

English at Almond Hill Junior School 2023-24



Subject Intent Statement

We aim to promote high standards of English by equipping pupils with a robust command of spoken and written language in addition to a love of literature through widespread reading opportunities.

We aim to ensure that all pupils leave our school...

- reading fluently and with good understanding.
- reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- writing clearly, accurately and coherently, in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- with a wide and rich vocabulary modelling competence in the skills of both speaking and listening.

Implementation

Reading

Reading is taught through a range of approaches at Almond Hill in order to most successfully support our children in reaching or exceeding the expected learning outcomes by the end of KS2.

The core learning for reading skills occurs during two discrete lessons per week in each class/year group. Skills covered in these weekly sessions focus on vocabulary, specific reading skills and comprehension. In addition to these discrete sessions, children have access to texts and reading opportunities each day through class readers, independent reading and via cross-curricular reading as part of learning in other subjects.

In addition to teaching the 'skills' of reading, staff understand the importance of promoting a love for reading and adopting the habits of reading for pleasure. We encourage this through a vast range of promotion strategies including engaging school reading displays, class libraries, class reading rivers, library visits, book fayres, author visits, and whole school initiatives such as term-long weekly home-learning challenges linked to reading.

Our **reading principles** support children and staff in understanding what good teaching and learning in reading looks like. Children are encouraged to reflect on these after each taught reading lesson and consider which principles were used.

On entry many children are assigned a 'banded' reading book from the selection which is matched to the current phonemes/graphemes they are learning to ensure decoding skills are embedded before moving onto wider reading skills and 'free reading' opportunities. These are developed as soon as the children are ready.

Where necessary, separate individual intervention or small group sessions will take place for children who have gaps in decoding skills – ***Extra Reading***. In these sessions, phonics will be taught based on assessments of gaps in phonic knowledge. These children are assigned a 'banded' reading book from the Twinkl selection which is matched to the current phonemes/graphemes they are learning. This usually a lower school provision.

Writing

English lessons are taught daily and incorporate elements of writing, the reading of quality texts and opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. Across the school year, a number of themed units of writing are taught in all year groups which reflect a range of different authors and themes (including diversity). Every year group also teaches a unit based on a classic text or poem. Writing units cover a variety of genres including all aspects of narrative writing, poetry and non-fiction texts.

Teachers ensure that children at Almond Hill develop confidence and independence as writers by providing a range of experiences in their English lessons:

- Exploring themes and features of specific text types through reading quality texts and visual stimuli such as pictures, real objects and video clips
- Analysing and discussing language, layout and writer's techniques, including grammatical devices and the purpose and audience of each piece
- Learning new vocabulary and developing the use of dictionaries and thesauri
- Teacher modelling of the writing process using a variety of techniques
- Group discussion and shared writing in pairs, groups or as a whole class
- Role play and speaking & listening activities
- Differentiated tasks and targeted support for pupils with special educational needs (and through separate intervention groups where required)

Planning, drafting and editing is a key aspect of all writing activities in English lessons. Once teachers have read written outcomes, supportive feedback is provided during editing lessons and additionally, through verbal comments, 1:1 conferencing or written comments in books. Children are encouraged to read their own work closely then proof read & edit independently and with peers to improve grammatical accuracy, spelling and the overall quality. Final written drafts form part of high quality central displays across the school. In the spring term, the whole school participates in a three-week writing project which focuses on a picture book. Several other schools in the local area also take part in the project as part of The North Herts and Stevenage Schools Partnership which culminates in a writing award ceremony to celebrate the children's achievements.

Year 2 to 3 transition

During the summer term, year 3 teachers and year 2 teachers from our main feeder school (Letchmore Infant and Nursery School) plan and begin teaching a transition writing unit which is continued in September. This supports a smooth transition of children from year 2 to year 3 in the autumn term.

Cross-curricular Links

Pupils have regular opportunities to reinforce writing skills in different curricular areas as outlined in year group long term planning grids.

Spelling

Spelling is taught using the Hfl Spelling Essentials scheme which adheres to the spelling guidelines in the National Curriculum for English. A spelling lesson is taught every week and is reinforced within English teaching and through home learning activities. Children study word origins, letter patterns, sounds and spelling rules following specific teaching sequences that build on previous learning and reinforce phonics. Lessons include games, oral activities, investigations and written tasks as well as regular spelling dictations to assess understanding. Current spelling rules, the year group statutory spelling list and new vocabulary are displayed in each classroom.

