

LONG MEAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY



Policy name	Literacy policy
Date written	June 2024
Date agreed by Governing Body	June 2024
Date of renewal	October 2025
Senior member of staff with oversight	Headteacher

Rationale:

“The skill, the art of literacy is a gift. To read is to watch in your mind as a single word explodes into a confetti of images. Truly, of all the gifts given to man, reading is most sacred, For from words come dreams and from dreams come great tomorrows.” — Stephen Cosgrove.

We believe that literacy is the key to all learning. Children need to read and write and have an understanding of written and spoken language to access the whole curriculum and to make good progress. It is vital that they are literate and confident in their use of language, not only in school, but to fulfil their potential as adults and to have play a positive role in wider society.

Aims:

We aim to develop pupils’ abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of English within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

At Long Mead School we strive for children to be ‘Secondary Ready’, so by the age of 11 we aim for a child to be able to:

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- have an interest in books and make the positive choice of reading for enjoyment
- have an interest in words, their meanings, keen to develop their vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- understand a range of text types– be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- develop their imagination, creativity and critical awareness of visual and written texts.
- have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate responses clearly and precisely.
- acquire a wide and rich vocabulary, an understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling and linguistic conventions to promote sophisticated skills when reading, writing and speaking.
- appreciate our rich and varied literacy heritage.
- write clearly, accurately and coherently adapting language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

- ask questions to clarify their understanding and build and develop their knowledge.

Approaches to the learning and teaching of speaking and listening:

At Long Mead, we use a variety of approaches to develop speaking and listening such as: sharing news and current events, role play and the use of drama, learning and reciting rhymes and poems, paired discussion and ideas sharing, speaking in class assemblies, hot seating, group work activities, listening to a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction texts, story sacks, circle time, plan, do and review. These strategies permeate the whole curriculum and are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Show and Tell (SaT) opportunities in KS1 and lower KS2 give the children opportunities for speaking in front of an audience and listening to others in order to feedback to each other and offer ideas for development. These strategies permeate the whole curriculum and are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards.

Through these, as well as in more tailored activities designed to promote understanding of the wider world, children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life

Approaches to the learning and teaching of reading:

'People who cannot understand each other, cannot exchange ideas, cannot communicate. The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity' – Neil Gaiman

At Long Mead, we are passionate to inspire readers for life, to ignite in the children an intrinsic value for reading for pleasure that engages them with an understanding of the world around them and provides a spark to their imagination and creativity. As such, we know that reading is a fundamental, enriching life skill. We aim for all children to be able to read fluently and confidently and have good comprehension skills by the time they leave our school. In order to achieve this, we use a variety of teaching methods and learning opportunities in all subject areas. Every class focuses on a number of quality texts during the year.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and lower KS1

The programme Letters and Sounds forms the basis of our phonic teaching, which is then supplemented by other resources and activities in order that the children are given the most effective opportunities to learn how to decode words and apply phonic knowledge accurately in their writing. This approach focuses on how to recognise phonemes, recognise digraphs and trigraphs, the learning of such as syllables and building a sight vocabulary particularly of high frequency words. All of this then supports and allows the children to have the confidence to make effective choices when negotiating an unknown word in their independent reading. Teaching

and learning happens as a whole class as well as enabling children to work in groups, pairs or independently. Assessments on the children's progress are ongoing, however formal assessments occur each term to ensure that every child is given the most appropriate input to sustain good progress. It is important to us that the children are provided with phonically decodable books that reflect the stage of learning that the children are at. We therefore provide each child with an independent book that is phonically decodable as well as other books designed to promote their encoding skills. This is an area we constantly seek to develop, so that a good range of books is always available to select from, and over reliance on one scheme does not happen.

In EYFS and Year 1, the children individually read levelled books chosen by a staff member. In this way, they progress through a levelled book banded scheme, which includes texts from a range of publishers. We actively promote the expectation that children read or are read to every night at home. Alongside their phonically decodable book and sound book for certain children, we also encourage children to choose books to take home from an early age to promote enriching reading experiences at home. To support the success of this, we focus on developing the children's ability to select books that they might be interested in reading, so that they are actively engaged and stimulated by the content. In addition, through regular communication, we promote to parents the importance of developing comprehension and understanding skills, as well as practising decoding skills, by spending time discussing the book with their child. Any reading experience, whether at home or at school is recorded in a Home Reading Diary which then reflects the progress and history of a child's reading, as well as forming a good basis of communication between the teacher and parent regarding a child's reading skills and understanding.

