



# Simonside Primary School

## English Policy Statement

### Rationale

At Simonside, we believe that English is a fundamental aspect of learning. English provides access to the whole curriculum and gives children the opportunity to be successful throughout. It is vital that we encourage a love of language and literature to ensure lifelong learning for all children.

It is well documented that underachievement in language will impact detrimentally on any individual's life chances. The National Literacy Trust states that families with high literacy levels have improved lives, live longer and are healthier. The opportunity to acquire good communication skills both written and oral is a right for all children. This policy sets out the guidance followed by all staff at Simonside Primary School to ensure that all children, regardless of their starting point, achieve a highly proficient level of communication ability in the key skills of reading, writing and articulation.

### Rights of the Child

*Article 3 (best interests of the child)*

*The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.*

*Article 28 (right to education)*

*Every child has the right to an education.*

*Article 29 (goals of education)*

*Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.*

### Aims

At Simonside, children receive a stimulating and enriching experience in English, developing the skills necessary to master the English curriculum. Through high-quality teaching, well planned and structured lessons, we ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 are met alongside our aims:

- All children will learn to be confident communicators. They will be able to articulate their thoughts and will recognise that there is an appropriate way to communicate dictated by different situations.
- All children will learn to be good listeners; respectful of other points of view and able to respond to debate, discussion, conversation, and instruction. Children will understand that listening is as important a skill in communicating as talking.
- All children will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or ability. Our approach will engender a love of reading which will support their development as imaginative and creative thinkers as well as careful researchers and enquirers who will be able to make informed decisions about the meaning and purpose of writing.
- All children will learn to communicate in writing. Their writing will reflect their ideas, be well organised and communicate appropriately using the rules and conventions of written English.

## Teaching Speaking and Listening at Simonside Primary School

Listening and sound discrimination is the first literacy tool that most children acquire. Throughout their primary years children must be taught to speak and to listen. They should have the opportunity to talk in pairs with adults and peers, in small groups, to present to large groups and as they become more sophisticated users of language to plan spoken presentations. Much of this work can be achieved through planned opportunities for discussion in topic work as well as a regular feature of group work in English lessons.

The classroom and school environment must be a rich language environment where children have the opportunity to hear good, clear modelling of spoken English from adults. They are supported and encouraged to speak in whole sentences, to think about the language they use when speaking and to modify and change this language taking account of circumstances and the needs of listeners.

<b>Early Speakers</b>	<b>Emergent Speakers</b>	<b>Apprentice Speakers</b>	<b>Confident Speakers</b>
Use talk to gain attention, link statements and stick to a main theme or intention.	Organise what they say making main points clear to the listener.	Organise and shape what they say, selecting relevant ideas and using appropriate vocabulary to interest their listeners.	Convey complex ideas, using different techniques for clarity and effect.
Initiate conversation speaking clearly and audibly with confidence and control showing awareness of the listener.	Speak clearly and take turns, make relevant contributions, give opinions and listen to different views.	Explain their opinions and ideas, modifying them in the light of what they have heard.	To extend and justify their opinions and ideas, building on what they have heard.
Follow simple instructions.	Follow simple two part sequential instructions.	Follow instruction and convey a message accurately retaining key points.	Give instructions and recognise the importance of accuracy when conveying a spoken message.
Enjoy listening to and using spoken language and readily turn to it is their play and learning.	Remember that they have heard and ask questions.	Organise that they say according to listener's needs, including the use of spoken standard English when appropriate.	Select relevant ideas and use appropriate vocabulary to engage and maintain the interest of listeners.
Extend their vocabulary exploring the meanings and sounds of new words.	Reflect on how talk varies dependent on circumstance and listeners.	Reflect on their own and others' speech and investigate how it varies.	To adjust what they say, including the use of standard spoken English according to the needs of their listeners and communication technology being used.
Use gesture and action to support meaning. Mimic the conventions of non-verbal communication such as eye-contact.	Reflect on how talk varies dependent on circumstances and listeners.	Reflect on their own and others' speech and investigate how it varies.	To adjust what they say, including the use of standard spoken English according to the needs of their listeners and communication technology being used.
Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences.	Explore the use of imaginative language in role play and story.	Use dialogue and discussion to build up and refine ideas collaboratively as a group.	Identify the differences between spoken and written language, both on paper and on screen taking account of context, purpose and audience.