Spelling is also a key aspect of editing lessons where common errors are addressed and spelling rules reinforced. Children are then expected to correct spelling mistakes within their writing using age appropriate dictionaries and thesauri. The school also uses the Hfl SOS Spelling Intervention. This supports children whose spelling difficulties prevents them from reaching the year group expected standard for writing.

Phonics

It is recognised that some children will need to consolidate the phonic knowledge and skills taught in Key Stage 1, especially in year 3. Phonics is taught in all classes with additional interventions to the children who need extra support. The school uses the Twinkl KS2 phonics scheme.

Punctuation and Grammar

At Almond Hill, teachers implement the grammar & punctuation requirements of the English Curriculum through the Herts for Learning Stranded Planning Platforms which outline the **progression of skills** in these areas.

English punctuation and grammar is planned and taught as an implicit part of each English unit and writing outcomes incorporate the skills taught. Where required, some specific aspects of grammar are taught as explicit lessons.

Handwriting

At Almond Hill we teach all children to write clearly, legibly and to develop a fluent style of joined writing using the **Nelson Handwriting Scheme** (each year group has Nelson resources to support teaching, including the Nelson font on all classroom computers).

The formation of letters and correct joins is taught in weekly handwriting lessons and during lesson starters (using lined handwriting books in year 3 and year 4 if required). Pupils in years 5 and 6 are expected to write in blue pen (**not biro**) although younger children displaying confidence in using a fluent and neat style of handwriting may be encouraged to transfer to a pen much earlier. Teachers and support staff model high standards of handwriting at all times in line with the school handwriting scheme.

End of Key Stage 2 Assessment Framework (Year group TAFs from HFL followed by years 3 -5)

Working towards the expected standard

The pupil can:

- write for a range of purposes
- use paragraphs to organise ideas
- in narratives, describe settings and characters
- in non-narrative writing, use simple devices to structure the writing and support the reader (e.g. headings, sub-headings, bullet points)
- use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contraction mostly correctly
- spell correctly most words from the year 3 / year 4 spelling list, and some words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list*
- write legibly.¹

Working at the expected standard

The pupil can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (e.g. the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)
- in narratives, describe settings, characters and atmosphere
- integrate dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action
- select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (e.g. using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility)
- use a range of devices to build cohesion (e.g. conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs
- use verb tenses consistently and correctly throughout their writing
- use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 mostly correctly[^] (e.g. inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech)
- spell correctly most words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list,* and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary
- maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.²

Working at greater depth

The pupil can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting the appropriate form and drawing independently on what they have read as models for their own writing (e.g. literary language, characterisation, structure)
- distinguish between the language of speech and writing³ and choose the appropriate register
- exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary to achieve this
- use the range of punctuation taught at key stage 2 correctly (e.g. semi-colons, dashes, colons, hyphens) and, when necessary, use such punctuation precisely to enhance meaning and avoid ambiguity.[^]

[There are no additional statements for spelling or handwriting]

Curriculum Development 23/24

- Continue to develop Extra Reading resource in conjunction with a reading audit to ensure phonics is strong
- Develop the Fluency project to impact future intervention and whole teaching
- Use of reading ladders to increase vocabulary across the school
- Introduction of Boxed up Success Criteria to support writing for a purpose/audience- summer term 23 to be followed up from Autumn 23.
- Spelling SOS training rolled out to all teachers and TAs in Autumn 23
- Reviewing and developing a writing curriculum

