



## **English (Reading and Phonics) Policy (2025 - 2026)**

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<b>Owner</b>	Aimee Sargent

## **Reddish Hall English Policy 2025 – 2026**

### **Reading Intent**

At Reddish Hall School, we believe reading is a vital skill that will support children's learning across the whole curriculum. As a school, we will ensure that our children are taught to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding through a variety of discreet and cross-curricular learning opportunities. Reading helps pupils to develop mentally, emotionally and psychologically. Every book provides an opportunity to learn and explore new ideas. Reading books increases their knowledge, makes learning and school easier and helps with their confidence and independence. Pupils need to read for at least 20 minutes a day to help improve their skills both within reading and across the curriculum. Above all, we want children in our school to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers. Essentially, we want children to enjoy reading.

### **Our Teaching Philosophy:**

- The development of reading cannot be seen in isolation from writing, speaking and listening/drama.
- In our school, we will strive to give pupils a stimulating environment, where reading materials are presented in an attractive and inviting way. Furthermore, within English lessons we create an environment that stimulates the generation of ideas from texts where all ideas are accepted and valued.
- Teachers will act as role models in their enthusiasm for both reading and writing by keeping up to date with current children's literature.
- We recognise the complex social and academic needs of our pupils and therefore seek to plan reading activities that are both engaging and appropriate to the children at Reddish Hall.

### **Aims:**

We will develop children's reading within an integrated programme of writing and speaking and listening/drama. Our aims for reading are to:

1. Instil children with a love of reading that lasts for their lifetime, share with them an enthusiasm for children's literature and help children to recognise the value of reading as a life skill.
2. Encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers by introducing them to good quality books, from a variety of cultures and in a range of different styles and formats
3. Develop our children's understanding of a variety of text types including non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama.
4. Develop children's confidence, fluency, and independence when reading for different purposes.
5. Develop children's abilities to reflect on and have an interest in what they have read and the language and punctuation choices made by the author
6. Pupils to access at least 40 minutes guided / independent reading each week
7. Improve their reading age and ability to read (when required)
8. Reading becomes 'second nature' and part of their curriculum
9. Pupils become more confident readers, enjoy reading and are no longer 'scared' of improving their reading skills
10. Pupils can apply their reading skills across the curriculum to support and improve their learning, knowledge and skills in all subjects
11. Use reading to improve and add value to their lives (outside school)
12. Ensure our children have sound phonic awareness and use a phonics first approach to reading.
13. Use ICT systems to access and locate texts.

### **Assessment of Pupil Reading Ages:**

- Pupils' Reading Ages are assessed during the Autumn, Spring & Summer term

- Pupils use Star Reader / Early Literacy (Renaissance) for their 1<sup>st</sup> assessment completed in Autumn 1 (Toe by Toe is used as a pupil back up only and for those that cannot access the Star Reader / Early Literacy Assessment)
- Pupils who have a reading age 'above' expected or 16+ **will not** complete a reading assessment in Spring 2, **they will** complete one in Summer (this does not include year 11)
- The Whole School English Tracker Reading Data will remain the same for Spring if pupils have a reading age 'above' expected or 16+ and it will be classed as 'maintained' in the Reading Data Analysis
- Spring & Summer Reading Age Assessments will be completed using Toe by Toe
- The above **does not** apply to Nurture as pupils' reading ages are assessed Termly
- The Whole English Tracker also clearly states if the Reading Age Assessment is either GL or Toe
- Reading Data Analysis is provided in Autumn, Spring & Summer term
- Reading Ages are used (across the school) to inform planning and teaching in all subjects and are accessible for all staff on the Whole English Tracker

### **Implementation:**

Reading is taught throughout the whole school and discreetly as part of English. As a school, we encourage cross – curricular reading links where possible and reading is embedded throughout the entire curriculum at Reddish Hall School. These are identified in all teachers' schemes of work, medium and long-term plans. **Further information can also be located on the Structured Reading Guidelines and Phonics Policy.**

Our approaches and strategies are summarised below:

