



EXPEDITIONS English Policy

Ethos and Vision

At Edisford, we seek to broaden children's experiences, ensuring that they build personal characteristics alongside strong academic progress. We do this through a first-hand learning approach wherever possible, with children learning key characteristics for success, as well as teaching the core skills and knowledge associated with each subject.

Intent

Our English curriculum is designed by us and is unique to us. It is based on the system of Expeditions mountain setting, where children are taught in smaller groups of similar ability, meaning that the range of differentiation is narrower and this leads to better attainment and progress.

English Expeditions Sets

Vega

Polaris

Betelgeuse

Pennines

Cairngorms

Pyrenees

Dolomites

Appalachians

Himalayas



Reading

At Edisford, we forge a love of reading, first and foremost. Reading is an inherent part of the school day, with class novels and books read to children on a daily basis, guided reading books which foster interest and broaden experience, lyrics to songs in Musician Endeavour, Flair for Music and our Christmas shows and children's individual reading books. Reading is part of most lessons – we know that reading for pleasure improves life chances. It is given a high status at Edisford, because it has a high impact on children. It gives children a range of

experiences they may never have, exposes them to new vocabulary building language skills, provides an escape from the world and is therapeutic. It allows children to make links with the things they have read and the subjects they study.

Phonics and Early Reading

Phonics Finch Intent

Two of our own teachers have designed a systematic, synthetic phonics programme which meets children's needs in a highly effective way. This progression can be viewed at [Phonics Finch Progression of Learning](#).

We justify the use of the Phonics Finch programme, because it yields strong, consistent results.

Phonics Finch Implementation

All children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 attend a daily phonics session, followed immediately with a guided reading session enabling children to apply what they have been taught. This is matched closely to the sound that they are currently being taught. In addition to this, children are provided with a home-reader which again closely matches the sound being taught. At school, we use the Oxford Reading tree book scheme which, as it is linked to the order of Letters and Sounds, works for our bespoke scheme too.



Phonic sessions begin in reception class, as soon as children start school and are a non-negotiable part of the school day for all children in EYFS and Key Stage 1. Alongside this discrete session, further opportunities to consolidate knowledge are peppered in throughout the school day. Children learn how to form the graphemes within the phonics session, thus ensuring that they are practised daily.

We ensure that that our phonics scheme is implemented effectively to the individual needs of our children. The programme matches the National Curriculum and Early Learning Goals and follows the progression outlined in Letters and Sounds.

Impact of Phonics Finch

Each session involves revise, teach, practise, apply. We employ consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling throughout the school. We do this through responsive teaching, frequent assessment including live reshaping of lessons and good subject knowledge and pedagogy so that the curriculum is rich and varied to appeal to all learners.

For the last two years, Phonics Finch has led to 87% of children passing their phonics screening test. It also enables them to access reading swiftly and is long-lasting.

Early Reading in the EYFS and KS1

Children are taught new sounds throughout the week in a daily synthetic systematic programme of phonics, so that they can access reading as soon as they start school. Alongside this, children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 have daily guided reading, which follows on from the phonics lesson, so that they can apply the new sound being taught and recap previous sounds.

Paramount to our early reading programme is the chance to read exciting, enriching books of a variety of genres and subjects. Books and texts have been carefully chosen to foster a love of reading.

Children also have a home reader that is closely matched to their phonic level, with another book that is a 'reading for pleasure' book.

Our approach is to teach reading in EYFS and Key Stage 1 in three ways:

1. Word Reading (Phonics Finch Programme)
2. Fluency (Guided Reading linked to Phonics Finch sounds)
3. Comprehension

EYFS and Key Stage 1 Writing

Phonics and Spellings

Writing begins in the Early Years, with children practising to encode new sounds taught in the phonics sessions. Focus starts with writing s a t p i n graphemes, CVC words and tricky words. In Year 1 and 2, children encode new sounds including digraphs and trigraphs every day. Children learn to spell tricky words, too. Handwriting is taught alongside phonics, with children learning the appropriate ascenders and descenders as they encode.

Handwriting

Children in Early Years learn to print letters (graphemes). In Year 1, children move on to pre-cursive and then join up in Year 2. It is taught both discretely and in our daily phonics lessons.

Grammar and Punctuation

Children learn the correct terminology for grammar and punctuation right away. In EYFS, we teach children to use full sentences for speaking, rehearse it out loud and then hold it in their head to write it down. As they move through the phonics scheme, they become familiar with the terms 'digraph' and 'trigraph' and then in Year 1 and 2, learn to use terms such as 'pronoun', 'singular' and 'plural'. They learn to use punctuation such as apostrophes, commas in lists and contractions.

