

Victory Primary School



Victory for all!

English Policy

January 2023

“English is the language of the future, ...the most important tool you will ever need, no matter what career you choose. You have the right to English. Make it your right!”

Benjamin Zephaniah

Rationale

At Victory Primary School, we encourage our children to become lifelong learners. We aim for excellence in all our school activities and encourage all children, whatever their ability, to achieve the best they possibly can. We believe that providing pupils with a well balanced, enriching and engaging English curriculum will aid their journey to becoming highly self-assured communicators through speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Aims of the English Curriculum

- To ensure that all children are receiving a relevant and well-balanced English curriculum.
- To ensure that all teachers provide pupils with a consistent approach to English teaching throughout the curriculum and across the year groups.
- To ensure that all children are given the opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills.
- To ensure that all children are exposed to quality texts and engaging experiences.
- To ensure children use their abilities in English to access all other areas of the curriculum.

Reading Aims

- To extend and develop readers throughout their time at school.
- For children to emerge from inexperienced readers to independent readers who can use a range of reading strategies to read for different purposes.
- To develop higher order reading skills to support children’s comprehension.
- For children to be able to enjoy reading for pleasure, alone or as a shared experience with an adult or their peers.
- For children to be able to use their research skills to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- To read a wide range of books and media texts on paper and on screen.
- To provide books about different cultures and books in a variety of languages, in order for pupils to develop their knowledge of cultures and languages other than English and allow children of different cultures to celebrate their heritage.
- To recognize that reading plays an important part of education and life.
- To read, recite and perform poetry.

Reading at Victory

At Victory, we aim to encourage a love of books and reading. Pupils will have regular opportunities to engage in independent, guided and shared reading within class, with other classes and their parents. The school literacy room, school library and class book corners provide teachers with a range of guided and quality texts for use in guided reading, story times and literacy lessons. Many of these books have strong cross curricular links.

Jolly Phonics

Reception and Year 1 have phonics lessons based on the Jolly Phonics programme. Reception have daily 20 minute lessons and year 1 have 30 minute lessons 4 times per week (with one guided reading session per week), Year 2 will also continue to have phonics lessons and groups based on teacher assessment. Children are taught sounds whole class and then can be divided into phonics groups according to their reading and phonetic ability. Each group has a tutor (CT or TA) who is responsible for the running of their group and will feedback any assessment to the class teacher. The TA leads year 1 and 2 phonics intervention groups. Every half term, all year 1 (and some year 2) children are assessed using past phonics checks and data is passed on to the year 1 and 2 teachers to support the children's learning and progress.

Phonics Screening Check

In June of year 1, children have to take the Phonics Screening Check which assesses their ability to phonetically decode pseudo and real words. In addition to Jolly Phonics, year 1 will be taught phonics in literacy, guided reading sessions and in targeted intervention groups. This teaching will focus on phonetic knowledge, segmenting and blending. Children in year 2 who do not reach the threshold of the screening check in year 1, will receive daily phonics intervention in order to retake the phonics check in June.

Children who still do not pass the check in year 2 will receive appropriate intervention in year 3. Children in year 1 (and year 2 if threshold not reached in year 1) phonological skills are reviewed on a termly basis. The results are analysed and shared with the phonics tutors (class teachers and TAs). The contents of the intervention groups are then based on this analysis.

Helping our Pupils Learn to Read

Children need the opportunities to practise the different strategies they need to apply in order to read and understand texts.

Early readers

1-to-1 pointing

Children practise pointing using a sentence from the story. Children show and use a pointing finger.

Predicting

Cover a word – predict what it could be and check. Model predicting a word – checking all searchlights.

Checking initial/final/middle sounds – does that look right?

Cover the first/last sound– predict, then check. Point to the first sound – get your mouth ready to make the sound. Find the sound on a sound chart.

Applying phonics to read words

List some more challenging words in the text – decode these together using phonics – predict/discuss the meanings.

Checking meaning – does that make sense?