- During Literacy, guided reading/comprehension and other areas of the curriculum, children will have the opportunity to experience a wide range of good quality texts (both fiction and non-fiction) and are encouraged to respond and reflect on these. Using shared and guided reading children will experience good models of reading and reading discussion, using a variety of quality texts written for a range of purposes.
- Every primary pupil will take part in Guided Reading sessions with their teachers, on a weekly basis to develop both reading and comprehension skills.
- All pupils access a 40-minute reading lesson each week (within their English timetable) where they use Margaret Mooney's 'To, With & By'
- During the 40 min reading lesson; pupils can use their chosen, age-appropriate books. Books can be borrowed from the library or brought from home or read Magazines / Newspapers. Pupils are also encouraged to borrow books from the library to read at home.
- The library contains books included on the National Curriculum Reading List, Pie Corbett's Reading Spine, 5 Plagues of Reading, Barrington Stoke, Reluctant Readers as well as those appropriate for Low Readers and Phonics.
- Pupils are encouraged to join the Reddish Hall Star Reader competition, take part in the 100-book challenge as well as joining the school's Book Club and become a RHS Reading Ambassador
- RHS celebrates World Book Day each year

### **Independent Reading:**

- Pupils will be given opportunities for independent reading of their reading scheme/library books during the school week. All children in KS2 will have a reading book, chosen by them, at an appropriate level.
- Children will be given the opportunity to change their library books where/when needed.
- In KS2, all reading to an adult should be recorded in the children's reading records.
- The school library has books (banded in colours) according to recommended reading age. There are reading books for all key stages. For earlier, more phonics-based readers, we have phonics reading books (at various phases) which can be used for guided reading and 1:1 readers.

- We recognise the complex needs of our pupils can act as a barrier to home reading and therefore, we organise home readers with parents/carers on an individual needs basis and when appropriate
- We will support and encourage children through bands but we will not rush or push children through them when their decoding and/or their comprehension skills are not sufficiently developed.
- Some children will need to read more regularly to an adult as they need more practise. These are identified through Star Reader / Early Literacy Assessments as well as teacher judgment/ informal assessment.
- Children's attainment and progress is regularly monitored and reviewed through Reddish Levels on Solar and the Whole School English Tracker.
- MOTSI's/ Reading Interventions will be identified through GL Reading Age Assessments and our school intervention referral system.
- Phonics is to be taught throughout the school to those children identified as being in the earlier stages of reading. The school uses SoundsWrite phonics programme (see separate phonics policy for further details).

The Head, Assistant Head teacher and Head of English will:

- Provide support by encouraging staff and sharing best practice.
- Monitor learning and teaching throughout the school.
- Monitor planning and assessment.
- Support staff development through in-service training and provision of resources.

The Head of English will:

- Work with the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher to ensure continuity in assessment throughout the school and lead staff meetings to support this aim.
- Help to support the monitoring of reading in school.
- Keep up to date with new developments in reading and keep the staff informed.
- Play a key role in formulating, maintaining and reviewing the Reading Policy.
- Lead colleagues and at all times be supportive.
- Audit resources regularly
- Support staff (within the English Dept & across the school) with using pupils reading ages to support pupils' learning

Teaching staff will:

- Encourage children to read
- Primary teachers are to endeavour to read to their class on a daily basis
- Be able to recommend books to children and help them expand the authors and genres they are selecting for themselves.
- Be responsible for the teaching of reading as set out in this Policy and the Reading Lesson Guidelines.
- KS2 class teachers and Secondary English teachers to provide literacy plans make these available to the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and the faculty lead for English.
- Provide work samples to the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Faculty Lead for English.
- Assess children's reading through the Reddish Levels for Reading
- Use evidence from the teaching and assessment of reading in order to inform future planning.
- Monitor pupil progress in reading using assessment data
- Be aware of reading ages and ensure reading materials in lessons are accessible to pupils based on their reading age.
- Ensure classrooms have a reading display and a reading area where possible.

