

English Policy



Lever House Primary School

2026

MISSION STATEMENT

At Lever House Primary School, we provide a supportive, secure and stimulating learning environment in which every child is given the opportunity to reach their full potential academically, creatively, physically and morally.

We aim to prepare our children for the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life by developing confident, independent and curious learners who can communicate effectively, think critically and express themselves creatively.

Our English curriculum plays a central role in achieving this ambition. Through reading, writing and oracy, children develop the language, knowledge, vocabulary and confidence they need to access the wider curriculum and participate fully in life.

Above all, our key words are:

Learning, Creativity and FUN!

OUR VISION FOR ENGLISH

At Lever House, we believe that English is fundamental to every child's education.

We want every child to become a confident and enthusiastic reader, writer and communicator. We want children to develop a genuine love of books, stories, language and learning and to recognise the power of reading and writing to open doors to new ideas, experiences and opportunities.

Our English curriculum is designed to ensure that children:

- develop strong foundations in reading, writing and oracy;
- acquire a rich and increasingly sophisticated vocabulary;
- become fluent and confident readers;
- develop the knowledge and skills required to become successful writers;
- develop accurate and increasingly automatic spelling and handwriting;
- learn to construct effective sentences and communicate ideas clearly;
- develop the ability to discuss, explain, question, reason and debate;
- read widely across fiction, non-fiction and poetry;
- develop knowledge of the world through reading;
- use reading to inspire, inform and develop their own writing;
- write for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts;
- develop independence, creativity and confidence as writers;
- plan, draft, revise and edit their work appropriately;
- develop resilience and pride in their written work;
- experience high-quality literature and diverse texts;
- develop a lifelong love of reading and learning.

At Lever House, reading, writing and oracy are interconnected. Reading provides children with knowledge, vocabulary, ideas and models of effective language. Oracy enables children to rehearse, articulate and develop their thinking. Writing allows children to organise and communicate their ideas independently.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The teaching and learning of English at Lever House follows the statutory requirements of:

- The National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study for Key Stages 1 and 2;
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework;
- The Communication and Language and Literacy areas of learning within the EYFS;
- relevant statutory guidance relating to phonics, reading and writing.

The National Curriculum identifies the following key areas:

Spoken Language

Children should be taught to listen carefully, speak clearly and effectively, participate in discussions and develop their ability to articulate ideas and communicate for different purposes and audiences.

Reading

Reading comprises:

- word reading;
- comprehension.

Writing

Writing comprises:

- transcription - spelling and handwriting;
- composition - articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing.

Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Children develop knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation through explicit teaching and through meaningful application in reading, writing and oracy.

The 2025 DfE Writing Framework provides evidence-informed guidance for the teaching of writing from Reception through Key Stage 2. It emphasises the importance of strong foundations in transcription, sentence instruction, oral composition, vocabulary, modelling, practice and carefully sequenced teaching.

SUBJECT ORGANISATION AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

The English curriculum at Lever House is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that pupils progressively develop the knowledge, vocabulary and skills required to become successful readers, writers and communicators.

Our mixed-age classes and two-year rolling curriculum are carefully mapped to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and experience a coherent progression of learning.

Pupil provision is based on individual attainment and need rather than simply age. Teachers use their professional knowledge and assessment information to adapt teaching and provide appropriate support and challenge.

Our English curriculum is built around high-quality texts and purposeful opportunities to read, discuss, explore language and write.

Teachers carefully consider:

- the knowledge pupils need to acquire;
- the vocabulary pupils need to understand and use;
- the reading experiences pupils need;
- the writing knowledge and skills pupils need to develop;
- opportunities for oral rehearsal;
- appropriate sentence and grammar teaching;
- transcription requirements;
- opportunities for modelling and guided practice;
- opportunities for independent application;
- appropriate challenge and support.

English learning is carefully sequenced so that children encounter, revisit and apply important knowledge and skills over time.

Where appropriate, English is linked meaningfully with our wider curriculum so that children can apply their reading, writing and oracy skills across different subjects and contexts.

ORACY

At Lever House, we recognise that spoken language is fundamental to children's development as readers, writers and learners.

The quality and variety of language children hear and use contribute significantly to vocabulary development, comprehension, reasoning and writing.