Children's abilities to follow simple instructions, to listen to stories and to extract meaning when listening should be carefully assessed alongside their speaking skills.

## Vocabulary Acquisition

Children need to develop a wide range of vocabulary to be able to make sense of the world in which they live and to be able to convey meaning to other listeners. New vocabulary is acquired through being involved in rich learning opportunities where good modelling of spoken language demonstrates precise grammatical use. The differences in spoken language for different purposes should be studied more explicitly as children mature and children should be increasingly aware of the appropriateness of their spoken language. Children should be encouraged to use precise technical vocabulary in **all subjects** of the curriculum and should be required to answer questions correctly, being supported by skilled questioning to fully explain and communicate their meanings. Teachers and staff have a key role in questioning children thoroughly, rephrasing answers and in championing good speaking and listening skills.

Many children in early years often mispronounce key sounds and letters. Early identification of speech problems, close monitoring and early referral to speech and language therapy is essential for these children. This is in order that they are able to communicate confidently with others and their speech sounds are clear enough to support them as readers and writers. Advice is first sought from the SENDCO in order that appropriate referrals, alongside small group and individual teaching programmes (such as Talk Boost and Early Talk Boost), can be made to address any speech problems.

In order to ensure that children are taught a wide range of vocabulary that is progressive in complexity we have devised a Tier 2 and Tier 3 words list for each group. Tier 3 word lists are used throughout the Owl Trust schools in order that feeder secondary schools can ensure continuity. See Appendix 3.

## The Home Environment

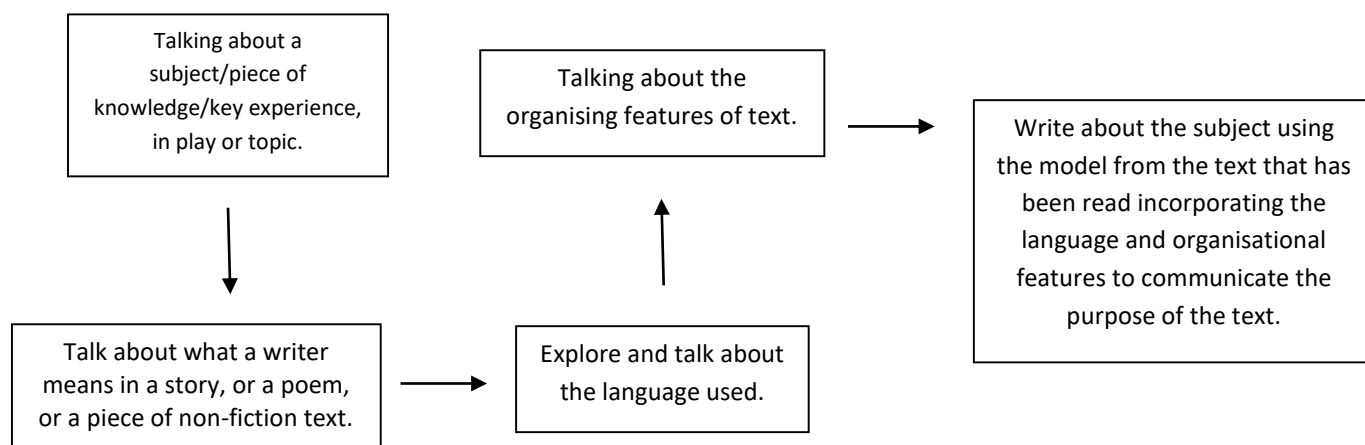
Talking at home has been clearly linked with higher attainment at school. Parents should be encouraged to talk to children about their learning through talking homework where children are required to talk about a subject at home and at school. Parents should be given opportunities to recognise their important role in developing children's spoken language and in valuing this key skill as highly as written and reading skills are valued.

*'Parents who just talk as they go about their daily activities expose their children to 1000 – 2000 words every hour.'*

*[www.thespeechpractice.com](http://www.thespeechpractice.com)*

## Talk for Learning

In the sequential integrated process of learning in English, we focus on children's spoken acquisition of language before their reading and writing. Talk is both the starting point and integral throughout the process. Talk for learning is crucial to acquiring all the skills of being literate.