## **Phonics Intent**

As a school we recognise high quality phonics teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically. This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of phonics. Our primary approach to teaching phonics is the Sounds-Write program which consists of a very highly structured, multi-sensory, incremental and code-oriented, instructional approach to teaching children to read and spell. Our phonics scheme is intentionally buildable from primary through secondary school (interventions).

We recognise that phonics is one of the many skills required to become a competent reader and writer. We aim to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to decode and encode (spell) confidently and independently. A sharp and consistent focus on children gaining phonics knowledge gives pupils a solid foundation for future and wider learning. We recognise that the development of spoken language, enjoyment and comprehension of quality literature go hand in hand to develop a lifelong love of reading. We aim to nurture and develop these attributes alongside the phonics program.

At Reddish Hall School, we believe that the delivery of Phonics plays a vital role in teaching pupils to read and spell. Teaching of phonics follows the **'Sounds-Write'** Programme, a high-quality scheme endorsed by the Department for Education. Phonics sessions are taught systematically with pace and rigour and are adapted to meet children's individual needs. Our phonics programme will teach children the reading skills they need to decode new words, which in turn promotes reading fluency, confidence, and a love of reading.

Our aim is that by the end of KS2, all pupils will have a secure understanding of the initial and extended code taught in the 'Sounds-Write' programme. Children will apply this knowledge to reading and writing and be ready to access the curriculum coverage of reading and spellings upon entry into KS3. Any children in KS3 or KS4 who are not confident in reading words with initial and extended code will continue to learn phonics through carefully planned and targeted interventions.

## **2. Implementation Phonics**

Children who attend Reddish Hall School will be assessed using the Star Reader / Early Literacy Assessment (Toe by Toe as a 'back up'). Children who present a reading age as below nine years old will be assessed using the **'Sounds-Write'** phonics assessment, to identify and address gaps in phonetic skills and knowledge. These assessments will be used to inform teacher planning and interventions. These assessments are then used to regularly assess children's knowledge and progress, so teachers can adapt planning and delivery appropriately.

As our children often start with us from Year 5 onwards and have often previously struggled to access a mainstream curriculum including phonics, we recognise that starting from where the children are is the best approach. We aim to provide this via discrete, daily sessions progressing from simple to more complex phonic knowledge and skills and covering the major sound/spelling correspondences enabling children's progress to be assessed using a multi-sensory approach; Demonstrating that phonemes should be blended, in order, from left to right, 'all through the word' for reading as well as demonstrating how words can be segmented into their constituent sounds for reading and spelling, and thus guaranteeing the teaching of a reversible code ensuring that children have opportunities to read texts and spell words that are commensurate with their phonic knowledge and skills as early as possible.

Phonics sessions are taught on a class basis and/or a 1:1 basis (via MOTSI's). The frequency of sessions is decided based on assessment of class/pupil need. Where pupils have progressed beyond targeted phonics sessions, it should be ensured that their systematic, synthetic phonic work remains the prime approach to decoding print and that they are provided with appropriate challenge in reading, spellings and comprehension tasks. Sounds-Write will be used as an intervention with Secondary pupils identified as needing further phonics support.

**Phonics teaching is systematic, engaging, and interactive. Each phonics lesson includes the following elements:**

- Teach – introduce a new grapheme
- Revise – recap previous graphemes
- Apply – read and spell words with new grapheme
- Practise – use previous graphemes to read and spell words

Children have phonetically decodable reading books which are matched to their phonics knowledge. Children read these at the end of each phonics session and are encouraged to read regularly throughout the day. This allows children to apply their knowledge to book reading, as well as developing fluency and confidence in their reading skills.

### **Phonics Impact:**

Through the teaching of phonics in KS2, our aim is that children will be confident in decoding words, reading phonetically decodable books with fluency, and spelling words that can be read by others. Through targeted interventions in KS3 and KS4, our aim is that all children will gain the skills and knowledge they need to read and spell with confidence.

### ***By teaching a systemic approach to phonics pupils will have:***

- Learnt the skills of blending and segmenting as a priority as they are introduced to the grapheme/phoneme correspondences for reading and spelling. This ensures that from the outset children are able to read and spell simple CVCs with the GPC's they know.
- Be able to apply their phonic knowledge in the context of reading and spelling in the wider curriculum and understand how and when to do this.
- Develop their spoken language and comprehension simultaneously as they are learning phonics.