Explain that reading should always make sense. Practise re-reading to check meaning. Read a sentence – check that it makes sense. Give the children two options – which one makes sense? Discuss what is happening on the page.

Re-reading to practise self-checking

Explain to the children the importance of going back and checking their reading. Model re-reading; practise re-reading.

Images

Use the pictures in a text to support the other cues. Do not use as a stand alone cue.

Blending/Segmenting

Break the word down into sounds or syllables e.g. hand -bag = handbag and put back together.

Graphic

Using part of a word to work out a whole word e.g. stop becomes stopping.

Contextual

What word makes sense in the text? Why?

Syntactic

Knowledge of grammar e.g. his or her

Vocabulary

Discussing the meaning of words prior to reading and then during reading

Developing Readers

Inferring meaning of unknown words: list some more challenging words from the guided book on the board. Ask the children to read the words and predict what they mean. Read the whole sentence the word is in, so they can check their predictions (context)

Text layout: analyse a page of text (e.g. non-fiction) – how is it organized? Why? How do we read it?

Decoding unknown words: record difficult words from the text on cards or the board. Ask children to decode these words and explain how what they did (i.e. syllables; phonics; knowing parts of words etc) or predict the meaning of the words.

Checking meaning: read a sentence from the text which is more challenging; discuss what it means and how they know.

Vocabulary:

Discussing the meaning of words prior to reading, includes semantics and literary language.

Activate Prior Knowledge: Pre reading activities.

Visualising: read a section of text – ask children to think about what pictures they see in their head.

Predicting: predicting and finding evidence from the text to support or disprove your prediction. Revise initial ideas.

Reading longer sentences (multi-clause sentences): record the main clause from a multi-clause sentence on the board – read it and discuss what it means – explain that authors often add more information to the sentence (subordinate clause) – add the subordinate clause and discuss what it means – add it to the main clause and discuss how the two clauses relate to each other – locate the comma and explain that the clauses are usually split by a comma.

Identifying the main points/summarizing: read the opening paragraph of the text to the children and ask them to identify the main points – list these on the board and discuss why other information is not key to the story.

Scanning: looking for key words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs to find particular information.

Skimming: Reading a piece of text quickly to get an overall idea of its content. This may involve not reading every word.

Linking – finding similarities and differences within and between texts and genres.

Questions – writing and asking your own questions about a text.

Reading Behaviour

We aim to develop children's reading behaviour. We aim to develop their reading stamina and speed. We also aim to develop their fluency and intonation when reading aloud. We aim to develop the children's ability to self-regulate their reading and ask questions of the text.

Home/School Reading

Children are encouraged to take books home from school to develop their reading skills, develop reading for pleasure and open up a positive dialogue about reading between school and home. Across the school, the children have their book changed a minimum of once a week. In EYFS and KS1, the teachers choose books to match the child's reading ability/phonological awareness and the children are also given the opportunity to choose their own reading for pleasure books. This may mean they choose a book that they can access on their own or that will need reading to them. They may even keep the same reading for pleasure book for a while or have the same book more than once. Parents and teachers can communicate about a child's reading in their reading record. In KS2, children are provided with a range of books to choose from which matches their reading ability and appropriate challenge. If a child receives intervention, the intervention tutor may choose a book for the child to take home to practise phonics/reading key words etc. The reading records are checked and initialed by the CT/TA.

Guided Reading

Guided reading aims to allow children to become independent readers who can decode using a range of reading cues and comprehend what they are reading. Guided reading takes place once a week in reception and year 1 and daily in years 3 – 6 (yr 2 receive a blend of guided reading and phonics, to support children who have not achieved the PSC threshold and continue to heighten children's phonological awareness. Guided reading takes place in groups or whole class. Teachers follows the VPS Guided Reading Map and the planning provided by The Literacy Tree.

