



Laxton Junior School

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English Policy

The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Laxton Junior School.

Introduction

At Laxton Junior School, we provide a high-quality, language-rich English curriculum, which is varied and diverse, enabling children to acquire skills, knowledge and creativity to develop their understanding of the English language and its application.

Our Values

Driven by our five School Values (A Love of Learning, Opportunity, Care, Community and Quality), our School Mission is to prepare all our children for both their chosen senior school and the life that lies beyond. This preparation develops in them a series of essential characteristics that we believe will enable them to thrive in whichever direction they wish their lives to take. We want our children to be: Confident and Resilient, Kind and Respectful, Open-Minded and Well-Rounded, Collaborative and Independent. As outlined below, the nature of our English curriculum is rooted in high-quality texts and meaningful opportunities for children to practise skills in each lesson, taking the learning forward into literary opportunities, which demonstrate and enrich the school Values and Mission.

Aims

The skills, knowledge and understanding layered into our English Curriculum provide opportunities for personal growth and development, through speaking and listening opportunities, interacting in shared writing opportunities, and managing to use both spoken and written communication as a means to share opinions, find answers and ask questions about the wider world. We want children to grow into positive, responsible people, who can collaborate with others while developing their individual passions, knowledge, independence, resilience and skills in order to be happy and make a successful contribution to society in the future.

We aim:

- To provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated
- To provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning, both in speech and writing, of factual, imaginary and personal experiences
- To provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate its main features
- To foster an enthusiasm for and love of reading for life
- To encourage pupils to have a fluent, joined and legible handwriting style
- To provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of IT
- To provide opportunities for role play and drama
- To cultivate a love of literature that permeates all aspects of life at LJS

Through our English curriculum, pupils will:

- Be able to participate in a conversation, listening to others, responding appropriately and taking turns to speak
- Develop the confidence and ability to speak and perform in front of varying sizes of audience
- Be able to sustain concentration in a range of listening situations
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with key literary conventions
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of non-fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its audience and purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately in all written work
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and develop a growing vocabulary
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Understand the phonic system and spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts
- Be interested in books, read for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences
- Be able to work confidently and increasingly independently in all areas

Key Skills

While English skills may sometimes be taught in isolation, with specific intricacies explicitly delivered, our English curriculum aims to bring together all elements—Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing (including Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation)—into one cohesive and engaging learning experience. We take a flexible approach, drawing on The Literary Curriculum from The Literacy Tree as a foundation. This book-based approach balances fiction and non-fiction texts, emphasising the fundamentals of writing alongside creativity in a structured sequence.

At the same time, we use our professional judgment to select high-quality, engaging texts that connect with humanities topics or reflect the interests of our children. This flexibility allows us to ensure relevance and foster meaningful connections between texts. By doing so, we aim to help children develop their understanding with purpose and clarity, empowering them to enjoy, benefit from, and utilise all aspects of language and communication.

For the benefit of this document, key skills will be separated to clarify the purpose and progression of a wide range of skills, including:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing; incorporating spelling, handwriting, grammar, punctuation and overall quality

Speaking and Listening

In the EYFS, Speaking and Listening opportunities are abundant. Children are engaged in their play, supported through modelling of conversations and dialogue, and enhanced with quality, purposeful provision. Children may also take part in show and tell, where they are given the opportunity to stand in front of their peers to deliver, answer questions and articulate their own thoughts. As a collective, children partake in an annual performance, which further develops their speaking and listening.

In Pre-Prep, the foundations of oral literacy continue from the skills built in the EYFS. Children are exposed to role play opportunities in the classroom, and much of their cross-curricular learning is delivered through songs, speaking opportunities and an enjoyment for listening and sharing. Children also take part in performance opportunities throughout their Pre-Prep journey, where they learn lines, and deliver these in front of an audience.

In the Prep department, children take part in regular drama lessons, and again, continue to build on the art of storytelling and performing within English sessions and further across the curriculum. Children are provided with opportunities during which they speak in front of others, within their class, year group and school.

Throughout school, children are given opportunities to show their speaking and listening skills. These include applying for leadership roles, our Speech and Drama competition, becoming a Digital Leader, productions, supporting the delivery of assemblies and more.