### **Assessment:**

Dynamic assessment, which entails the teacher assessing the pupil(s) as they work with them, seeing what the pupils can do with some support from the teacher and what they can do independently. The Whole School English Tracker is used to track pupil progress and provides a 'central hub' for all English pupil data and assessments.

Criterion referenced assessment, used to test a pupil's skills and code knowledge if progress is giving cause for concern and intervention is required, or to differentiate tasks within a phonics groups. This data will be recorded to show both what phase pupils are at and their specific phoneme grapheme correspondence and blending and segmenting skills. Reading Age Assessments (Toe by Toe), Initial Assessments (Functional Skills) and Star Reader / Early Literacy Assessments are implemented to identify pupils' academic levels, gaps in knowledge, comprehension, reading age and phonics need.

### **Spellings:**

Within phonics lessons pupils are taught how words are comprised of sounds and how sounds match to spellings and spellings match to sounds. Segmenting is an absolutely vital and indispensable skill in the process of enabling children to learn to spell and read proficiently. This knowledge and understanding are taught within the Sounds- Write programme through the deployment of a variety of word building skills and activities. Not only does this practice make explicit the way in which English words are structured, from the simplest to the most complex, but it also makes clear to pupils that words are comprised of sounds that are represented by spellings.

Such knowledge provides all pupils with the ability to read and spell words of any level of complexity. Segmenting and blending are built into the foundations of the Sounds-Write programme to ensure that all pupils engage in daily practice of these essential skills. Pupils will be provided with reading and spelling materials that are commensurate with their level and ability. At the start, simple, one sound/one spelling, one-syllable, CVC words only are introduced. As the programme progresses, the complexity of one-syllable words is increased to four- and five- and six-sound words, such as 'jump', 'swift' and 'scraps', before introducing the most common consonant digraphs, such as <sh> and <ch>. After this, all the remaining common vowel and consonant sound/spelling correspondences are taught until all the common spellings for the forty-four sounds in English have been covered. Alongside this, pupils are taught how to

read and spell polysyllabic words, progressing from two-syllable to five- and six-syllable words.

Alongside phonics-based spellings, pupils will be provided with weekly spellings, at the discretion of the teacher these will be relevant to English targets or topic-based vocabulary. Staff need to ensure that invented spellings, e.g., *hoam* for *home*, are corrected sensitively and selectively so that a balance is achieved between acceptance of the child's application of current knowledge of phonics and ensuring that invented spellings do not become ingrained. It must be recognised and praised when using an invented spelling pupils may be using the only phonemes/graphemes they have knowledge of, so it must be considered what phase the pupil is at. Selection of spellings to correct will be based upon what the child has been taught, i.e., if the grapheme has been taught, the spelling will be corrected if the child continues to spell incorrectly. Precision teaching or schemes such as toe by toe may be used to support learner that find phonics schemes challenging.

### **Learning Environment:**

Resources in the classroom are accessible and readily available to support the children in applying phonics to reading and writing. Resources will be tailored to the multisensory approach of sounds-write phonics however alternative approaches such as toe by toe are available. Sounds, word banks, and vocabulary cards should be displayed where appropriate. Displays reflect relevant phonics phases include sound buttons and pupil specific spellings where relevant.

### **Phonically Decodable Texts:**

Children are not expected to read texts which they cannot decode for themselves until they are reaching fluency. We have a choice of phonically decodable books for guided reading, which are carefully selected to match the children's developing phonic knowledge, so that every child can experience success in their reading by using the skills they have so far been taught. We recognise the balance between creating a lifelong love of reading by allowing pupils to access a variety of texts that they are interested in and providing them with texts appropriate to their ability.

## **3. Curriculum**

We use the programme Sounds-Write to ensure a consistent system is followed, and that learning can be tracked and monitored within the systematic framework.