We therefore provide regular opportunities for children to:

- listen attentively and respond appropriately;

- ask questions and seek clarification;
- develop and use new vocabulary;
- explain their thinking;
- articulate and justify opinions;
- retell and sequence events;
- describe, explain and narrate;
- participate in collaborative discussion;
- debate and consider different viewpoints;
- present information to different audiences;
- perform poetry, drama and scripted work;
- develop confidence in speaking to others;
- use Standard English appropriately;
- orally rehearse words, phrases and sentences before writing.

Oral rehearsal is an important part of writing development. Children are encouraged to say what they intend to write before committing ideas to paper, particularly when developing transcription fluency. This helps children to focus on composition while reducing unnecessary cognitive demands.

The DfE Writing Framework identifies spoken language as being as important for writing as it is for reading and encourages pupils to compose orally as they develop their transcription skills.

At Lever House, we believe:

Children need to talk like writers before they can write like writers.

READING

At Lever House, reading is at the heart of our curriculum.

We believe that reading opens doors to knowledge, imagination, creativity and opportunity. Our ambition is for every child to become a fluent, confident and enthusiastic reader who reads widely and often.

Reading is not simply an English activity. It is fundamental to learning across the curriculum.

Our reading curriculum develops:

- phonics and word reading;
- fluency;
- vocabulary;
- comprehension;
- background knowledge;
- inference;
- prediction;

- retrieval;
- summarising;
- comparison;
- discussion;
- critical thinking;
- reading for pleasure.

Children experience a wide range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Teachers select texts carefully to expose pupils to rich vocabulary, varied language structures, different perspectives, diverse experiences and knowledge beyond their immediate lives.

Reading also provides children with important models for their own writing.

Teachers draw attention to vocabulary, sentence construction, structure and authorial choices so that pupils can increasingly make deliberate choices in their own writing.

PHONICS AND EARLY READING

Phonics is taught systematically from the beginning of Reception and continues to be prioritised until children are secure in their decoding and word-reading skills.

At Lever House, phonics is taught using Red Rose Letters and Sounds.

Children receive regular, systematic phonics teaching and are assessed regularly to identify those who require additional support.

Where pupils are identified as falling behind, timely intervention is provided to enable them to keep up with their peers wherever possible.

Intervention may include targeted phonics teaching, additional reading practice and appropriate programmes such as Fast Track Phonics or Bounce Back Phonics.

Our aim is that children become accurate and increasingly automatic readers so that their cognitive capacity can increasingly be directed towards comprehension and enjoyment.

READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION

Fluent reading is developed through regular opportunities to practise reading accurately, automatically and with appropriate expression.

Children read and discuss increasingly challenging texts and develop the knowledge and vocabulary required to understand what they read.

Comprehension is developed through high-quality discussion, questioning, modelling and explicit teaching.

Teachers support children to:

- retrieve information;
- make inferences;
- explain their ideas;
- use evidence from texts;
- predict;
- summarise;
- identify themes;
- compare texts and characters;
- discuss vocabulary and authorial choices;
- make connections across texts and experiences.

Reading is assessed regularly and gaps in knowledge or skill are identified and addressed promptly.

This aligns with the current Ofsted expectation that primary curricula prioritise accurate and fluent word reading and that reading is rigorously and sequentially taught, with gaps addressed effectively.

READING FOR PLEASURE

At Lever House, reading is more than a taught subject; it is a fundamental part of our school culture.

We actively promote reading for pleasure and create opportunities for children to discover books, authors, genres and ideas that inspire them.

We aim for children to:

- choose and recommend books;
- talk enthusiastically about reading;
- discover new authors and genres;
- read independently;
- share books with others;
- listen to adults reading aloud;
- develop their own reading preferences;
- understand that reading is enjoyable as well as educational.

Our National Year of Reading is strengthening our whole-school reading culture through initiatives including:

- whole-school reading assemblies;
- staff sharing their own favourite books;
- Reading Buddies;
- Non-Fiction November;
- World Book Week celebrations;
- development of our school library;

- family reading initiatives;
- parent workshops;
- opportunities for children to recommend and share books.

We want children to see the adults around them as readers and to understand that reading is something to be enjoyed throughout life.

HOME READING

Children are encouraged to read regularly at home.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to establish positive reading routines and encourage families to share books, discuss vocabulary, ask questions and talk about what they have read.