Teachers have the freedom to annotate and the plans to ensure that the needs of the children are being met, i.e. there is an appropriate amount of challenge and support. When applicable teachers will plan and choose guided reading books to support the needs of SEND children. These books may be selected from the school's guided reading resources, which include RWI, Big Cat, Project X and real books as group reads. Online resources, for example Twinkl comprehension papers are also used.

In guided reading sessions, children will also have the opportunity to practise their comprehension skills, spelling, read for pleasure and complete various activities which are linked to the reading domains.

How to plan guided reading

Year 2 to Year 6 should have guided reading sessions planned 5 days a week.

Reception and Year 1 will have one guided reading session a week.

When teachers are not following the literacy Tree guided reading planning, teachers will follow the planning guidance below.

For early readers, reading strategies will be decoding (phonics) and introducing simple comprehension skills. For more developed readers, comprehension will be the focus. The strategy is then broken down into steps which become the learning objective for a series of lessons. Class teachers will choose texts that will support the learning objective. Texts should match the reading level of the group in terms of fluency—they should be able to read between 90-94% accurately and with understanding. A mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts will be used, and where possible, texts should relate to another area of current learning or interest. Most importantly, texts must provide opportunities to apply the strategies that form the group's current focus e.g. If trying to extend a pupil ability to use inference, it is important to select texts that do not make everything explicit.

A guided reading session will follow the sequence of; introduction/recap, a strategy check, reading/interaction, return and response, plenary/feedback. The teacher/teaching assistant shares the strategy and learning objective for the session with the pupils, assesses pupil's progress within the session, gives feedback and next steps in the plenary and records outcomes on the guided reading planning sheet. These outcomes are recorded by highlighting what a child has achieved, is working towards or has not achieved and written comments can also be made. During the guided reading session, pupils may read at the same time. The class teacher will 'dip in and out' and listen to each child read. This will give class teachers an opportunity to assess and monitor each pupil's reading skills and ability, whilst still allowing the other pupils to continue reading. Sometimes, the adult may read the text to the children or ask the children to read one at a time, for example, when assessing decoding or intonation. Whole class guided reading sessions will also take place using 'The literacy Tree' guided reading planning.

Questioning

Key questions about the book are contained in the planning. Class teachers will need a good knowledge of the text they have chosen for a particular group/class in order to plan effective questions. Questions will link to the learning objective/strategy and allow pupils an opportunity to extend and consolidate their reading strategies. Questions should develop children's understanding at three levels;

- Literal questions, asking pupils to recall information that is directly stated in the text.

- Deductive or inferential questions, asking pupils to work out answers by reading between the lines, by combining information found in different parts of the text and by going beyond the information given.
- Evaluative or response questions, asking pupils to go beyond the text by, for example, thinking whether the text achieves its purpose, or making connections with other texts.

Higher order thinking skills and content domain question stems will also be used, as will question stems common to SATS.

Teachers can also use Book Talk. Book Talk can provide more thinking time, allow children to respond and open up deeper discussion. For example, class teachers can start discussions from a key sentence in the text, invite pupils to elaborate on their responses, make a challenging statement and invite children's questions and responses. Book talk enables children's ideas and questions to lead a discussion.

Children will also be encouraged to think of their own questions.

Guided reading activities

While the class teachers/teaching assistants are reading with groups, the other pupils will need to be engaged in reading activities. Pupils will stay with their guided reading group and may move through a variety of activities during the week. The activities may include silent reading, reading for pleasure in the book corner or reading topic books, answering comprehension questions, exploring characters, phonics and word level work and spelling investigations. Reading journals provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to extend and consolidate their reading skills, prepare for their next session or complete a follow up task from their previous session.

Story Time

All children in the school should have a daily story time. This gives children the opportunity to listen to stories for pleasure, share quality texts, access a wider range of vocabulary and develop their listening skills.

Reading Environment

The school library and literacy room offer a range of quality texts in inviting environments. Class book corners also include a range of text types and fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. Book corners are inviting and comfortable and displays remind children how to handle books, reading strategies are displayed and there is the opportunity to write book reviews to each other. Books are organized according to genre and displayed attractively. Classrooms are language rich to support reading. Phonics displays are prominent in EYFS/KS1.