### **Blending and Segmenting.**

Oral blending and segmenting are taught first before being applied to reading and writing. Children are taught that phonemes are blended in order from left to right, '*all through the word*' for reading. They are also taught how words are segmented into phonemes for spelling. These skills are taught throughout each Phase of Sounds- Write so that as children meet more complex words or grapheme phoneme correspondences, they are able to tackle them with confidence.

### **Common Exception Words**

Children are taught high frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules. We call these 'tricky' words. Children are specifically taught the 'tricky' part of the word and strategies to remember this. They are taught to apply their knowledge of these words in reading and writing.

### **Comprehension and Reading for Meaning:**

Comprehension and meaning are addressed separately within literacy and wider curriculum planning and policy. Teachers and practitioners are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills. Both English and Topic lessons should provide the opportunity for vocabulary and comprehension skills to be developed.

Analytic phonics-referenced in the good reading policy as alternative to when synthetic doesn't work.



## **Writing Intent**

We understand writing is the ability to effectively communicate ideas, information and opinions through the written and printed word in a wide range of contexts. Writing also enables people to be able to express themselves imaginatively and make sense of new learning experiences as well as develop confidence in forming essential relationships. Skilled writers understand the characteristics of writing's many forms and can adapt their style to suit a range of purposes. At Reddish Hall, our pupils arrive at various stages of their writing development, often having missed key milestones in their education. We aim to quickly equip our pupils with the necessary skills to become confident communicators and able writers in all areas of the curriculum.

By adopting a consistent, creative, whole-school approach to the teaching of writing we aim for our pupils to develop confidence and accuracy when writing in all areas of the curriculum by:

- Developing a genuine love of writing which develops positive attitudes.
- Writing with confidence, fluency, clarity and imagination.
- Helping them to learn to value and enjoy their own writing and the writing of others.
- Teaching the phonics and spelling system and use this to write confidently with better accuracy.
- Encourage creativity and the use of more ambitious vocabulary in their writing.
- Providing language-rich learning environments that promote independence and self-help.
- Enabling pupils to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry and to understand narrative structure such as setting, character, plot etc.
- Writing non-fiction texts using the features of different forms.
- Teaching pupils to plan, draft, revise and edit and publish their own writing and learn how to critically and constructively appraise the writing of others.
- Developing a technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their writing.
- Developing fluent and legible handwriting.
- Developing the attitudes of curiosity and interest, imaginative thinking, independence, perseverance, critical appraisal and co-operation.

### **Implementation:**

Writing will be taught in English lessons by the English staff but also taught in all areas of the curriculum to support the enrichment of the subject and better curricular access and proficiency, e.g., MOTSI's. There are agreed protocols in respect of the presentation of work in pupil files and all staff will reinforce these at every opportunity. All staff are expected to develop writing by continually looking for opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Incentives will be given for good writing.

The RHS Marking Policy and English Department Marking Symbols describes how staff communicate with pupils in their books and this is intended to provide a consistent approach which allows pupils to quickly improve their work and build on successes.

One of the key attitudes necessary for our pupils to experience success in writing is resilience or stamina. As well as teaching the basic skills of writing, our pupils will be given a range of extended writing opportunities which build the confidence and enthusiasm which in turn, lead to greater writing resilience. As well as practising their skills, drafting, spelling, editing and re-drafting, pupils will be encouraged to present final, neat copies of their work which they have edited.



We will expect pupils to apply their written skills to all areas of the curriculum and to write at a sustained high level, matched to both their potential and current writing level. Pupils will have realistic targets identified and planned for. Staff will be expected to provide plans of where they expect to provide writing practice in their weekly and termly planning proformas and this will be monitored by the Curriculum and Standards Co-ordinator. Writing activities, like all others, will be differentiated and matched to the individual abilities of all pupils.

### **Modelled Writing:**

This is a powerful strategy that teachers use to demonstrate a range of skills, processes and procedures. By thinking aloud as they write teachers give pupils insights into the process's writers use to compose text as well as provide them with a completed text which can serve as a model for the pupils' own writing.

Using this strategy teachers can incorporate a range of teaching points to enable pupils to see how a piece of writing takes shape – e.g.