Writing Composition

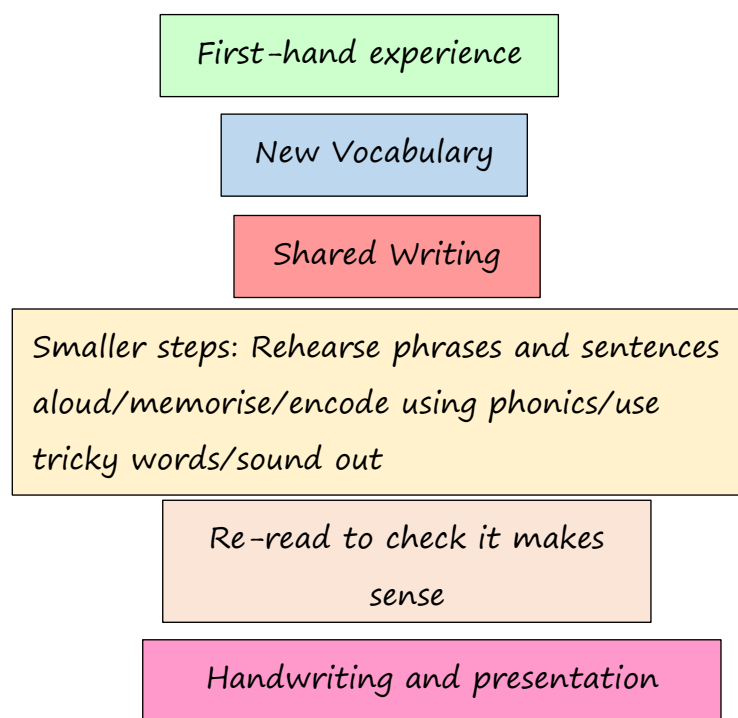
Children start writing with a first-hand experience, as well as a strong link to the book they have been reading. This enables children to use their own experience, hooks them into their writing, giving them a reason to write. Children are taught to:

- Rehearse aloud what they want to write
- Memorise the sentence in their head
- Encode using phonics and tricky words and sounding out
- Re-reading to check it makes sense

Shared Writing

Writing is modelled through shared writes so that children can see how to structure their writing, use new vocabulary, encode words. Modelling allows children to see the writing process first-hand and rehearse it, seeing how the writer thinks and makes choices as they write.

The Writing Process



A variety of genres are taught so that children gain experience of writing in different ways. Children are taught Alan Peat's Exciting Sentences, so that they have key phrases to draw from.

Vocabulary

New Vocabulary is taught through first-hand experience, Exciting Sentences and gleaned from reading books. Apt vocabulary is prioritised and children are encouraged to use it in their writing.

First-hand experience for Writing

Children in EYFS and KS1 cover a range of first-hand experiences such as:

Potions (link with Witches and Wizards Week)

Marbling

Missing Chairs (The Day the Chairs Quit)

Tiger in the classroom

Food tasting (Blackberries, exotic fruits)

Daffodils dissection

Obstacle course

A coastal visit/sea life

Great Fire of London

Exciting Sentences and MAPS

Children learn set phrases/sentences which they can utilise in their writing to build interest and description. They are also taught how to write similes to add description.

Key Stage 2 Reading

Reading at Key Stage 2 builds on prior learning, breaking reading down into:

1. Word Reading
2. Fluency (Expeditions Guided Reading)
3. Comprehension

High importance is placed on fostering a love of reading. We choose books and texts that will engage children and enrich vocabulary and comprehension. We use the reading fluency time at the start of our English lesson to encourage lots of talk around books and the subject matter, the language choices and new vocabulary. We build the soft skills of comprehension here in a variety of ways:

- Making lists of new vocabulary and memorising the meanings

- Chunking words into their phonic and syllabic structure to read them
- Finding joy in learning new words with intriguing sounds or cadence
- Predicting what might happen next
- Linking events with each other
- Discuss characters and what we like and don't like about them
- Drawing comparisons with our own lives
- Imagining and hypothesising
- Teacher modelling of how a sentence/paragraph could be read, including accents for characters
- Reading aloud independently, reading in pairs, groups
- Reading in our heads

Word Reading

We rehearse the words we are learning for spellings by reading them frequently. We chunk them in order to read them or use phonics.

Fluency

A daily 20 minute guided read allows children to rehearse fluent reading and prosody. Modelling how something is read is part of this process, as well as having lots of opportunities to read. Fiction is prioritised as it builds comprehension effectively.