Children have access to appropriate home reading books which are carefully matched to their reading development.

Reading records provide an opportunity for school and home to communicate about children's reading.

We recognise that reading at home can take many forms and encourage families to share:

- fiction;
- non-fiction;
- poetry;
- magazines;
- newspapers;
- recipes;
- instructions;
- maps;
- information texts;
- books from home or the library.

Our aim is to develop confident readers who read widely and often.

WRITING

Writing is a complex process requiring children to coordinate knowledge, language, composition, spelling, handwriting, sentence construction and the physical act of writing.

At Lever House, writing is therefore taught explicitly, systematically and progressively.

The DfE Writing Framework emphasises the importance of sequencing teaching carefully to manage pupils' cognitive demands and ensuring that transcription becomes increasingly automatic so that pupils can focus their attention on composition.

Our writing curriculum develops two closely connected areas:

Transcription

- handwriting;
- spelling;
- phonics;
- letter formation;
- increasingly fluent and automatic writing.

Composition

- generating ideas;
- oral rehearsal;
- vocabulary selection;
- sentence construction;
- organisation;
- paragraphing;
- text structure;
- purpose and audience;
- planning;
- drafting;
- revising;
- editing;
- publishing where appropriate.

HANDWRITING

Handwriting is taught explicitly from Reception and developed progressively throughout the school.

We use Letter-Join to support the teaching of handwriting.

Children are taught accurate letter formation, joins where appropriate, appropriate sizing and spacing, and increasingly fluent and efficient handwriting.

The aim is for handwriting to become sufficiently automatic that pupils can devote greater attention to composing and communicating their ideas.

SPELLING AND TRANSCRIPTION

Spelling is taught explicitly and systematically.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, phonics provides the foundation for spelling development.

In Key Stage 2, spelling is taught through focused teaching linked to the National Curriculum requirements and the school's agreed spelling programme.

Children are taught:

- spelling patterns;
- common spelling rules;
- statutory words;
- morphology;
- prefixes and suffixes;
- word families;
- etymology where appropriate;
- strategies for remembering and applying spelling patterns.

Spelling is also taught in the context of children's reading and writing so that children understand how words are used.

Regular opportunities are provided for children to apply spelling knowledge independently.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION, GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

Sentence instruction is a central part of writing development.

At Lever House, grammar is taught primarily through its application to reading, speaking and writing rather than as isolated terminology.

Children are explicitly taught how sentences work and how grammatical choices affect meaning.

They develop understanding of:

- sentence boundaries;
- sentence structure;
- clauses;
- verb choices;
- tense;
- nouns and noun phrases;
- pronouns;
- conjunctions;
- adverbs and adverbials;
- punctuation;
- cohesion;
- paragraphing;

- grammatical terminology appropriate to their age.

Teachers model effective sentences and provide opportunities for pupils to orally rehearse, construct, manipulate and improve sentences.

The DfE Writing Framework identifies sentence instruction as essential because all writing is made up of sentences, while noting that grammar is most valuable when pupils understand how it helps them control meaning rather than when terminology is taught in isolation.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary development is a golden thread throughout English and the wider curriculum.

Teachers deliberately introduce and revisit ambitious, useful vocabulary.

Children are encouraged to:

- encounter new words through reading;
- discuss meanings;
- explore word relationships;
- use new vocabulary orally;
- apply new vocabulary in writing;
- develop precision in word choice;
- understand vocabulary within different contexts.

Reading plays a particularly important role in developing vocabulary because children encounter words and language structures that they may not experience in everyday conversation.

TEACHING COMPOSITION

Writing lessons are carefully sequenced so that pupils have the knowledge and skills necessary to write successfully.

Depending on the age and stage of the pupils, teachers may use:

1. Knowledge and vocabulary building
2. Reading and exploring high-quality texts
3. Discussion and oral rehearsal
4. Explicit teaching of relevant writing skills
5. Teacher modelling
6. Shared or guided practice
7. Independent application
8. Reviewing, revising and editing

Teachers model the thinking involved in writing and make effective writing choices visible to pupils.

Children are given opportunities to write independently once they have developed the knowledge, vocabulary and skills required for the task.

We recognise that quality is more important than simply producing large quantities of writing. Children need sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their learning while ensuring that writing remains purposeful and meaningful.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing is not restricted to English lessons.