Progression of skills

READING	Year 3 Developing reader	Year 4 Moderately fluent reader	Year 5 Fluent reader	Year 6 Experienced, avid reader
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies new vocabulary and sentence structure and discusses to develop understanding identifies and understands meanings of a wide range of conjunctions used to link events together identifies a range of standard words/phrases used at various stages of a narrative <i>e.g. introduction, build up etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes examples of descriptive language and explains the mood or atmosphere they create notices key words and phrases used to convey passing of time to introduce paragraphs or chapter. identifies how specific words and phrases link sections, paragraphs and chapters identifies how authors use precise vocabulary to meet the intended purpose/effect <i>e.g. They slipped into the room unnoticed</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of strategies to identify the meaning of new vocabulary identifies examples of effective description that evoke time or place commenting both on word and sentence choice notes words and phrases in pre twentieth century writing which have changed their meaning over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyses, and explains the impact of, authors' techniques and use of language <i>e.g. expressive or figurative language, range of sentence structure, repetition etc</i> notices where the author uses a wider range of cohesive language to create more sophisticated links between and within paragraphs <i>e.g. where the author has avoided over-use of obvious adverbials/conjunctions such as 'on the other hand'</i>
Retrieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers back to the text for evidence when explaining extracts information from tables and charts recognises some different forms of poetry retrieves information from text where there is competing (distracting) information uses contents pages and indexes to locate, retrieve and record information from non-fiction texts recognises different narrative genres notices the difference between 1st and 3rd person accounts identifies the conventions of different types of writing <i>e.g. greetings in a letter/email, diary entries, numbers and headings in instructions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognises the introduction, build-up, climax or conflict and resolution in narrative retrieves information from text where there is competing (distracting) information identifies a wide range of poetic forms, <i>e.g. cinquain, haiku, calligram, kenning</i> identifies key words and phrases as evidence when making a point identifies the structure and features of a range of non-fiction, narrative and poetry texts. analyses how structural and presentational features contribute to purpose in a range of texts identifies events that are presented in more detail and those that are skimmed over identifies underlying themes in a range of narrative texts <i>e.g. courage over adversity, loss etc.</i> identifies the way descriptive language and small details are used to build an impression of an unfamiliar place identifies figurative and expressive language that builds a fuller picture of a character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments on use of language using terminology including onomatopoeia, metaphor, personification notes how cohesion is achieved in different ways identifies how the author signals change in the narration, time and place and notes the effect that this has on them as the reader retrieves information, referring to more than one place in the text, and where there is competing (distracting) information identifies and compares underlying themes in a range of narrative texts <i>e.g. can track words/phrases linked with the theme throughout a narrative and note how the author keeps reinforcing the theme throughout.</i> identifies how an author varies pace by using direct or reported speech at different points in a story comments on how a character is built and presented, referring to dialogue, action and description <p>retrieves, records and presents ideas from non-fiction in a different format <i>e.g. retrieves information from a report to inform a persuasive text</i></p> <p>identifies precision in the use of technical terminology and considers the different reasons for why an author might use this <i>e.g. for genuinely informative reasons, or to 'bamboozle' the reader</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retrieves information, referring to more than one place in the text, and where there is competing (distracting) information recognises how the author of non-fiction texts expresses, sequences and links points explains how poets create shades of meaning, justifying own views with reference to the text and to other sources of evidence <i>e.g. wider reading</i> considers when a story was first published, and discusses the audience that the author had in mind, when reading texts from our literary heritage identifies and analyses conventions across a range of non-fiction text types and forms looking at the differences in conventions within the same text type <i>e.g. categorise sub-sets of persuasive texts into groups</i>
Summarising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarises main ideas from a text begins to identify themes across texts <i>e.g. friendship, good and evil, bullying</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains and justifies an opinion on the resolution of an issue/whole narrative summarises the main ideas of a non-fiction text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarises main ideas from more than one text to support note taking analyses information from tables and charts and can incorporate this information into a summary of the whole text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarises competing views analyses dialogue at certain points in a story and summarises its purpose <i>e.g. to explain plot, show character and relationships, convey mood or create humour</i> discusses main