It is important to us that we provide a range of fiction and non-fiction texts to develop an understanding of a text.

It is essential that children have regular opportunities to talk about texts, answer questions and develop their comprehension skills. In addition, children in year 1 also engage in written comprehension tasks as the year progresses.

Year 2 and Keystage 2

Reading activities are taught throughout the week and consist of

- Guided reading groups (Year 2)
- Reciprocal reading approach
- Reading activities linked to class text and independent reading books
- Comprehension tasks – verbal and written using texts, pictures or film
- The reading of rich class texts with discussion
- School library visits
- 1:1 reading with the class teacher, LSA or volunteer

Reading skills are taught progressively from Year 1 informed by the National Curriculum (see Appendix 1). Central to our reading teaching and learning is the choice of high-quality texts, which enable the children to practice their reading skills when reading independently, and extend their reading understanding if being taught in a whole class session or in a group.

Guided reading sessions are undertaken in the EYFS and KS1 classes as well as for some children in KS2 who still need this approach to progress their reading understanding. Throughout the school, whole class reading sessions are also used to teach reading strategies and comprehension, link reading and writing together, expose the pupils to a richer vocabulary, as well as exciting curiosity and inspiring questions from the content of the texts used.

In KS2, the structure of the Reciprocal Reading strategy is implemented across the week to teach reading. This enables the teacher to expose the children to a range of different text types, which may or may not reflect the current learning in the classroom. This involves:

- a whole class session focussed on a high-quality text extract
- followed in successive days by children exploring the same text in mixed ability groups led by the teacher. In this time, three particular types of question are used and developed upon. They are:
 - looking questions (retrieval)
 - clue questions (inference)
 - thinking questions (wider links made to other texts, the wider world, philosophical questions etc)
- when not in a group, the children undertake focussed reading tasks which are designed to reflect, support and extend reading understanding.

Regular independent reading opportunities take place, and in KS2 we continue from the children's experience in KS1 to support children in the choice of their books. The independent reading opportunities may take a range of forms, eg silent reading, reading for pleasure sessions or group discussions. As with KS1 children, we promote the expectation that children have a reading experience every night at home, and this should be recorded in a Home Reading Diary. Diaries are checked regularly by the teacher or LSA, and if a child is not consistently having book-related experiences at home, takes relevant action or puts in place provision at school.

Lastly, we believe it is important to have regular timetabled sessions across the week where the teacher reads a book to the class, promoting the enjoyment of reading, the importance of cultivating and being part of a reading community as well as extending the children's knowledge of different types of writing.

Approaches to the learning and teaching of writing:

Writing

'You learn to write better by reading. You learn to read better by writing. Reading and writing work together to improve your ability to think!' Anon

Central to our English teaching at Long Mead, is actively promoting making overt links between reading and writing whenever possible, inspiring this in our pupils, particularly when exploring texts, either as a reader or a writer. It is important to us that the children are enabled to use writing as an effective means of communication and are active in their learning in engaging with this.

Knowledge of purpose, audience and structure is essential within the teaching and learning and, wherever possible, children are provided with purposeful reasons to write. This is reflected in the other subject areas where opportunities are provided for the children to use a range of text types to reflect their curricular understanding eg diaries in history, or non-chronological reports in Science or character descriptions in PHSE.

Carefully structured long-term plans ensure that each year group have an experience of a range of both fiction and non-fiction text types (see long term plan) and are rooted in whole real texts. The teaching and learning of writing is taught using detailed mid-term plans and involve using elements of the 'Talk for Writing' process.

Within this, the pupils have the opportunity to understand how to write a specific text type, innovate upon a modelled version and create their own using identified strategies. Short writing bursts, using the class text or other stimuli, are also used to further develop creative writing and understand how to write a variety of text types. The strategies of both modelled and shared writing are used to teach each stage of the writing process, from drafting to producing a final copy. Importance is placed on the editing process and differentiation seen between editing for meaning and that for secretarial purposes. Children also are actively engaged in generating success criteria or checklists to support them in the writing process and provide them with a scaffold to undertake both peer and self-assessment.

Writing walls, word banks and other scaffolds are used to facilitate the teaching of writing and to both support and extend pupils of every ability level. In addition to this, all children are provided with targets (set 3 times a year) that enable them to focus on specific areas of their writing, which are regularly monitored by both pupils and staff to support progress. These are also placed in wider curriculum books, to ensure continued focus by the pupils on consistently maintaining high writing standards in their work.