Reading

Children's English learning is rooted in stimulating, relevant texts, both fiction and non-fiction, poetry and drama. Subject matter reflects the interest of the children, as well as the needs of the curriculum, and where possible, provides cross-curricular links to humanities. Our reading texts aim to introduce and expose our children to a wider range of interests beyond their immediate experience.

Reading opportunities to promote each child's interest, enjoyment and commitment to reading are provided throughout each week.

In EYFS and Year 1, pupils are introduced to Phonics and High Frequency Words. Our phonics scheme is based on, but not restricted to, Letters and Sounds, promoting a clear progression of sounds, alternative graphemes, and common expectation words. These Reading skills are taught explicitly in regular, discrete phonics teaching in the classroom, and applied independently in home-school reading books. Our children are expected to read daily at home and are heard regularly by adults in school to ensure that their reading book supports their level of confidence and phonics skill to make maximum progress in reading fluency and comprehension. This is at the discretion of the Form Teacher. As children move into the Prep Department, or as appropriate, children begin to have greater independence in selecting their own reading book from set ranges. This is tracked and recorded by year group staff to ensure that progression in content and comprehension continues to develop.

In the Prep department, pupils are provided with opportunities to read aloud regularly. This may be in a group, pair or individual setting. The expectation to complete daily reading continues as part of children's home learning, and parents are encouraged to participate in reading, through discussions with children or by listening to them read aloud. Throughout the school, children enjoy a full range of texts through shared reading in whole class sessions. Children also enjoy group and pair reading, and actively choose to read things aloud to their peers.

Literature is at the heart of our English teaching and, as children's confidence and skills in reading develop, the emphasis on teaching shifts to comprehension and text level analysis rather than fluency. We aim to foster reading and comprehension skills in the widest possible sense so that children not only learn how to read, and extract information from a variety of types of texts but also appreciate the enjoyment and learning they can gain from a range of material. Children will become more aware of the different features of various types of text genres, and will begin to understand how organisation of language, choice of vocabulary, grammar, layout and presentation all influence meaning.

Through comprehension sessions, children are encouraged to develop skills in the following areas: vocabulary, inference, predicting, explaining, retrieving and sequencing.

Writing

One of the key elements to writing at Laxton Junior School is that children are exposed to, and given the opportunity to write, a range of genres and purposes. This includes a variety of styles and for a variety of audiences. Children explore what it means to be a writer through the process of drafting, proofing and producing a 'final version', seeing writing as a continual process.

Writing as a means of communication is clear in many areas of the curriculum, and children are expected to uphold their age and skill appropriate level to all areas of the curriculum. This is enhanced through all staff members being aware of the year group expectations for writing, whether in an English or, for example, a science lesson.

Throughout English lessons, children are given opportunities for short, instant publishing, as well as planned and carefully organised publishing. Our literacy curriculum balances shorter and longer writes, so that our children are able to apply specific skills, as well as building up to planned and organised pieces of writing. Our English curriculum adopts a book-based approach, with lessons meticulously tailored to meet the specific needs of each class. To ensure all children benefit from relevant and meaningful writing experiences, we also incorporate additional resources from a diverse range of sources. This approach enables us to provide a curriculum that supports the learning and development of every child.

In all writing, our children are expected to apply their spelling, phonics, grammar and punctuation skills.

We help to improve writing by:

- Providing meaningful fiction and non-fiction opportunities, based on our curriculum texts
- Modelling writing to show structure, presentation and organisation of ideas
- Providing cross-curricular links to writing to enable children to make connections between different areas of learning
- Using 'polishing pens' as a tool to encourage self-correction and improvements

Phonics and Spelling

In the EYFS, children begin their phonics journey through reading and writing. Our Phonics planning is structured from Letters and Sounds but has been adapted to include High Frequency and Common Exception words for reading and spelling. The Phonics progression pathway in the school is for children from Reception to Year 2, after which and when ready they should move onto our spelling progression pathway. However, this is adapted and changed, in line with our responsive teaching, to ensure that all children are secure with phonics and basic spelling patterns, rules and skills.

A steady and planned progression in spelling is developed as children move into Year 3 and then into our Prep Department. Our overarching spelling plan is provided by the Head of English, outlining the coverage of curriculum words. These are taken from the National Curriculum, fitting in with our current assessment method for spelling.