Equality and reading

When teaching guided reading to EAL and SEN pupils, it is important to use pictures and visual cues to support discussion in order to aid comprehension. In addition, time should be spent discussing and defining new and unusual words. Ensure that you model how to use specific strategies and give the children an opportunity to practise the strategies a number of times. Dual language books are available in school. Class teachers will need to consider IEPs when planning effective guided reading sessions to ensure SEN pupils are being supported appropriately.

Gender equality will be promoted by making sure texts avoid cultural and gender stereotyping and by ensuring boys and girls have access to all the resources available. Texts are chosen to engage all children and excite them to read.

To promote cultural equality, the texts chosen by teachers and are available for children to read, must reflect the interests and the cultural diversity within the school, and must not depict or promote negative cultural stereotypes.

Gifted and Talented children will be planned for by taking into account their current reading levels and providing them with rich texts that allow them to build on their reading skills and develop their independent reading and thinking skills.

Opportunities to discuss issues of race, gender etc will be provided through the discussion of the resources used.

Reluctant readers will be encouraged by choosing texts based on their interests, engaging them with quality picture books or information texts. Big Cat progress readers for KS2 and Project X books provide support for struggling and reluctant readers. Children may also be offered additional support with their reading by reading with TAs or volunteer readers. This may involve reading for pleasure or developing word recognition skills, phonics or comprehension.

In EYFS, parents are encouraged to stay and read with their child on Tuesday afternoons.

Buddy reading takes on a half termly basis across the key stages.

Resources

The guided reading resources are kept in central locations. It is the responsibility of all adults working in the school to return the resources in their original state.

Assessment

Please refer to the assessment policy.

Writing at Victory

Writing Aims

- To develop children into becoming efficient and effective writers who are able to write for a range of audiences and real purposes.
- To ensure all children can use the conventions of grammar and spelling as set out in the national curriculum.
- To ensure that all children experience a range of writing genres.
- To ensure all children follow the Nelson Thornes handwriting scheme (KS1 and KS2)
- To ensure all children have opportunities to plan, edit, draft and present their work for a real audience and purpose
- To develop children's ability to sustain a piece of writing on a regular basis.
- To write and perform own poetry
- **To engage, enthuse and develop children's love of writing**

Curriculum coverage

Every week, all pupils should be experiencing writing across the curriculum using the skills and knowledge acquired in literacy lessons. Where applicable, curriculum links to literacy are made explicit in the literacy planning.

Modeled and Shared writing

Modeled writing is when the teacher models the writing of the text. In shared writing, the pupils will contribute to the text by suggesting words or sentences to be used. The teacher demonstrates how to write and explains writing decisions. S/he will model thinking, rehearsing sentences, writing and re-reading to generate words and ideas and to check against the success criteria of a lesson. Across the key stages, teachers will focus on the purpose, audience, level of formality, structure and organization of the text. A particular aspect of word or sentence level work may provide an additional focus based on assessment, for the first minutes of a literacy lesson.

Presentation

The long date and learning objective will be recorded and underlined with a ruler. SEN/LA pupils in KS1 may have the date and LO written for them on a sticker, which they will stick into their books. SEN pupils may have a separate LO from the main class. Also, scaffold sheets used to support SEN and EAL pupils should be trimmed and stuck in neatly. All pupils will begin by writing in pencil. Pupils who can present their work by following the presentation guidelines will be able to apply for a pen licence. These guidelines are displayed in classrooms and the literacy room. Teacher's handwriting must always be a good model for the children to follow.

If children word process their work for presentation, the font Comic Sans MS or Aerial should be used. NB Bradley Hand ITC also had the letter 'k' presented as the children will see it in the phonics screening check, 'k'.