Comprehension

Children learn key techniques for comprehension, such as remembering the question (holding it in their head as they skim for the answer), underlining key words in the question, or using key phrases, such as 'because it says' to help them answer using the text.

Phonics into KS2

Children who did not finish the phonics programme in Year 2, and who did not pass their phonics retake in Year 2, continue the phonics programme until they have completed it. These children have interventions for their reading throughout the week, and attend phonics sessions.

Year 3 cover a range of phonics throughout the week.

Key Stage 2 Writing

Central to our writing curriculum is the idea that children write from their own experience. They also gain wider knowledge of the way things are written from the reading they cover.

First-hand Experience

We focus on children being able to use a rich, specific and varied vocabulary drawn from first-hand experience. In this way, they find starting points for writing from activities designed to give children their own experience, in a similar way to how authors begin to write. Examples of first-hand experience activities are:

- Crop circles discovered in the school field
- A break-in where things are left in disarray or stolen
- Snails
- Dogs
- Canaries
- Woodlice
- Clarinet
- Guitar
- Opera singer
- Pipe organ
- Mushrooms
- Unusual food
- Curious objects

Some of these first-hand experiences are designed to be event-driven, whilst some encourage children to describe more specifically and elaborately using what we call an elaborated code. They all seek to expand children's experience of the world, so that they build up a broad vocabulary and have a desire to write about their new experiences.

New Vocabulary

We notice that a proportion of our children enter school with a restricted vocabulary (Berstein, 1971) which limits their ability to describe the world. To respond to this, we actively encourage children to use a more elaborated code, so that they develop strong language skills from the outset.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS, we develop their ability to converse with others, by modelling back-and-forth conversation, using such tools as 'four-turn conversation'. Practitioners in the EYFS facilitate lots of language, by encouraging children to use the right word to describe things and modelling how to answer questions. In the EYFS, our practitioners design activities which will develop language, including activities with first-hand experience e.g. building a

wormery, planting sweetcorn and strawberries, watching tadpoles metamorphose into frogs, or making bird feeders. Whilst children work, we actively feed in new words and ask them to repeat them. This builds language over time.

Key Stage 1 and 2

As children enter Key Stage 1, we continue to introduce new language through first-hand experience for writing, modelling language and the use of specific vocabulary to describe. Instead of 'get me that over there', we ask them to 'get the red coat on the hook outside'. In Key Stage 2, our writing activities all include FHE, so that we can teach new vocabulary. Children develop a love of language, using new vocabulary learnt with one first-hand experience in several pieces of writing.

Spelling

We recognise that spelling is often the last aspect for some children to grasp (Reading Framework, July 2023). Our collective approach is to rehearse spellings often, covering a spelling rule at a time each week. Tricky words and word list words are taught in sequence each week, sharing them out into each Expeditions standard. Spellings taught correlate with the Word Reading lists so children learn to read and spell a bank of words with the same rule each week.

Grammar and Punctuation

We teach grammar and punctuation both discretely and throughout writing. Grammar and punctuation objectives are shared out between the Expeditions groups, which correlates to Appendix 2 of the National Curriculum.

Exciting Sentences

Creativity in writing is taught by using sentence formulae derived from 'Exciting Sentences' by Alan Peat. This gives children a sentence framework to write from and greater impact on the reader. Different types of Exciting Sentences are shared out between the Expeditions groups and complement the genre and content of writing the children are learning about. Use of exciting sentences encourages children to be creative with sentence structure and maximise the effect of their writing on the reader.

MAPS (Metaphor, alliteration, personification and simile)

Figurative language gives writing depth and imagery. We teach MAPS to children from Scafell Pike through to Everest. Children acquire the ability to use simile and alliteration

first, moving on to the harder concepts of personification and metaphor. We also teach onomatopoeia and other figurative language where appropriate.

Key Stage Two

First-hand Experience (FHE)

In KS2, we teach writing using first-hand experience as the starting point. We also gear up to writing using selected texts with similar themes e.g. stories if we are writing stories that week. WE feed in new vocabulary so that children begin to describe using new words that are specific and descriptive.

Shared Writing

Next, we show children how to write, using shared writing. This gives children a framework on how to get started. We refer to a structure of writing for the genre we are looking at. For example, stories follow a story mountain structure, and non-chronological reports have an introduction and a conclusion, plus a glossary of terms and diagrams.

As we write as a class, the teacher shows why we choose certain words and children contribute. Deliberate mistakes and editing encourage children to think about the choice of words and sentence structure. We build in new vocabulary, 'Exciting Sentences' and MAPS to make writing imaginative.

