



2022 - 2023

# ENGLISH POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

At Esteem South Academy our intention is to provide our students with an English curriculum that enables them to develop their reading and writing skills, empowers them with opportunities to read for pleasure, whilst providing them with a positive experience of the rich literary heritage in England.

We understand the importance of developing a positive attitude towards speaking and listening for all our pupils in order to increase their ability to express themselves, in whichever method is most appropriate for the individual, and further their learning.

We believe that it is crucial that we instill literacy skills that provide the key components for cross curricular access and learning, supporting decoding, comprehension and communication within all subjects.

Our aim is to provide pupils with a curriculum that develops their functional literacy skills, assists them in engaging with and navigating the world around them and finally develops their understanding of how these skills can be applied in their lives going forward.

## AIMS

- To develop happy, healthy and curious learners who in time will read and write confidently and independently to their full potential.
- To enable students to access all areas of the curriculum at an appropriate level for them as individual learners.
- To enable students to access, understand and begin to manage information, increasing in skill and confidence as they move through the school so that they reach a functional level as young adults.
- To enable students to access work experience opportunities both within the school environment and in the wider workplace.
- To enable students to access a range of academic qualifications such as Entry Level, GCSE and vocational qualifications.
- To raise standards in English and communication for all pupils.
- To assist pupils to achieve their potential in all strands of English – reading, writing, communication.
- To promote literacy as a pleasurable and creative activity that produces pupils with a lifelong appreciation of reading and writing.
- To ensure that literacy skills are embedded in all areas of the curriculum and the importance of these skills are recognised.
- To enable our pupils to become fluent and responsive readers.
- To teach pupils functional writing skills in order to develop the confidence and skills to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To develop pupil's ability to communicate in the most appropriate form for them.
- To provide opportunities to develop functional communication skills through a total communication approach.

## RANGE

Pupils are given the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding through the following ranges:

### **Literature:**

- Stories and poems with familiar settings and those based on imaginary or fantasy worlds.
- Stories, plays and poems by significant authors.
- Retelling of traditional folk and fairy stories.
- Stories and poems from a range of cultures.
- Stories, plays and poems with patterned and predictable language.
- Stories, plays and poems which are challenging in terms of length and vocabulary.
- Texts where the use of language benefits from being read aloud and reread.

### **Non-fiction and non-literary texts:**

- Print & ICT-based information texts.
- Dictionaries, encyclopaedias & other reference materials.

### **Online Resources:**

- Star Reader – Reading and comprehension ability assessment tool
- Interactive white board resources; software and websites.
- IXL – Online literacy activities.
- Century – Online Literacy activities and modular assessment system.

### **Library Resources:**

- Reading books grouped into 'book bands' by level of complexity.
- Dockside Reading scheme – phonics scheme grouped by RWI phonics scheme.
- Read Write Inc phonics scheme support materials and resources grouped into sets
- Library books organised into fiction and non-fiction.
- Class library books for free reading.

*Continued...*



**RANGE *Continued...***

**Supportive literacy tools:**

- 15min daily core skills lessons
- Balanced literacy approach
- Word aware – vocabulary and comprehension support
- Total communication approach
- Read Write Inc systematic synthetic phonics

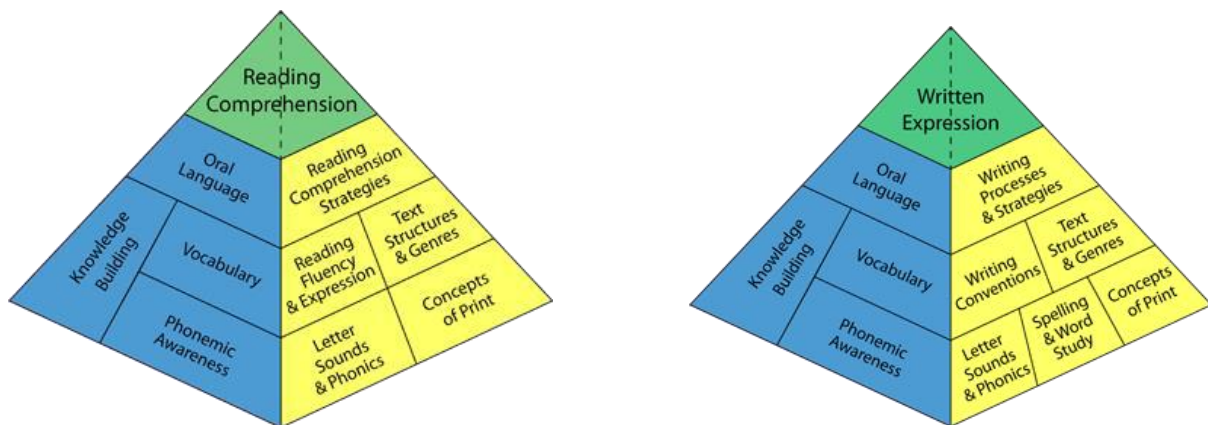
**Pupils working towards Qualifications:**