Grammar and Punctuation

The place of grammar is important within the writing strand and notions of syntax, punctuation, word order, vocabulary and parts of speech must be introduced in order to help children structure their writing. Our philosophy is that language is interesting, that understanding it can be fascinating and working with it can be fun. As such, much of our grammar and punctuation teaching is delivered through our English

lessons and, therefore, based in rich, meaningful experiences linked to high-quality texts. However, we realise that some skills need explicit teaching to ensure that they can be applied fully.

Grammar from EYFS to Year 6 focuses on sentence level punctuation, delivered through rich modelling and exposure to sentence structure in spoken conversations, written work and through reading. As children move through each Key Stage, and as they are ready, they are introduced to more technical terms, such as word classes, conjunctions and tenses. By the time children leave the Pre-Prep Department, most are able to choose and use the correct tense in spoken and written work, and can form developed, varied sentences.

Children in the Prep Department build on these skills, learning more advanced grammatical terminology and skills. We expect our children to be able to use technical language to describe their writing, improve their writing, and recognise grammar and punctuation when reading. We expect that through explicit and implicit teaching of vocabulary, our children are able to understand and reason within their English learning to describe why, amongst other things, an author has made a certain word choice or how a comma can change the meaning of a sentence depending on where it is placed.

Handwriting

Throughout their time at Laxton Junior School, children's handwriting style, legibility and control develops and changes. We encourage children to develop a fluent style by providing a clearly structured progression, with full coverage of the technical aspects of writing, including letter formation, basic joins, printing, speed writing and slope.

Handwriting is explicitly taught, but embedded in every curriculum area, as children develop their gross and fine motor skills, and practise their pencil grip. We do not focus on a 'one model fits all' approach, and, as such, all children will experience the careful progression from pre-writing to an individual style by the time they enter Year 5.

In the EYFS, teaching concentrates on the development of an effective and comfortable pencil grip and the correct formation of letters. These fine motor skills are reinforced by working with a range of media, e.g. sand, air, malleable materials and tactile materials. Children are introduced to letter formation at this stage through modelling of the style by teachers and using it in their own writing. There is a strong focus on developing core and upper body movements to aid the development of muscles that help with writing.

In Year 1, children continue to learn about size and orientation of letters and begin to use the pre-cursive style, writing on an appropriate lined paper, thinking about the size of lower-case and upper-case letters, as well as learning how to position ascenders and descenders on a line. Once this is secure, normally in Year 2, children are introduced to basic joins. This is with the expectation that most children will enter Year 3 with an accurately joined handwriting style.

From Year 3, teaching concentrates on building up each pupil's handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice which ultimately results in children developing their own style and choice of handwriting which best suits them and the task set.

Correct handwriting styles and good presentation is encouraged throughout the curriculum by:

- Regular monitoring of pencil grip by Teachers
- Regular monitoring of correct posture, when writing, by teachers
- The use of fibre-tipped pen or a fountain pen to improve presentation when the teacher feels the handwriting skills are at the appropriate level

Our Approach

Curriculum

Our English Curriculum is broken into three cohesive phases – EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep. Each phase leads to the next ensuring the skills are layered throughout all year groups and viewed as a whole entity. Building from the skills developed in the EYFS, our English Curriculum builds knowledge and information to ensure a systematic approach is adhered to, helping to develop key milestones for learning, which can be applied in a variety of contexts.

The English Curriculum is overseen by the Head of English, who is responsible for the monitoring and progression of the subject across the school. However, day-to-day teaching is adapted in line with our Teaching and Learning approach, and policy, rooted in responsive teaching. Year group teachers are responsible for ensuring coverage of the year group objectives laid out by the Head of English.

Planning

Long term plans are written by Head of English for the academic year ahead and provide an overview of the curriculum; this is formulated alongside the Head of Humanities to encourage as many cross-curricular links as possible. Medium term plans give clear guidance on the objectives to be covered by the end of each year and are provided by the Head of English. These are adapted and changed by Form Teachers to ensure responsive teaching and learning. Our scheme of work is based on, but not beholden to, the National Curriculum guidelines. Our short-term plans are designed using teachers' expertise and professional judgment to create lesson sequences that ensure effective skill progression and meet the specific needs of each child. When appropriate, we also draw on the texts, skill progression, and content provided by The Literary Curriculum, aligning objectives with our medium-term plans and assessments. These short-term plans are adapted and responded to daily, following the formative assessment of learning in each curriculum lesson.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning at Laxton Junior School is an all-encompassing, varied, rich experience for all of our children. Our English curriculum is no exception to this. Within each lesson, teaching staff provide real-life experience to help children develop their cognitive pathways, as well as providing differentiated resources, questioning and support. English is taught in line with our Teaching and Learning Policy, giving staff the freedom within their lessons to teach to the needs of their class in the best way possible.