Vocabulary

Within both the teaching of reading and writing, opportunities for widening the children's vocabulary are consistently taken and enthused about. Text crunch type activities are used when introducing a new text, with teacher's identifying words that may be unfamiliar to the children and exploring them before accessing the texts.

To support this, key tier 2 vocabulary is also identified from both the key texts and across the wider curriculum subjects to teach in a term, made clear on the mid-term plans. These are then clearly displayed within the classroom and each word has a focus week within which it is intensively taught. Children are encouraged to visit the new words in multiple situations and to include new words in their writing and conversations.

Additional vocabulary is also displayed in classrooms and is actively referred to by teachers and staff to ensure that it is used in the children's writing effectively.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Grammar and punctuation are taught both within the study of high-quality texts, supported by such resources as No Nonsense Grammar. Generally speaking, an area per week is focused on and children are encouraged to apply their learning within subsequent writing tasks, always linking it to how both grammar and punctuation can influence meaning.

It is important to us that these areas are not just rote learnt, that teaching focusses on enabling the children to understand how writers use them to manipulate the reader or to convey meaning.

It is our intent to equip our children with a range of strategies that makes 'I can't spell...' a thing of the past. We seek to enable our children to become fluent spellers to support their writing prowess, fluidity and literary confidence. In order to achieve this, we use the Sir Linkalot Spelling App which provides an engaging scheme of work used from Year 1 through to Year 6. It runs in tandem with our phonics programme, helping our children further to learn to spell those tricky words that do not follow a particular spelling pattern. Sir Linkalot allows children to both practise spelling words, as well as learn new words to expand their vocabulary, particularly in the higher year groups. It does this using a wealth of animation-based content and online lessons that teach children a variety of linking strategies to spell words including creating mnemonics and finding words within words. It also teaches spelling rules and patterns and homophones. In addition, Sir Linkalot has partnered up with Susie Dent for 'Susie's Stories', which enables the children to learn about the etymology of words, prefixes and suffixes.

In addition, spelling is reinforced and taught in the daily phonics lessons for EYFS/KS1 and those in KS2 who still require it. These focus on providing the skills and knowledge for the children to apply phonic or knowledge of spelling patterns when they are writing. Classroom displays provide additional support to inspire independent learning, as does overt teaching of how to use word banks or dictionaries to ensure accurate spelling of written vocabulary.

Handwriting

The Debbie Hepplewhite handwriting programme is followed throughout the school and taught regularly (at least 3 times a week at the beginning of the year, this may reduce to two times a week as the children become more proficient through the year), whilst handwriting and mark making activities are always available in EYFS for both

teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Cursive handwriting is taught from year 2 and when the children have gained fluency, legibility and clarity are encouraged to write in pen, which usually happens at some point during Year 3. All classes have supportive posters in the classroom which are progressive according to age and need. (See separate document 'Handwriting Information at Long Mead Community Primary School' for further guidance on this) The importance of presentation is emphasised throughout the curriculum too; 'Presentation – The Standard' posters are stuck in every exercise book.

Resources:

Each classroom has a reading area, designed to place high value on books and reading. They are interactive, encouraging the children to explore a range of different text types, to give their opinions on what they read and to respond to questions raised by books and reading. They contain a variety of appealing fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts appropriate to the age of the children in the class. Books from the library can also be borrowed and it is actively encouraged that texts from here supplement the learning that is happening in the classroom. Each class has a range of other resources that can be photocopied and additionally a range of word games are available in Foundation Stage and KS1 classrooms. The guided reading materials and a wide range of teacher resources are kept in the resources room.

Displays, both in the classroom and around the school, support and enhance the use of English by being interactive and emphasising the vocabulary relevant to a particular topic or theme.

'A library gives every citizen equal access. It's a community space. It's a place of safety, a haven from the world. Libraries really are the gates to the future.' Neil Gaimon

We are very proud to have a library, providing a space for the children to further explore the worlds of fact and those of the imagination. It is maintained by an LSA and a team of librarians from Key Stage 2, and is structured following the Dewey System. Classes are timetabled once a week for visits to choose or change books. It is well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction books as well as a range of other reading materials, for example 'National Geographic magazine' and copies of 'The Week'. Teachers are encouraged to use the library to support the learning across the curriculum, actively teach the use of the Dewey System to locate books, as well as using the space and resources to teach skills such as research and note taking.