- Pre-entry English using units from WJEC Pathways
- AQA Entry Level English Certificate
- GCSE English language and literature

## WHOLE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

At Esteem South Academy we understand that our pupils may need different and individual approaches to their education. In order to support this variety of learning styles we utilise a balanced literacy approach. Balanced literacy is balancing explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration. It aims to strike a balance between both whole language and phonics when learning to read. The strongest elements of each are incorporated into a literacy program that aims to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. A typical balanced literacy framework consists of five components including read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and word study.

Esteem South Academy's literacy program is based on research based best practice taking inspiration from the balanced literacy 'diet'. This posits that there are foundational 'food groups' that students need in their 'literacy diet' to become proficient readers and writers. The images below demonstrate the groups that are crucial for reading comprehension and written expression.



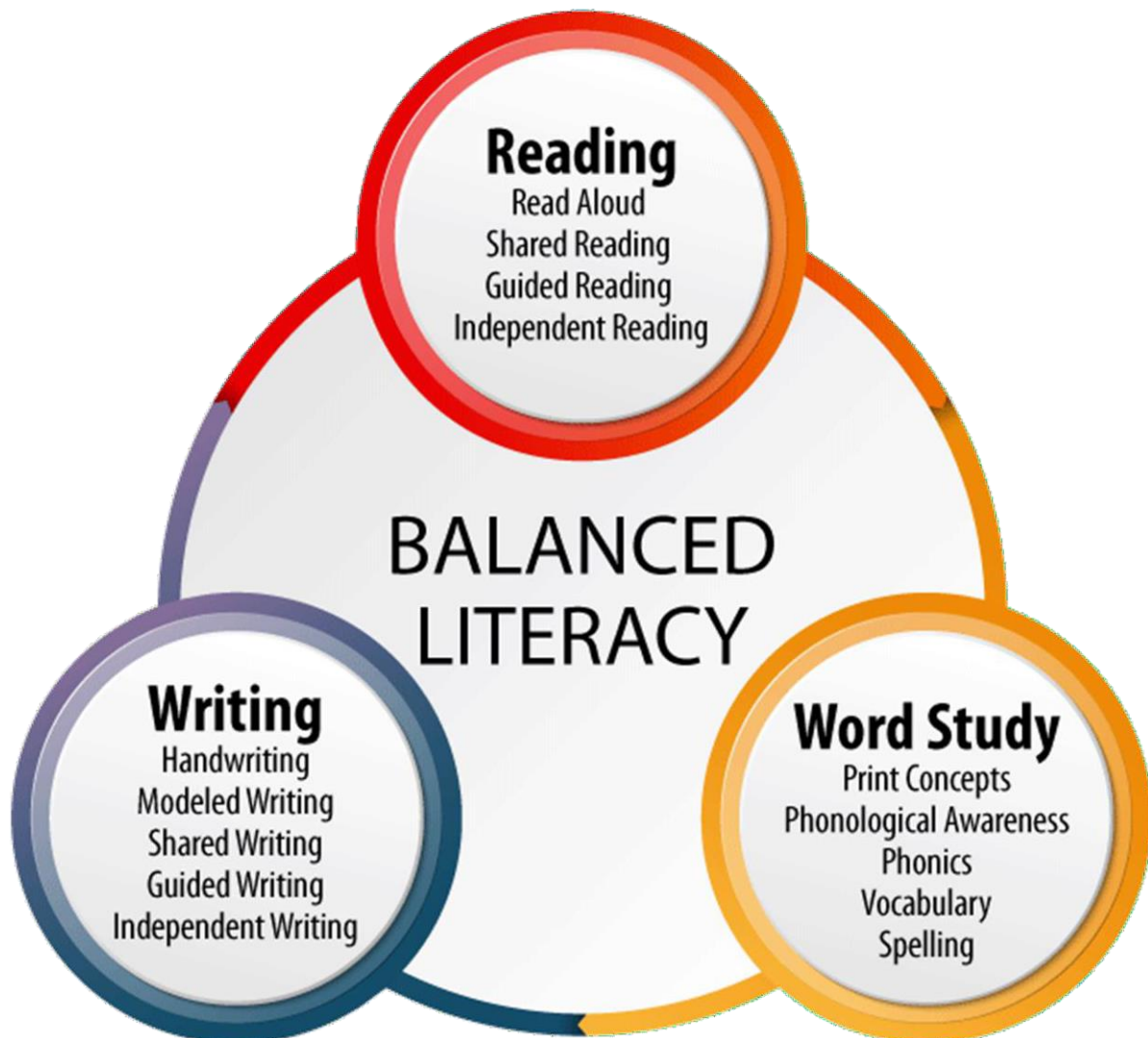
A balanced literacy approach allows us to meet the needs of all our students, whether they learn best through a systematic synthetic phonics approach, sight word study, learning through meaning or a combination of all, they are supported by this program.