Differentiation

To ensure all of our pupils are making the most progress they can within a lesson, the work must be clearly differentiated using AFL via a variety of methods e.g. resources, adult support and level of thinking or literacy skills required. Differentiation must not be based on outcome. Differentiated questioning must be included in the planning to stretch and develop pupils thinking.

Assessment

Pupils receive feedback in their books including their next steps for learning (EBI) 2 or 3 times a week. Children also complete peer and self-assessment on a regular basis. They correct and extend their work using green pen. Pupils complete independent, extended writing assessments once every 3-4 weeks. This will result in the class teacher having a minimum of 3 pieces of independent writing to help assess the pupils against each term. The assessment will reflect a genre that the pupils have already been taught and will be an opportunity to see if the pupils are able to apply their newly learnt skills. Each term during assessment week, the children from year 1-6 will complete a piece of writing using the same writing task. All assessments will be completed on yellow paper. The assessment is also reported to parents in termly reports. At the end of key stage 1 and 2, the children complete their SATS. At KS1, teacher assessment supports the test results for reading. At the end of both key stages, writing is assessed using the teacher assessment framework.

Guided Writing

Guided writing is an excellent way to use AFL and aid children in achieving their pupil progress targets. Guided writing is a mini lesson within a literacy lesson itself. Guided writing groups are fluid. They may include children from different ability groups. They may also be target based (so those children who have the same writing target may be included in one guided writing session). The guided writing session may have a separate learning objective to that of the main teaching (for example, the children may be learning to write using different sentence starters, however you have a group of children who are still not using full stops and capital letters properly. Your guided writing session will involve those children learning to use full stops and capital letters.)

Planning

All teachers should use the Victory School planning provided by The Literacy Tree. The map offers suggestions for writing outcomes, speaking and listening opportunities and cross curricular opportunities. Class teachers will also be responsible for using weekly plans to show what each daily literacy lesson will entail. Planning should be annotated daily using AFL from the lesson and the marking. Teachers should be making notes

after a lesson has been completed on what went well, difficulties and specific pupil(s) that will need extra support in the following lesson. Daily lessons may include a 'starter' activity based on AFL of phonics, grammar or spelling. Teachers should also write what the purpose and audience for each lesson is. SC should be split into must, should and could. Plans should also indicate which thinking skills activities require and indicate who will receive adult support.

Spelling

Class teachers are responsible for their pupils learning the spellings appropriate for their year group. In the new curriculum there are spelling rules for years 1-6. There are also word lists for years 1-6. Each year group should include spellings in their pupil's home learning books. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to use AFL and planning to ensure the children are learning their spellings and spelling rules. Each week it will be required that the children complete a spelling test to ensure they have learnt their words for that week. Class teachers could also include words searches, spelling games or hangman during guided reading sessions, as independent work, to help children learn their spellings. Spelling rules can also be included in the 'starter' session in literacy lessons.

SPAG

Children in year 2 (optional) and 6 take a SPAG test in May with their SATS (spelling, grammar and punctuation). Children are supported with the test through teaching in literacy lessons. They will also be tested on a regular basis. Assessment of the SPAG test is then used to inform teaching in class.

Homework

Homework will be sent home on a weekly basis. Homework will include class spellings and a writing activity that relates to the genre the children are learning about in class or an activity which promotes a skill or concept which a child may need further opportunities to consolidate. Before school holidays, children may be set a longer piece of writing. The homework task should be differentiated appropriately for each ability group. The literacy weekly plan includes a homework box. Homework must be marked to allow pupils and parents to be able to monitor progress.

Computers

Computer based work is available to all pupils. Pupils will use ICT wherever possible as an integral part of the writing process, including research using the internet. All pupils will have access to ICT for drafting and for the final presentation piece of writing. Class teachers, parents and pupils will refer to the e-safety policy for guidelines on computer safety.