Children are given regular opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, including through:

- science;
- history;
- geography;
- RE;
- PSHE;
- art and design;
- computing;
- outdoor learning;
- creative curriculum projects.

Teachers ensure that cross-curricular writing has a clear purpose and that pupils are taught the knowledge and vocabulary needed to write successfully within each subject.

Ofsted's current inspection toolkit expects the curriculum to develop pupils' language and vocabulary across subjects and to provide pupils with the knowledge they need for later opportunities and responsibilities.

PLANNING, DRAFTING, REVISING AND EDITING

Children are taught that effective writing is developed through a process.

As appropriate to their age and stage, pupils are taught to:

- generate and organise ideas;
- plan;
- draft;
- reread;
- check meaning;

- improve vocabulary;
- improve sentence construction;
- correct spelling and punctuation;
- revise sections of writing;
- consider the needs of their audience;
- edit independently.

Editing is taught explicitly and is not simply an expectation that children will “check their work”.

Teachers model how writers reread their work and make purposeful improvements.

WRITING FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND AUDIENCES

Children experience a broad range of writing, including:

Fiction

- narratives;
- descriptions;
- character writing;
- setting descriptions;
- poetry;
- traditional tales;
- stories with different structures and styles.

Non-fiction

- explanations;
- reports;
- recounts;
- instructions;
- information texts;
- persuasive writing;
- letters;
- biographies;
- newspaper reports;
- arguments and discussions.

Children are taught to consider:

- purpose;
- audience;
- tone;
- vocabulary;
- structure;
- organisation;
- appropriate grammatical choices.

EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the foundations for children's future success in English.

Children are given rich opportunities to develop communication, language and literacy through:

- high-quality stories;
- songs and rhymes;
- conversation;
- storytelling;
- role play;
- mark-making;
- phonics;
- shared reading;
- picture books;
- environmental print;
- purposeful writing within continuous provision.

Adults model rich vocabulary and sentence structures and provide opportunities for children to talk, listen, respond and develop confidence as communicators.

Children are encouraged to see themselves as readers and writers from the earliest stage.

Handwriting and spelling foundations are developed from Reception, in line with the principles of the DfE Writing Framework.

INDEPENDENCE AND CREATIVITY

We want children to become increasingly independent writers.

Children are taught the knowledge and skills required to make their own choices rather than relying permanently on scaffolds.

Scaffolding is used purposefully and is reduced when pupils are ready to work independently.

Children are encouraged to:

- generate their own ideas;
- make vocabulary choices;
- experiment with language;
- develop their own voice;
- take pride in their writing;

- respond to feedback;
- persevere when writing is challenging.

Creativity is valued alongside accuracy.

INCLUSION AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

We have high expectations for every pupil.

Our aim is that all children, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who require additional support, have access to an ambitious English curriculum.

Teachers identify barriers to learning and adapt teaching appropriately.

This may include:

- additional modelling;
- oral rehearsal;
- vocabulary support;
- sentence scaffolds;
- visual prompts;
- word banks;
- additional transcription practice;
- targeted adult support;
- adapted resources;
- additional reading practice;
- structured intervention.

Support is designed to enable pupils to access the curriculum and become increasingly independent rather than creating unnecessary dependency.

Where pupils experience difficulties with reading or writing, gaps are identified quickly and appropriate action is taken.

The current Ofsted toolkit places particular emphasis on strong foundations, including accurate word reading, spelling and handwriting, and on addressing gaps promptly so that pupils can keep up with learning.

INTERVENTION

Intervention is targeted according to identified need and is reviewed regularly.

Current provision may include:

- Precision Teaching;
- IDL;
- Fast Track Phonics;

- Bounce Back Phonics;
- targeted reading practice;
- additional spelling practice;
- handwriting support;
- additional writing practice.
- Reading Plus

Interventions are monitored to evaluate their impact and determine appropriate next steps.

Where possible, the emphasis is on keeping pupils up rather than allowing gaps to become embedded.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment at Lever House is used to understand what pupils know, understand and can do and to inform subsequent teaching.

Teachers use:

- questioning;
- discussion;
- observation;
- reading;
- written work;
- phonics assessments;
- spelling assessments;
- planned assessment activities;
- teacher assessment;
- statutory assessment information.