Each week pupils experience a timetable that supports all of these areas. They receive a weekly core literacy skills workshop, fine motor/handwriting session, topic work lessons that feed into each other and build upon pupil's independence in reading and writing and a reading session that includes 1:1 reading with staff to develop personal targets and guided reading sessions. In addition to this, pupils receive 15-minute core 'focused learn' lessons on a daily basis focusing on objectives such as phonic study, spelling, punctuation and grammar and reading for pleasure, alongside Math's objectives.



WHOLE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION *Continued...*

Balanced literacy supports each pupil's reading and writing, working continuously to progress them towards independence wherever appropriate. The below diagram demonstrates how teachers deliver reading, writing and word study to pupils and how they progress them.



For a more detailed and explicit diagram, please see the whole school English sequencing plan.

At Esteem South Academy we utilise many tools in order to support and progress the literacy skills of our pupils. Some of these core tools are outlined below.

## PHONICS

Esteem South Academy's phonic learning is delivered based on pupil specific needs. Where pupils are still developing their knowledge of the 44 common sounds, students will receive regular and discrete phonics instruction which focuses on practicing and embedding known phonics and learning high frequency decodable and tricky words. Staff are creative in their approaches to teaching phonics in order to ensure that sessions are engaging and meet the needs of each pupil.

### **Read Write Inc is based on the 5 Ps**

**Praise** – Students learn quickly in a positive climate.

**Pace** – Good pace is essential to the lesson.

**Purpose** – Every part of the lesson has a specific purpose.

**Passion** – This is a prescriptive program. It is the energy, enthusiasm and passion that teachers put into the lesson that brings the teaching and learning to life.

**Participation** – A strong feature of Read Write Inc lessons is pupil engagement and peer work.

### **Delivery of Read Write Inc phonics**

- A multisensory approach to phonics delivery is taken.
- Lessons will be pitched at the correct level for each pupil, ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged while able to make clear progress.
- Initial sounds are taught in a specific order.
- Sounds taught should be 'pure' i.e. 'b' not 'buh' as this is central to phonic teaching and ability to recognise sounds in words.
- Pupils are taught that the number of graphemes in a word always corresponds to the number of phonemes as this greatly assists spelling efforts.
- Set 2 sounds are to be taught after set 1 (initial sounds)
- Letter names are to be introduced with set 3.
- Lessons will use phonics, reading and writing skills in order to connect and support each of these areas.
- Phonics delivery is adapted to meet the age appropriate requirements of our pupils and utilising the tools most appropriate to suit their functional literacy needs i.e. Decoding tools/dotting and dashing.

For further details, please see the reading and phonics policy.





**ACCELERATED READER**



**STAR**<sup>™</sup>  
Reading

Star Reader is one of the core methods of monitoring reading progress at Esteem South Academy. Star Reader is a nationally recognized reading initiative that focuses on improving reading ages. The program is utilised at Esteem South to regularly assess pupils and identify the correct text complexity for them as individuals in order to develop their skills further. Pupils develop reading skills most effectively when they read appropriately challenging books, difficult enough to keep them engaged but not so difficult that they become frustrated. This is what is referred to as their 'zone of proximal development'. Star Reader allows staff to effectively identify pupil's reading ages and future reading targets with a distinct focus on developing both pupils decoding and comprehension skills.

For further information on reading, please see the reading policy.



## COMMUNICATION

Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols and semiotic rules.