ICT resources are used throughout the school to support every child's literacy development. Communicate in Print is used to develop children's vocabulary in a structured way and has been developed to give emerging, struggling or non-readers access to information. The symbols help to create materials that are completely accessible.

Inclusion

It is important to us that every child has an equal opportunity to access high quality texts and be provided with opportunities to achieve highly whatever their ability, placing no ceiling on their learning. Using a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies, pupils or groups of pupils under-achieving in relation to their age-related expectations, as well as those who are exceeding their year group objectives are identified and steps are taken to either accelerate their progress or provide further suitable learning challenges to widen and extend understanding. Advice and guidance from outside agencies are sought and utilised for specific children with the facilitation of the SENCO. Intervention programmes with clear targets and small steps identified are put in place to give specific help for small groups of children and are reviewed termly (10 weeks). In English, these may include:

- Reading groups focusing on reading fluency
- Reading groups focusing on reading comprehension
- Additional targeted phonic interventions
- 1: 1 reading
- Writing groups
- Speaking and listening groups

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. Alternative methods of recording are available for those children that need it such as the use of ICT.

Disability Equality

At Long Mead School, we are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all of our pupils whatever their needs or abilities. Pupils have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Pupils with a disability have special educational needs if they have any difficulty in accessing education and if they need any special educational provision to be made for them, which is anything that is additional to or different from what is normally available in schools in the area.

At Long Mead School, we undertake the duties, including in relation to this policy:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason which relates to their disability
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

- To do our best by all disabled members of our school community in relation to the requirements of this particular policy.

Gender Equality

Long Mead School fully recognises its duty to comply with equality and diversity legislation, and its Gender Equality Policy sets out the school's aims in relation to equality and what it will do to ensure that equality is fully embedded in practice. The school fully acknowledges its responsibilities in terms of equality issues in relation to gender, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, including in relation to this policy.

Access and Entitlement:

Tasks are set and skills developed according to children's prior attainment. Teachers design enrichment activities to extend all children with opportunities intrinsic to these which both support and extend learning. Tasks may be modified for those requiring support and children requiring additional support are identified, English targets set to ensure progression and extra classroom support may be put into place. Class teachers and LSAs support the children in working on these targets.

Long Mead School is firmly committed to equality and diversity, and when carrying out our functions, we shall have due regard to the need: to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; to promote equality of opportunity between genders.

Assessment and target setting

Every term (3times per year) English is assessed through:

- Reading fluency test – Every year group from EYFS to Year 6
- Reading comprehension, 3 times a year using standardised scores (Exam Ninjas – Year 2 to 6)
- Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test (Exam Ninjas – Year 2 to 6)
- Independent writing task linked to the termly text type - Every year group from EYFS to Year 6

Staff moderate writing within staff meetings at planned for points in the year.

Monitoring and Record Keeping:

Monitoring takes place by members of the school leadership team and the English leader through lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutinies. Teachers are given feedback to highlight strengths and areas for development. Regular pupil progress meetings are carried out to ensure that children are meeting their targets and that any support that may be needed is given appropriately.

Members of the SLT and/or the SENCO are present to ensure that every child is discussed and suitably supported. The English leader carries out book monitoring against the planning although this may be carried out as a whole staff activity to

examine the use of marking. Examples of good practice and areas for general improvement are shared and actions developed.

Feedback to children about their progress in English is through verbal comment, conferencing, and the marking of work. This is in line with the Marking and Feedback Policy.

Pupil voice is used to ascertain pupil's views a number of times throughout the year.

The Role of the English Leader

The English Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

Monitoring and evaluating English:-

- Tracking pupil progress to ensure all groups are making good progress
- Overseeing the provision of English
- the quality of the Learning Environment; including monitoring books and children
- the deployment and provision of support staff
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Supporting colleagues in their Continuing Professional Development (CDP)
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments

Conclusion

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies: Teaching and Learning policy, Presentation policy, Marking and Feedback policy, Home Learning policy, the Foundation stage policy and the Disability and Equality policy.

Appendix 1 – Reading Skills

Reading Skills Progression

1. Retrieval
2. Background knowledge
3. Retrieval and background knowledge
4. Predicting
5. Predicting and background knowledge
6. Retrieval, background knowledge and prediction
7. Visualising

8. Retrieval, background knowledge, prediction and visualise

9. Summarise

10. Retrieval, background knowledge, prediction and summarise

11. Words and phrases

12. Retrieval, background knowledge, prediction, summarise, words and phrases

13. Inference

14. All skills