				ideas from a text within a group and summarises the discussion
Inferring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggests reasons for actions and events • infers characters' feelings, motives, behaviour and relationships based on descriptions and their actions in the story • identifies with characters and makes links with own experiences when making judgements about the characters' actions • justifies their views about what they have read • Identifies how settings are used to create atmosphere e.g. <i>what words/phrases in this description indicate that bad things might be about to happen in this place?</i> • identifies evidence of relationship between characters based on dialogue and behaviour • analyses the use of language to set scenes, build tension or create suspense • explains how words/phrases in the description are linked to create suspense • explains how words/phrases in the description are linked to create an overall and consistent impression on the reader, for example, 'what other words/phrases in this passage tell us that he is a sinister character?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies techniques used by the author to persuade the reader to feel sympathy or dislike • justifies opinions of particular characters • distinguishes between fact and opinion • makes deductions about the motives and feelings that might lay behind characters' words • summarises the way that the setting affects characters' appearance, actions and relationships e.g. 'The children in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe are family and speak and act differently to the class mates in The Angel of Nitshill Road' • comments on the way key characters respond to a problem • makes deductions about characters' motives and feelings and explain whether their behaviour was predictable or unexpected • explores alternative outcomes to an issue • analyses dialogue, making judgements about the extent to which characters reveal their true feelings or motives • evaluates texts for their appeal for the intended audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides evidence of characters changing during a story and discusses possible reasons where reasons are not obviously stated in the text • recognises that characters may have different perspectives in the story • considers the time and place where a story is set and looks for evidence of how that affects characters' behaviour and/or plot development • explores in-depth the meaning of particular multi-layered (figurative) word/phrases, deciding what effect the author most probably intended on the reader and justifying this with further evidence from the text • summarises ideas across paragraphs, identifying key details that support the main ideas • identifies conventions across a range of non-fiction text types and forms e.g. <i>first person in autobiographies</i> and can identify where a common convention has been broken/breached/ignored! Offer reasons for why the author may have chosen to do this • analyses characters' appearance, actions and relationships and makes deductions about differences in patterns of relationships and attitudes • identifies examples of dialogue that show different degrees of formality and considers what this implies about the relationships and context • shows understanding through emphasis, intonation and volume when performing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draws reasoned conclusions from non-fiction texts N/A which present differences of opinion • analyses why and how scene changes are made and how they affect characters and events <p>techniques and use of language e.g. <i>expressive or figurative language, range of sentence structure, repetition etc</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notices where the author uses a wider range of cohesive language to create more sophisticated links between and within paragraphs e.g. <i>where the author has avoided over-use of obvious adverbials/conjunctions such as 'on the other hand'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguishes between implicit and explicit points of view • identifies and summarises underlying themes in a range of narrative texts noting where there are several themes competing in a text • provides evidence to explain how themes emerge and conventions are applied in a range of fiction and non-fiction genres • explains underlying themes across a range of poetry e.g. can form compilations of poems based on themes explaining choices for the grouping, and considering the order of the poems in the compilation. • explains the intent of the author e.g. explains how the author has tried to manipulate the emotions/bias of the reader • identifies stock characters in particular genres and looks for evidence of characters that challenge stereotypes and surprise the reader e.g. <i>in parody</i>
Predicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predicts what might happen from details stated and can indicate the strength/likelihood of their prediction being correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predicts on the basis of mood or atmosphere how a character will behave in a particular setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies whether changes in characters met or challenged the reader's expectations 	N/A
Authorial Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluates effectiveness of texts in terms of function, form and language features • identifies how language structure and presentation (font size, bold, calligrams) contribute to meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands how authors use a variety of sentence constructions e.g. <i>relative clauses to add detail</i> • explains the decisions that the author has made in setting up problems for the characters and choosing how to resolve them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises the style of different authors and recognises their intended audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • justifies agreement or disagreement with narrator's point of view when evaluating a text
Comparing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments on the effect of scene changes e.g. <i>moving from a safe to a dangerous place to build tension</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comments on differences between what characters say and what they do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies balanced or biased viewpoints and discuss texts which • explore more than one perspective on an issue • checks whether viewpoint changes in the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explains how a personal response has altered at various points across a text as the narrative viewpoint changes e.g. 'I didn't like this character at the beginning because but now I understand why
Analysing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyses and compares plot structure • recognises the move from general to specific detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyses how the structure of non-fiction relates to its purpose e.g. how the points in a persuasive speech lead you to the author's viewpoint • analyses how poetry is structured and its effect on the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyses the structure of more complex non-linear narratives (print and electronic texts that require choices to be made by the reader, creating multiple plots) e.g. <i>experimenting with the</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • justifies personal response to narratives with suitable expansion e.g. <i>whether it was believable, whether dilemmas were resolved satisfactorily</i> • identifies how authors use a range of narrative structures

		reader <ul style="list-style-type: none">• exemplifies the move between generalisations and specific information	<i>different paths that the reader can take through the text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyses paragraph structures in similar texts noting and commenting on similarities and differences	e.g. <i>stories within stories, flashbacks</i> and can demonstrate understanding by re-telling/writing the narrative using a different structure