## Teaching Reading at Simonside Primary School



Many children who learn to read easily come from homes where they are actively involved in conversations regularly and where they hear stories and share books all the time. It stands to reason then, that in order to achieve our aim of *every* child being a reader it is essential that children hear, share and explore a huge amount of books alongside the extensive work on speaking outlined in the Speaking and Listening section of this policy. This is crucial throughout the whole school and it is the starting point for teaching children to read in the Early Years. At Simonside, reading is at the core of everything we do.

### Reading for Pleasure

We strongly promote and encourage reading for pleasure as an element of English at Simonside. Children throughout the school are encouraged to enjoy reading and are provided with opportunities to hear a wide range of stories and to interact with texts, both fiction, non-fiction, film, poetry, and internet based. In all classes, teachers read aloud with children on a daily basis. The school has drawn up a core canon of works/texts that are used in Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2. These are shared with our children and read for pleasure and enjoyment. For information about these books please refer to Appendix 2.

In all classes a reading area is set up with the interests and needs of the children in mind. Children work alongside staff to choose books to enhance reading areas on a termly basis.

*Progression in reading can be outlined as follows:*

<b>Early Readers</b>	<b>Emergent Readers</b>	<b>Apprentice Readers</b>	<b>Confident Readers</b>
Share books 1:1 and at story time. Demonstrate positive attitudes towards books.	Identify favourite books and be able to share opinions about books	Have favourite writers and be able to discuss opinions about books.	Make comparisons between authors and books and make recommendations about reading.
Hear and say sounds in the order in which they occur.	Hear, identify, segment and blend phonemes to decode text.	Read all texts with increased fluency aloud and silently.	Apply all skills to tackle reading texts. Self-correct for meaning.
Explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts, recognising some letters and familiar words in environmental print.	To develop a sight vocabulary and skills to tackle unknown non-phonetic words.	Use understanding of etymology and sentence meaning to understand unknown words.	Read silently predominantly or read aloud using 'voice' to support meaning.
Join in rhythm and rhyme games and songs, clapping syllables and keeping a beat.	Link sounds and letter patterns identifying syllables in high frequency and familiar words.	Recognise the role of punctuation in reading.	Recognise and control the listeners experience when reading aloud.
Join in with repetitive phrases and words in heard stories.	Recognise how word and order affects meaning.	Use inference and deduction to find meaning beyond the literal.	Use inference and deduction to understand layers of meaning.
Make connections with own experiences and books shared.	Make connections between texts and between own experiences to explain text meanings.	Make connections between different parts of a text and other texts they have read to explore author's purpose.	Make connections and comparisons with different parts of a text and other texts they have read.
Recognise the conventions of reading knowing that print carries meaning.	Recognise how writers select words to create effects.	Recognise and describe how writers select words and use a variety of language forms to create an effect.	Evaluate techniques used by writers commenting on how effective they are.
Retell narratives of well known stories drawing on language patterns and correct sequence.	Identify characters and retell narratives sequentially.	Recognise the structural connection in text and the conventions of structure in narrative.	Recognise sophisticated structural techniques in narrative such as flashback and non-chronological accounts.
Use pictures and photographs to support story retelling.	Recognise other organisation features of texts, finding information efficiently in non-fiction texts.	Identify different structural and organisational features, layouts and how they affect meaning.	Evaluate different structural and organisational features, layouts and how they affect meaning.
Share and experience a wide variety of texts.	Distinguish between fact and fiction and explain the differences in text types between fiction and non-fiction.	Recognise persuasive techniques in texts and distinguish fact and opinion.	Verify the accuracy and reliability of information including from online sources, detect bias and distinguish evidence from opinion.

### **Reading in the Foundation Stage** **Phonics and Early Reading**

Using the systematic programme Letters and Sounds, children prepare to read in Nursery through sharing stories and books in small and large groups and by taking books home to share with their parents. They learn to discriminate sounds as part of Phase 1 and Phase 2 and they recognise and name letters common to them from their names and from the print environment at home and in the classroom.

In Reception a daily Phonics session allows children to continue to progress through the Phonics Phases (from the Letters and Sounds Programme) in differentiated groups. Their progress is closely monitored using a Phonics Tracker and they are grouped according to the progress they make, with groups varying and changing over the year.

