

Literacy

Intent

At The Griffin Primary School, our aim is to inspire a lifelong love of literature and language while equipping children with the skills and knowledge to become confident, articulate readers and writers. We want every child to experience the joy of reading and writing from their earliest days with us, with opportunities that build on their individual interests and promote creativity, curiosity, and personal expression.

We aim to have a language-rich environment, prioritizing spoken language (vocabulary, grammar, interaction) as the foundation, and teaching systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) for decoding, alongside building reading fluency, comprehension, and a love of reading, all underpinned by a whole-school approach where all teachers are teachers of literacy across the curriculum.

English lies at the heart of our curriculum, as we believe it is key to both academic success and continued learning. Through a carefully structured, text-based approach, using Literacy Tree as our main source of planning, we develop pupils' technical skills alongside a genuine passion for reading and writing.

Our chosen texts are diverse, engaging, and purposeful—forming meaningful links across the curriculum, particularly with subjects such as History and Geography. This ensures children see reading and writing not just as school-based tasks, but as essential tools for understanding and communicating in the wider world.

We strive to help all our pupils grow into imaginative and effective communicators who are able to access, interpret, and contribute to the voices of both today and the future. By fostering a love of language and encouraging thoughtful engagement with texts, we aim to develop readers who read for pleasure and for purpose.

In writing, our key intentions are to encourage children to write for a purpose, helping them see themselves as writers who take ownership of their work. We aim to foster a view of writing as an enjoyable and creative process, where children can express their ideas freely. Additionally, we focus on developing their ability to organise and plan their thoughts effectively, ensuring their writing is clear and purposeful.

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that every child leaves The Griffin Primary as a capable communicator—well-prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond, with a strong command of the written word and a lasting love of reading and writing.

PRINCIPLES

- Language as Foundation: Prioritise rich, back-and-forth conversations, modelling new vocabulary, and teaching grammar explicitly to build strong thinking and learning skills.
- Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP): Teach decoding skills systematically and consistently, especially for early readers, as a key route to reading fluency.
- Balanced Approach (The "Five Pillars"): Combine phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension for effective reading instruction.
- Reading for Pleasure & Purpose: Foster enjoyment and engagement with a wide range of texts, connecting reading to information and pleasure.
- Whole-School Responsibility: All teachers, across all subjects, are responsible for developing pupils' academic literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening) to access the full curriculum.
- Clear Progression: Focus on word-reading in early years, moving to fluency, comprehension, and deeper engagement with texts as children progress.

Sequencing

Please see our writing progression document for the journey of writing across the school.

Spaced retrieval approach

Throughout their time at The Griffin Primary, children will revisit different text types and genres of writing in order to build on their previous knowledge and experience of literacy.

Early Years

In Early Years, literacy is taught using Talk for Writing with a different text as the focus each half term. It is an oracy based approach and develops an understanding of how stories are structured, as well as promoting a love of reading from a young age. Children start learning their Systematic Synthetic Phonics, using the Little Wandle scheme, and are encouraged to mark make and 'write' in all areas of the continuous provision. This includes the pre-writing stage of developing their gross and fine motor control through the Physical Development Curriculum. There are reading areas within each phase of the EYFS and children hear and learn stories and rhyme on a daily basis.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

We follow the National Curriculum expectations.

Implementation

At The Griffin Primary School, we provide engaging and varied early literacy experiences to spark enthusiasm for reading and writing from the very first days of school. Through songs, rhymes, and diverse texts, we aim to ignite a passion for language.

We use the Little Wandle Phonics programme, starting in The Little Griffin Nursery, to build a strong foundation in phonics. This proven, DfE-approved scheme supports children's progression through the six phases of Letters and Sounds, integrating reading, writing, and spelling skills. Phonics is taught daily, with additional support available up to Year 6, through tailored interventions and 1:1 reading sessions.

Our English curriculum is built around the Literacy Tree scheme, a complete, book-based approach using high-quality, diverse children's literature. This includes both traditional and modern authors across various genres, immersing children in literary worlds through process drama, discussion, and debate. This method encourages engagement, deepens understanding, and allows children to explore themes relevant to their own lives, while also gaining insight into the lives and experiences of others.

Writing is integrated across the curriculum, linking to topics in History and Geography, ensuring that English learning is meaningful and relevant. Children regularly encounter writing tasks for a variety of real-life purposes and audiences, helping them develop the ability to organise, plan, and take ownership of their writing. Grammar and spelling are explicitly taught and reinforced through weekly lessons and spelling practice, with words drawn from various sources including statutory key stage lists, high-frequency words, Little Wandle and the Literacy Tree scheme.

Tailoring for SEND

We aim for all English lessons and learning questions to be accessible to all pupils.

QFT for SEND pupils will typically include any of these 5 effective strategies:

- Scaffolding e.g. sentence stems,
- Explicit instruction e.g. small steps
- Cognitive & metacognitive strategies e.g. knowledge notes
- Flexible grouping
- Use of technology e.g. curriculum visions

Reading

Please see the Early Reading and Phonics section of the curriculum page on our website.

In Year 2, the majority of children use the Little Wandle Fluency Programme to help develop their reading, using short chapter books. Those that are not ready for this revisit Phase 5 or complete the Rapid Catch Up Programme. We do not rush reading or phonics as it is essential that children have really strong foundations before moving on.

As children become independent readers, they use the Accelerated Reader Scheme for home reading. All children, from Reception up, are encouraged to read regularly at home and there is a reward scheme called 'Out of This World Reading' to support this.

Oracy

In the Early Years, Talk for Writing encourages children to use their voices to tell stories and help them develop their vocabulary. This is also achieved through high-quality interactions with the Early Years staff. It moves from foundational listening, turn-taking, and basic vocabulary (EYFS) to developing self-awareness, structured talk, and audience awareness (KS1), then to confident presentation, debate, using sophisticated language, adapting to audiences, and building reasoned arguments (KS2), often using frameworks like the four strands (physical, linguistic, cognitive, social & emotional) and specific talk tactics, sentence stems, and roles (e.g., summarizer) to scaffold skills across the curriculum.

We use speech and language interventions (eg Wellcomm, Time to Talk, SALT) to support children who find oracy a challenge.

Impact

By the time students leave The Griffin Primary School, we want children to be confident, competent readers with the ability to engage in thoughtful discussions about books, express preferences, make recommendations, and evaluate an author's language and its impact on the reader. We hope they will have developed a strong enthusiasm for exploring a range of genres and are well equipped to use reading as a tool for research, enhancing their understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Students will confidently communicate their findings to a wide audience.

In writing, we hope that pupils will make strong progress from their individual starting points. By the end of Key Stage 2, they should be able to write clearly and accurately, adjusting language and style to suit different purposes, contexts, and audiences. They will enjoy using a rich vocabulary and demonstrate a strong command of written language. Above all, they will have developed a genuine love for writing, equipped with the skills and confidence to succeed in their future educational journey.

Teacher assessment

Formative

- Teachers use formative assessments within lessons as children are required to demonstrate their knowledge and the intended outcomes of the unit
- Following revisit sessions or cumulative quiz outcomes, staff will adapt their teaching in response to this feedback

Summative

- Evidence of pupil outcomes are used to check on pupil understanding

Monitoring

- Pupil Book looks are used to investigate how and when pupils are using the expected vocabulary, and to ensure that all learners have been able to access the content to know more and remember more.
- Learning walks
- Lesson planning scrutiny
- Half-termly reviews of how the curriculum is being implemented and any adaptations that may be required