Sometimes, we break down how we teach different parts of a text, so that children can rehearse it before putting it into the whole e.g. an opening or an ending to a story.

Drafting

Children cover a short write each half term, which is not drafted, and one longer write, which is drafted. This gives children plenty of practice at both writing fluently 'off the cuff', so encouraging stamina, and using the drafting process to try out and experiment with writing. We feel both aspects are important skills to gain as writers.

When children draft, they may use a writing frame to draft from. This enables them to think about the structure of the text and to remember writing conventions such as adverbials to link paragraphs.

Editing

We actively teach children how to edit their work. This is taught through a combination of showing them through shared writes (which is the best word?), by using another pen to edit their own work and by working with the teacher to edit and improve. Editing is a difficult process for children to master and so we teach this over time.

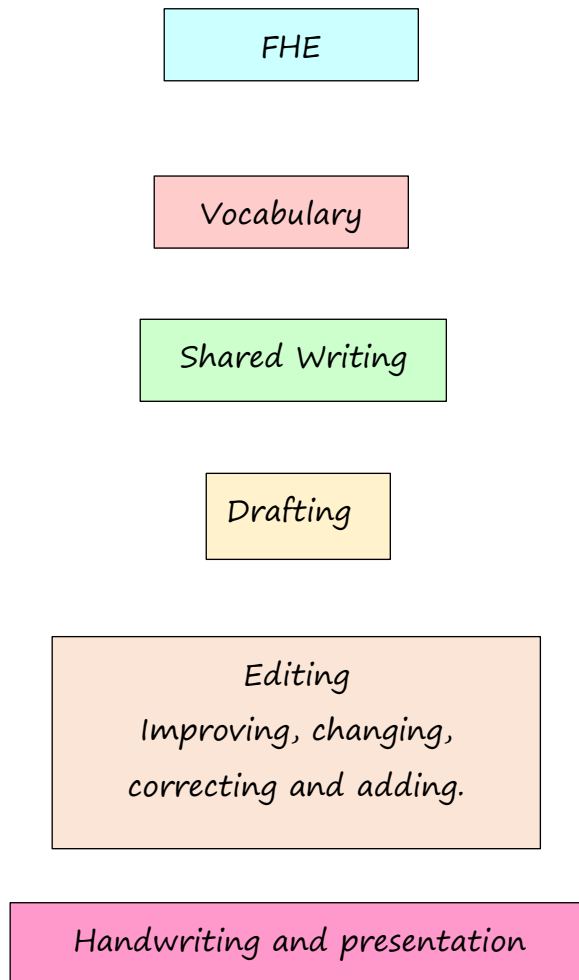
Handwriting

As we teach writing, we draw attention to handwriting and presentation. We rehearse how to join letters and encourage children to join from Year 3. By Year 4, all children should be joining their handwriting. This improves their stamina and fluency when writing.

We acknowledge that poor handwriting can have an impact on the quality of presentation, but also on the content. Research shows that the improvement of handwriting correlates strongly with improved writing quality as a whole.

As a result of this, we teach handwriting discretely whenever we need to throughout KS2. We group families of letters e.g. g, j, y, f are all 'loop letters' and their tail is looped.

The Writing Process



Differentiated and Adaptive Learning

Children are set by ability into smaller English groups. This means that their learning needs are already adapted. Within these groups, adaptations to learning are made continually so that all children can achieve the objectives. As groups are smaller than a traditional class size, more support is available for each child.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with SEND are carefully set into the right group for them, to cater for their needs. More support is available, or they have a teaching assistant to adapt the learning further if needed. We work on targets set in each child's individual Learning Plan in the English lessons where appropriate. Interventions are used to work on targets in a focused way.

Assessment and Moderation

Reading EYFS and KS1

Children are formally assessed throughout both phonics and comprehension lessons as well as regular guided reading sessions. Home reading books are checked frequently to ensure that they match the current GPCS being taught.

In phonics, children are formally assessed at the end of each phonics phase to ensure that they are ready to progress onto the next level.

In Year 2, children are assessed formally via a set reading comprehension. This is conducted at the end-point (June).

Reading KS2

Children are informally assessed throughout Fluency and Comprehension sessions, as well as through evidence of home reading.

Children's comprehension is also assessed formally at two points in the year through set reading comprehensions for each year group:

Mid-Point: February

End-Point: June

Writing EYFS, KS1 and KS2

We use the pieces of writing that children have completed through each half term to assess writing at two points in the year:

Mid-Point: February

End-Point: June

We use assessment statements which we have written to do this. These show if children are working within the expected standard, or at greater depth.

We moderate our assessments together as a team.