Alongside phonics, children in Reception begin to read key 'tricky' words (listed in the Letters and Sounds Programme). These words are practised during phonics sessions and are sent home weekly for children to learn. Once children are able to blend to read simple words in short sentences and captions, reading books

are shared with an adult. Early reading skills are taught through guided reading/ 1-1 and 1-2 reading where appropriate. The books are closely matched to their phonic level and key words that the children have been taught.

Reading records are kept in school and books matching the phonics taught each week are also sent home. Parents are asked to comment in home reading how they feel their child has managed the book sent home. Progress in phonics is assessed half termly and these are used to inform future planning and to track progress towards early learning goals for reading. In addition, children take a story book home for their parents to read with them, to promote reading for pleasure and parental engagement.

#### Reading Expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage

It is expected that by the end of the Foundation Stage, all children will meet or exceed the ELG for Reading. The progress of children is monitored on an on-going basis, with adaptations being made to teaching when necessary to enable them to achieve well.

### **Reading in Key Stage 1**

#### **Continuing the Teaching of Phonics and Early Reading and progressing to Emergent Reading**

KS1 build on the good practice established in the Foundation Stage. Children continue to read in groups, using the core reading schemes and supplementary books, which are closely matched to their phonic level. These group sessions teach children to apply their phonics learning to their reading, practise reading fluency and develop children's response to texts. As in the foundation stage guided reading records are kept which feed into the class profile for reading.

Home reading continues, with children reading their books at home and changing them at least twice each week. As in Foundation Stage, children take a story book home for their parents to read with them, to promote reading for pleasure and parental engagement. Teachers comment on children's reading progress at least once a month in the home reading record.

Phonics continues in KS1 and a daily session of phonics is taught in differentiated groups. Children throughout KS1 continue to progress through the phases of Letters and Sounds (usually Phase 3 to Phase 5), with a focus on spelling when they complete Phase 5. Children continue to learn sight vocabulary, being taught tricky words in phonics and a selection of year group Common Exception Words each week. These are assessed once per term.

Children are taught to read for meaning by decoding text and using their phonic knowledge.

There is an increased focus on understanding the purpose and meaning of a text, the language used by an author and the organising features and structure of a text. Children will experience a wide range of texts, narrative and non – narrative texts.

#### Reading Expectations by the end of Key Stage One

By the end of KS1, we aim for all children to reach age related expected standards (or above) in reading and be at the end of Letters and Sounds, Phase 6 in Phonics.

## Reading at KS2 **Developing Fluency with Reading**

Key Stage Two build on the good practice established in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. Over four years children develop their fluency and their ability to read aloud. They become confident and critical users of language, able to use evidence from texts to reason about purpose, audience, language and structure. They become engaged and interested readers who can read for sustained periods of time, independently of a teacher. Books read by children in Key Stage Two usually initially match their phonic level and then progress to book banded books, which enable progress to be tracked carefully and consistently.

Children in Key Stage Two continue to read at home and school, reading a wide variety of books by well known authors and visit the school library to supplement their reading choices from the core reading schemes (that include Oxford Reading Tree and Project X, amongst others).

Reading continues to be assessed termly using the Depth of Learning Tracker. This is used to track children's progress and to identify modifications to learning for children who fail to make the expected progress.

As children complete Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds they begin to learn to spell, applying their phonics skills both to decoding and to writing. Reading complements writing and they use their reading skills to edit their own and other children's work, improving their literacy skills by applying what they know and understand about texts.

### Reading Expectations by the end of Key Stage Two

By the end of KS2, we aim for all children to reach age related expectations or above in reading.

## **Teaching Writing at Simonside**



Writing is one of the primary forms of communication. It allows thoughts to be clarified, emotions to be expressed, opinions to be stated, experiences and explanations to be shared. It is also one of the more difficult aspects of the language as its many conventions can be difficult to follow and master. Writing is a complex skill that will not develop without teaching and practice and so we endeavour to enable our pupils to become confident writers by ensuring that they are provided with experiences that:

- Help children to use texts to gain more knowledge about improving their own writing (as outlined in the Reading section of this policy).
- Allow practice of extended writing in a variety of purposeful contexts.
- Develop positive attitudes to the writing process including planning and redrafting.
- Support improvement and high expectation of core skills i.e. spelling grammar and punctuation.
- Provide feedback to pupils which will enable them to improve their writing skills.