This is monitored and reviewed by the Head of English and reported to the Assistant Head Academic. Teaching and learning in English should be wholesome, fun and enjoyable for all learners, which is achieved through confident staff who have received appropriate training to support this. All children make excellent progress in English through our commitment to teaching English in an accessible and enjoyable way. For further information on how lessons are taught, please refer to the Teaching and Learning policy.

Marking and Feedback

Our marking and feedback in English aims to provide children with the information they need to improve their learning skills, and work, in the moment of the lesson. By following our Marking and Feedback Policy, green highlighters show areas of strength and pink highlighters to show areas for children to develop so that our children are able to gain the most out of each lesson. They can immediately see their next steps, and teaching staff are able to gain a clear insight into each child's understanding.

As part of marking and feedback in English, children receive clear verbal feedback to build on their understanding of each concept learnt. This includes feedback specific to that day's learning, as well as

feedback to help children develop their ongoing targets. We believe this is a hugely important aspect of the learning process in English, as children are accountable for their own work and understand that writing is a continual learning process.

Assessment

As per our Assessment Policy, English teaching and learning is assessed daily by the teacher, and lessons are changed and adapted to suit the learning needs of all children in the class. Formative and summative assessment play a large part in the development of English skills.

Phonics is assessed regularly in Phonics teaching, individual reading and other writing areas. At the end of each term, children complete a phonics assessment, which outlines specific sounds that children have not yet acquired. This is then analysed by the year group teachers and Head of English to identify specific areas for children to work on. Finally, children undergo a Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1 which is completed by Form Teachers. This information then informs subsequent teachers of specific gaps and areas for development as they enter Year 2.

English Writing in Years 1 to 6 is assessed in-house by teachers and overseen by the Head of English. Children complete a one-off, independent piece of writing that the teachers assess. This piece, alongside their daily writing, provides teachers with enough information to make an assessment on each child's level of writing. This enables a comparison between general writing style as well as specific Grammar and Punctuation skills shown in other summative assessments. Writing is labelled as one of the following:

- Below the expected standard- writing that is considered to be significantly below that of age-related expectations.
- Working towards the expected standard – the writing is currently below age-related expectations but demonstrates some elements of these expectations.
- Working at the expected standard- the writing demonstrates most of the age- related expectations.
- Working above the expected standard- the writing goes beyond age-related expectations, demonstrating a level of skill and sophistication which exceeds the expectations.

Reading and Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation are assessed twice a year in Years 1 to 6, and once a year in EYFS. This generates a standardised score, which is used to track each child's specific progress between assessment cycles. In doing this, year group teachers and the Head of English are able to identify children making expected progress, as well as less/better than expected progress and respond as appropriate with bespoke support or challenge. This ensures that all children are able to receive an English education that is specific to their needs.

An overview of the assessment timetable for English can be seen below:

Assessment/Event	Year Group	Timing	Description
GL Reading Assessment 1	Years 1-6	Michaelmas Term	An assessment of reading to inform word reading capabilities and comprehension
GL Spelling, grammar and punctuation Assessment 1	Years 1-6	Michaelmas Term	An assessment of spelling patterns and to inform progress and attainment in grammar and punctuation
In-House Writing Assessment	All Year Groups	Summer Term	An internal assessment of writing to evaluate progress and attainment against age-related expectations.
Year 6 Writing Exam	Year 6	Summer Term	A formal writing exam to assess Year 6 pupils' writing skills

GL Reading Assessment 2	EYFS- Year 6	Summer Term	An assessment of reading to inform word reading capabilities and comprehension
GL Spelling, grammar and punctuation Assessment 2	EYFS- Year 6	Summer Term	An assessment of spelling patterns and to inform progress and attainment in grammar and punctuation
Phonics Screening	Year 1	Summer Term	A screening to assess phonics knowledge and decoding skills.

