within the parameters of the taught style. Expectations on handwriting are displayed clearly throughout the school. To ensure all children hold their pencil correctly, some are encouraged to use a pencil grip.

### Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. **"Education is the process of preparing us for the big world and the big world has big words. The more big words I know, the better I will survive in it"** (EEF, Vocabulary in action). As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their

understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They are taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed in the statutory appendices. The school follows the definitions provided in the non-statutory glossary in the National Curriculum.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. Pupils therefore learn the correct grammatical terms in English and these terms are integrated within teaching. We ensure coverage of grammar across the school which sets out the progression and expectations of knowledge in grammar across the primary phase in line with Curriculum 2014. The children are sometimes taught grammar explicitly in stand-alone sessions as appropriate but mainly the grammar is delivered as part of our writing units.

### Spelling

In Reception and Year One, spelling patterns are taught using the Pearson Bug Club Phonics scheme and Curriculum 2014 on a daily basis through their phonics lessons. Throughout the rest of the school we follow Essential Spelling. It focuses more on the teaching of spelling so that children understand how to apply patterns, strategies and knowledge to other words and not just a list of words given for that week. It also provides links to prior knowledge and tracks back to related objectives so that teachers can give targeted support to children who are not yet able to spell words from their year group programme of study.

### Assessment

Assessment holds significant importance in our primary schools, Crowcombe and Stogumber. As the EEF emphasises, "**assessment is at the heart of effective teaching and learning.**" It serves as a vital tool for us, helping both students and teachers to understand progress and adapt our teaching methods accordingly. We continually rely on assessment to gain valuable insights into our students' strengths and areas that need improvement. With regular, ongoing assessment, we are better equipped to monitor our pupils' progress accurately. These assessments allow us to pinpoint gaps in understanding and provide targeted interventions and support when necessary. Some of the assessments we use include:

1. Phonics Tracker is used to assess blending, segmenting and decoding skills, helping students build a strong foundation in reading.
2. The NGRT test, Star Reader, and AR quizzes are utilized to evaluate reading fluency and comprehension, providing valuable insights into students' reading abilities and progress.
3. We complete a baseline writing assessment, along with two additional writing pieces at the beginning of each term. These assess transcription skills, such as spelling and handwriting, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation of students' writing abilities.

4. Further to this, composition is evaluated through end-of-genre writing assessments, enabling us to measure students' ability to craft coherent and creative pieces of writing.

5. Finally the NGST is administered twice a year to assess spelling proficiency, helping us track students' spelling development over time.

### Partnership with Parents:

Our home/school partnership is important in all areas. In English this is no different and there are several areas where we provide strategies for parents to engage with their child and their learning. We hope parents will support their child at home in order to help them get the most out of the learning in school.

### Appendix