- Maintain and develop a high writing achievement ethos at all stages in the school.

Texts that have been read at Simonside serve as a model for children. Using what they understand about the text they have read, they will apply this into their own writing as part of the teaching sequence in English.

### **The Importance of Models**

Writing must come from an understanding of a model. Young children begin to write by mimicking writing that they see in print around them – they use the models they understand, their name and environmental print to write. Initially this writing will be marks on a page, unrecognisable squiggles and dots but to the child they are recognising that print carries meaning to a reader. Once a child consistently remembers what their marks mean, they understand that the symbols of writing carry the same meaning and can be read by an unknown audience.

### **Writing in the Foundation Stage**

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are taught to apply what they learn in reading – their phonics and sight vocabulary work to their writing. They learn to hold a pencil and to form simple sentences. Initially they will copy words around the classroom as labels. Oral rehearsal is crucial at this stage as children learn to talk about their sentence and then to practise writing it. Alongside their writing they are taught letter formation and pencil control. They read simple sentences in their reading books. They discuss the book with the teacher, predicting what might happen, interpreting the pictures and they then use the model of simple sentences to write their own simple sentences.

Early writers need support to write. They should have letter formation models close to them which remind them of the formation of letters. They may need to copy sentences they make from word strips and sentence blocks and they need word cards, with vocabulary they commonly use to support their independence. Whilst children should always be encouraged to have a go, they also need the right level of scaffolding to support their writing. Children should be taught even this early to re-read and improve their writing, correcting reversals, punctuation errors and directionality problems. The Foundation Stage classroom should have endless opportunities to encourage positive attitudes to writing. Attractive writing materials should be on offer and where children talk – in role play areas for example they should always write.

Children's writing is assessed throughout the Foundation Stage against the Foundation Stage Profile and it is expected that most children will have met the ELG for writing at the end of Reception.

### **Writing in KS1**

As children move into Key Stage One they are taught using an integrated English teaching approach which is underpinned with talk, teaches reading and writing including spelling, grammar and presentation and finishes with evaluation and review. They explore a wider range of text types. Once a child is able to imitate and parody a text type they are able, if they have the technical skills of spelling, handwriting and grammar to write. It is essential that talk is constant, focussed and gives children the opportunity to form their ideas before and when writing.

Children continue to need scaffolds to help their writing:

- Word cards
- Sentence strip makers



- Letter formation alphabet cards

As in the Foundation Stage these should be constantly available to the early and emergent writer.

By the end of KS1 most children should be writing at the expected standard.

### **Writing in KS2**

As children's writing develops they write for longer, sustaining what they write. The children combine language features and structural techniques to write longer pieces of text and with greater sophistication, applying punctuation correctly and using links and structural features. They should use a wide range of texts as models and therefore writing types should be varied. Children need to explore the component features of each genre before writing.

Children continue in the early part of KS2 continue to need many of the scaffolds to write. They should be taught to use a dictionary for spelling and the classroom environment should include key spellings as well as focused topic vocabulary.

### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

At Simonside we embed the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) in our daily English lessons as well as teaching discrete sessions of SPAG. We believe that spelling, punctuation and grammar are an essential part of learning and communication. Spelling is taught through spelling patterns and rules, including the segmenting of syllables. Punctuation and grammar are taught in explicit sessions and within writing sessions. Spelling words are taught, not 'caught'. See Appendix 1, SPaG.

### **Handwriting and Presentation**

To secure fluent handwriting, we use Cambridge - Penpals for Handwriting scheme starting at Foundation, through to KS1 and KS2. Expectations of handwriting are consistent in all curriculum areas.

### **Assessment**

Robust assessment ensures that attainment and progress are closely monitored. Assessment is ongoing and progress is tracked using the Depth of Learning Tracker.

The assessment of reading is made through small group guided reading, whole class guided reading, general literacy comprehension independent work and oral discussions about texts read in class. Children are assessed against criteria set out in 'BAD' grids (Basic, Advancing and Deep).

We moderate reading and writing levels as a whole school and also with schools within the Outer West Learning Trust and other Newcastle schools (for Year 2 and Year 6).

Teachers moderate writing frequently to ensure consistency in levelling, and use exemplifications from the Standards and Testing Agency, as well as in school and links with local schools for moderation purposes.