The assessment cycles are monitored by the Head of English and supported by the Assistant Head Academic and Head of Educational Support.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equal Opportunities

We are an inclusive school and ensure that all children - irrespective of gender, race, religion and belief, cultural background, linguistic background, SEND or disability - have equal opportunity to access our English curriculum. We are committed to improving our curriculum, learning environment, provision of resources and mechanism for sharing information to enable all children to participate fully in our curriculum. Further details of our work, in this regard, are set out in our Accessibility Plan, with some of our ongoing strategies outlined below:

- Small class sizes enable greater personalisation of the curriculum
- Texts are chosen from a range of authors, to demonstrate role models and familiar characters to the entirety of our pupil body
- Educational Support Plans enable staff and children to work on specific targets relevant to their needs
- Staff deliver a differentiated curriculum using a variety of appropriate resources to tailor the learning to all children
- Regular progress reviews take place with children and parents

Children are given regular, ongoing targets, and children in the Prep department are aware of their own targets for learning.

The English curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for all children, and English teachers have the autonomy and freedom to adapt lessons to suit all learners.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The English Curriculum at Laxton Junior School is a diverse, rich, text and experienced based learning journey for all children. We have high aspirations for all our children. This is no exception for children who are identified as having SEND. Our English curriculum mainly follows a 'low threshold, high ceiling' approach, whereby children are provided with a task that can be accessed easily, and extended unlimitedly. This supports our children with identified SEND to both access the English curriculum, and thrive within it; there are plentiful challenges which are provided and communicated through the teacher, and each child's individual, personalised next steps can be achieved.

Through regular communication between the Educational Support Team, children, parents and teachers, we ensure that our curriculum matches the needs of our learners. If there are individual targets which are identified, work may be more heavily differentiated or additional adult support given; personalised

targets are measured this way. Further information regarding how children with SEND are supported can be found in the Educational Support Policy.

English as an Additional Language

Laxton Junior School welcomes all pupils, including those for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). In English, we provide opportunities to access the curriculum in the same way for all children, whilst also understanding that, due to language acquisition, some children may require additional support. Our Educational Support Team supports any child with additional needs, including those with EAL, should this be deemed necessary.

Through our EAL policy and our English Policy, we aim for all EAL pupils to become confident and fluent in Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing in English, whilst strongly encouraging them to remain fluent and confident in their first language. Throughout our teaching, we provide extensive opportunities to model fluent English, encouraging children to practise and extend their use of English, both within English teaching lessons and throughout all aspects of the curriculum.

Please see our EAL Policy for further information.

More Able and Exceptionally Able

Within our classrooms, we have children who excel at different areas of English, be it Reading, Spelling, Writing or Speaking aloud. While our English curriculum provides opportunities for challenge within each lesson, our staff are aware that some children are exceptionally able in an element within English, and require further extended opportunities for challenge.

Library

The library is divided into two distinct areas: fiction and non-fiction. All children have an equal opportunity for use of the library, with each class making use of the space in a weekly session. Children are given freedom in the library to develop their study skills in line with their own interests. Staff use the library space and resources in connection with all subjects, and the library is well-stocked according to school topics covered. Children are able to use resources that are available in the library to further develop their research skills. The library is maintained as a quiet area where the wider school community can relax and enjoy books together.

Monitoring Arrangements

Monitoring in English is carried out by the Head of English and supported by the Assistant Head Academic. Monitoring occurs in line with the Teaching and Learning Policy, ensuring periodic monitoring through the year, overseeing the teaching, learning and subject development of English. This policy is reviewed on a biennial basis, reflecting the care and dedication of our process to ensure that English teaching at Laxton Junior School is in line with current best practice, as well as the evolving needs of the children in our care.

As part of the ongoing monitoring of English, learning walks, book looks and pupil interviews are carried out regularly by the Head of English, which helps ensure that planning, teaching, learning and enjoyment in English are combined in the best way possible. An additional aspect of this is analysis of summative data collected twice yearly, which encompasses another layer of the monitoring of English. All Monitoring procedures are reported to, and evaluated by, the Assistant Head Academic through regular meetings with the Head of English.

Linked Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Assessment Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Drama Policy
- EAL Policy
- Educational Support Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Library Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- More Able and Exceptionally Able Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewer	Sumitha Hill
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