Handwriting at Victory

Handwriting Aims

- To produce clear, concise, legible handwriting
- To provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting
- To present work to a variety of audiences neatly
- To develop accuracy and fluency
- To help children recognize that handwriting is a form of communication and as such should be considered important in order for it to be effective
- To display neatly presented work around the school and in classrooms as a model of excellence for others to aspire to
- To encourage pupils to take pride in their work

Teaching Handwriting

In EYFS, children will practise their gross and fine motor skills and will write with a variety of tools and resources indoors and outdoors. They will be encouraged to mark make and will then learn how to form their lower-case letters alongside phonics teaching.

In Reception, children will use the Jolly Phonics scheme to learn how to form their letters.

From KS1, class teachers and pupils will follow the Nelson Thornes handwriting scheme. Handwriting should be taught discreetly at least once a week in lessons. All children will use handwriting books to practise their handwriting. Handwriting can also be practised on white boards in phonics lessons.

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The break letters (letters that aren't joined **from**) are:

b g j p q x y z s

Handwriting Expectations

Year 1 Handwriting expectations

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form capital letters.
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting families (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Year 2 Handwriting expectations

- Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Year 3 & 4 Handwriting expectations

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5 & 6 Handwriting expectations

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Support and extra intervention will be given where necessary to children with individual needs. Children who are left handed may also require support with pencil grip and where they sit so they have enough space to write.

Development of teaching of handwriting

Teachers need to have high expectations, asking pupils to rewrite work if not written neatly.

All children will write in pencil. Once children have shown consistent and neat presentation of their work over a period of time, in all of their books, they may see the literacy leader (head teacher in his/her absence) to apply for a pen licence. Children will then receive a certificate congratulating them on receiving their pen licence and a school pen to use in their topic and literacy books.

The pen licences are monitored by the literacy leader. If writing presentation is not maintained, the child will be given targets and their work monitored. If the child does not achieve the targets, they will lose their pen licence but can reapply.

Talk for Writing

Talk for writing allows children to explore the thinking processes involved in writing through talk. The talk allows the children to begin to think and talk like a writer.

Talk for writing includes:

- Learning and repeating oral stories
- Extending the oral stories into writing
- Creating new stories orally and in writing

The TFW approach should include imitation (repeating the stories), innovation (changing and developing the stories and finally invention (creating a new story).

Talk for writing will expose all pupils to oral storytelling and to the language and conventions of stories. The TFW approach can be embedded into a normal literacy sequence of lessons. TFW is also an opportunity for pupils to learn and use different sentence openers and conjunctions. The benefits of the TFW approach are that the pupils will build a bank of good vocabulary and narrative patterning. It will also help build confidence so that children can build their own creative stories. The TFW approach gives opportunities for class teachers to build role play and drama into literacy lessons.

The TFW approach can be applied in different genres, for example letter writing or writing information books.

Spoken Language

Aims:

- All pupils to develop into confident communicators
- To prepare pupils to regularly communicate to a variety of audiences

Opportunities for spoken language are included in the literacy map alongside the purpose and audience. Poetry has been placed in the map at the beginning of every term, in every year group, to support spoken language. Opportunities to develop children's spoken language should be included in the weekly plans. It is an effective way to differentiate and challenge our more and less able pupils and EAL pupils.

Developing spoken language across the school:

- Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs.
- Use of sentence stems to scaffold oral responses in class.
- Develop teacher and child questioning across the curriculum.
- Reciting and reading aloud.
- Drama activities

- Re-telling and role-play.
- Opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing.
- Debating.
- Collaborative work and reporting back following group work

Drama

Ideas for using drama are incorporated into the literacy map. Drama should be used to help stimulate talk for writing, practice success criteria orally, talk in role, perform, deepen understanding of character and plot and debate issues in texts. Drama should be incorporated into the writing sequence to engage and immerse children in preparation for writing. Ideas for drama include freeze framing, physical story boards, hot seating, conscience alley and telephone conversations.

Multimedia

At Victory, quality texts are used to stimulate children to write. As well as texts; film, television, art, real life events and music can be used as a stimulus for writing. Ideas for multimedia texts are incorporated into the literacy map.

Reviewed January 2023

Next review date: January 2025