- Planning a piece of writing
- Editing and proof reading
- Aiming for standard spelling and conventional grammar
- Developing ideas

### **Shared Writing:**

This is a blend of demonstration and participation, enabling pupils to understand what being a writer means.

In practice, shared writing is where a whole group contribute to create a piece of writing together. This could be through oral work, using mini-whiteboards or taking part in drama activities to list a few activities. At the end of the session the class should have a piece of work that they have all contributed to, which has been expertly modelled by the teacher. The teacher models all aspects of writing so that pupils can see the things they are expected to achieve in practice.

### **Guided Writing:**

This involves a teacher working with a group on a writing task based on previous work on the process of writing. Guided writing supports learners in this psychologically and cognitively difficult task.

Guided writing can be fully exploited by providing pupils with the language they need to complete the task together with the teacher. E.g., this may include making suggestions ('Why don't we start by saying ....?'), agreeing and disagreeing ('That's a good idea – let's put that ....') and asking for help ('Is it right to say ...?').

- Shared ideas and immediate feedback
- Development of oral fluency.

Pupils should be encouraged to write or work with a partner when working on pieces of writing, when annotating texts (or peer reviewing) or using whiteboards.

### **Independent Writing:**

Pupils enjoy writing from an early age and we must endeavour to develop their craft. To develop craft from emergent writing we will provide them with different materials such as different types of paper, felt tips, white boards, chalks, crayons, magnetic letters, brushes and paints as well as laptops/computers to encourage writing per se. Pupils should

be provided with scaffolding materials such as menu blanks, letter forms, invitations and label blanks that familiarise them with different writing formats. As they become more adept and knowledgeable the expectation must be that they learn the forms and are able to produce many of their own.

Physical development is key to pupils developing better gross and fine motor skills. Kinaesthetic activities help pupils to do this and must be part of the programme that leads to pupils developing a comfortable, legible script. Individual pupil work must be regularly displayed in classrooms to develop confidence.

### **Supported Writing:**

Some pupils, for several reasons, might require support staff assistance to begin with. This will be provided for but will never result in an adult doing the work for a child. Adult 1:1 support for writing will be fully planned and described by the teacher and will enable pupils to experience success in small steps, leading gradually to greater independence.

### **Spelling Tests:**

To promote spelling across Reddish Hall School each curriculum area should include a weekly spelling test for each group that they teach. These words should be a balance of subject- specific words, National Curriculum spellings, vocabulary linking to the subject area and commonly misspelled words that individuals struggle to spell.

## **Speaking and Listening Intent**

At Reddish Hall, we recognise talk is the only means that a young adult has of expressing themselves with any degree of complexity beyond the communication of immediate desires. Throughout life speech remains an essential tool for social interaction. In modern society pupils are constantly surrounded by noise of varying intensities. Therefore, we believe at Reddish Hall School, it is imperative that pupils develop these key skills in listening. Focused listening is a skill which children need in order to learn. At Reddish Hall, our pupils arrive at various stages of their speaking and listening development, often having missed key milestones in their education. We aim to quickly equip our pupils with the necessary skills to become confident communicators in all areas of the curriculum and beyond.

- To provide meaningful opportunities for talk in lessons that promote oracy effectively
- To ask relevant questions and provide accurate and substantial responses
- To use formal and informal speech as appropriate
- To communicate in a variety of situations effectively (discussions, presentations, role play etc.)
- To speak fluently and confidently in discussions and debate to develop and think through ideas.
- To encourage and teach good listening skills and enjoys the right of being listened to in their turn by peers and adults alike

### **Implementation:**

Due to the complex communication and learning needs of our pupils, we recognise that communication can be a barrier to good behaviour and learning. However, to support pupils with this and ensure they have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening effectively from their starting points. Speaking and Listening links to GCSE English Language, Functional Skills (Level 1 & 2) across curriculum lessons and social times including outdoor education.

### **Impact:**

We encourage pupils to build on their communication skills that promote relevant life skills and understanding of English, to aid individual living skills and add value to their lives as well as promoting positive communication between pupils and those they engage with.