Assessment helps teachers identify:

- misconceptions;
- gaps in knowledge;
- pupils requiring additional support;
- pupils requiring further challenge;
- areas requiring reteaching;
- next steps in learning.

Assessment should be proportionate and purposeful.

We do not assess simply for the sake of recording information. Assessment should have a clear purpose and should contribute to improving pupils' learning.

Writing is assessed through a range of children's work over time rather than through a single isolated piece.

PROGRESSION

Progression in English is carefully mapped from EYFS to Year 6.

Teachers understand the essential knowledge and skills pupils need to secure at each stage.

Our two-year rolling curriculum for mixed-age classes is carefully planned to ensure that pupils encounter all statutory content and that learning builds progressively over time.

Teachers revisit important knowledge and skills so that pupils can increasingly use them independently and fluently.

Leaders monitor progression across the school and identify areas requiring further development.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

English is a golden thread throughout our curriculum.

Children use reading, writing, vocabulary and oracy across all subjects.

We deliberately seek opportunities for pupils to:

- read subject-specific texts;
- encounter subject-specific vocabulary;
- discuss and explain ideas;
- record their learning;
- present information;
- write for authentic purposes;
- apply previously taught literacy skills.

Our curriculum also provides opportunities for outdoor learning, creativity and practical experiences which generate meaningful contexts for reading, writing and communication.

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is used purposefully to enhance teaching and learning in English.

Children may use digital tools to:

- research;
- communicate;
- publish work;

- present ideas;
- create multimedia texts;
- develop vocabulary;
- practise spelling;
- access appropriate reading materials.

Technology supplements rather than replaces the development of fluent handwriting, reading, spelling, writing and oracy.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

All pupils are entitled to a rich, ambitious and inclusive English curriculum.

We carefully select high-quality texts that reflect a range of:

- cultures;
- backgrounds;
- experiences;
- perspectives;
- identities;
- family structures;
- communities.

Children should encounter both texts in which they can see themselves reflected and texts which introduce them to experiences and perspectives beyond their own.

We actively challenge stereotyping and promote respect, empathy and understanding through literature and discussion.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We recognise parents and carers as important partners in children's literacy development.

Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through parent meetings, reports, workshops and informal communication.

We provide opportunities for families to support reading and writing at home and encourage regular reading, discussion and shared enjoyment of books.

Our National Year of Reading programme includes opportunities for families to engage with reading initiatives, workshops and challenges.

We aim to make reading accessible, enjoyable and achievable for every family.

THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH SUBJECT LEADER

The English Subject Leader is responsible for supporting and improving the quality of English provision across the school.

This includes:

Curriculum leadership

- developing and reviewing the English curriculum;
- ensuring appropriate progression;
- maintaining curriculum coherence across the mixed-age structure;
- keeping up to date with national developments;
- ensuring statutory requirements are met.

Monitoring and evaluation

- monitoring pupil progress and attainment;
- evaluating the quality of provision;
- reviewing books and pupils' work;
- monitoring reading and writing development;
- monitoring phonics provision;
- evaluating intervention;
- identifying strengths and areas for development.

Staff development

- supporting colleagues with subject knowledge;
- identifying professional development needs;
- sharing effective practice;
- providing appropriate CPD;
- supporting teachers to develop confidence in reading, writing and oracy.

Resources

- auditing and developing resources;
- supporting the development of the school library;
- ensuring access to high-quality texts;
- reviewing reading materials and writing resources.

Leadership

The subject leader works with senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of English provision and identify priorities for further development.

GOVERNANCE

Regular reports are provided to governors regarding English provision, standards and areas for development.

The English Governor is kept informed about developments within the subject.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner where there are significant changes to statutory requirements, national guidance or school provision.

CONCLUSION

At Lever House Primary School, we believe that every child can become a successful reader, writer and communicator.

Our English curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, carefully sequenced and rooted in high-quality teaching.

We build strong foundations in phonics, spelling and handwriting. We explicitly teach vocabulary, sentences and composition. We provide rich opportunities for children to talk, read, write, practise and apply their learning. We use high-quality literature to develop knowledge, imagination and language.

We want our children to leave Lever House able to:

read fluently, write confidently, speak articulately, listen thoughtfully and communicate effectively.

Above all, we want them to leave us with a genuine love of language, books, stories and learning.

Learning, Creativity and FUN!