**The main steps inherent to all communication are:**

- The formation of communicative motivation or reason.
- Message composition (further internal or technical elaboration on what exactly to express).
- Message encoding (for example, into digital, written, text, speech, pictures or gestures)
- Transmission of the encoded message as a sequence of signals propagating from the sender to one or more receivers.
- Noise sources such as natural forces and in some cases human activity (both intentional and accidental) begin influencing the quality of signals propagating from the sender to one or more receivers.
- Reception of signals and reassembling of the encoded message from a sequence of received signals.
- Decoding of the reassembled encoded message.
- Interpretation and making sense of the presumed original message.

At Esteem South Academy we believe in the importance of encouraging pupil's communication, both for academic and social progress. The ability to express oneself, in which ever form is chosen by the individual, enhances their ability to make progress and be understood by others. Communication is fundamental to pupil's development as students need to be able to understand and be understood, it is the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.

At Esteem South Academy we aim to provide a communication supportive environment for all of our pupils, one that promotes and supports each pupil's language and communication skills to develop and flourish.

A total communication approach is taken at Esteem South Academy. Total communication is a holistic view of communication that can be used with children, adolescents, and adults. It involves not only oral language to build on communication skills, but includes gestures, sign language and other visual communication systems. All methods of communication should be supported equally, respected and encouraged. Non-verbal communication can be just as effective as speech, communication is a two-way relationship and is only successful if the communicator and the people who they are communicating with are utilising the same language, i.e. there must be a shared communication system.



## **COMMUNICATION *Continued...* & HANDWRITING,**

Total communication is an approach that incorporates all the ways in which we communicate, including: speech, body language, facial expression, sign and gesture, vocalisations, symbols, written words, hearing, touch, taste, objects, art, music, contextual cues and behaviour.

### **Range of specific communication utilised at Esteem South Academy:**

- Makaton
- Cued articulation
- Speaking and listening activities
- Oracy development
- AAC Devices
- PECS (Picture exchange communication system)
- Communication boards
- Word Aware

### **Handwriting**

Handwriting is of fundamental importance to educating pupils and Esteem South Academy takes a holistic approach to handwriting, developing pupils' skills from gross motor to fine motor to pre-writing to handwriting. No pupil is expected to complete activities before they are developmentally ready for it and are supported as individuals at their current ability level and with their specific developmental needs in mind.

Pupils are supported through a sequence of gross motor and fine motor activities as set out by the school's occupational therapist, before completing the 'write from the start' early handwriting program and finally a handwriting program developing letter formation that follows the Read Write Inc script guidance.

For further details, please see the fine motor and handwriting policy.

## CONTEXTS & ASSESSMENT

### Contexts for English

All classrooms should have a designated phonics/literacy working wall with tools for decoding easily accessible to students. Classes should also have a dyslexia friendly alphabet arch, days of the week and months of the year on display and 'dotted and dashed' topic words where appropriate.

All classrooms should have a Word Aware display that changes daily/weekly, as needed, to meet students' current learning focus.

Literacy in the Environment: Pupils are encouraged to notice and access literacy within the school environment and when out on trips etc

15 mins daily phonic and literacy skills sessions are timetabled to aid in development core English skills.

Literacy activity days and trips such as: World Book Day, literacy workshops and theatre trips.

Vocational courses are offered as pupils move up the school where functional literacy skills are used in real life contexts such as on enrichment or educational visits.

### Assessment

Due to the nature of individual learning needs within an AP setting staff baseline students on entering the school and/or key stage and regularly assess to ensure students are working within the correct stage using the whole school Classroom Monitor assessment tool.

Star reader is used to monitor individual pupil reading progress.

Phonic knowledge is monitored through regular teacher assessment and observation.

Higher up the school, course work and academic examinations offer the students opportunities to take and achieve recognised qualifications at entry level and GCSE, alongside teacher assessment using Classroom Monitor.



## **ROLE OF COORDINATOR & CLASS TEACHER**

### **Role of Co-ordinator**

- The English Co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating English delivery throughout the school.
- To support staff in delivery of high-quality lessons.
- To ensure ALL learning environments provide high quality resources/displays/working walls to support the delivery of English.
- To identify, in conjunction with staff, CPD needs and then source and provide access to additional training and CPD opportunities for both individuals and teams of staff.
- To source, provide and organise resources to facilitate high quality lesson delivery
- To clearly communicate the school's approach to the teaching of English to parents using a variety of means, including information sheets, workshops, on a 1:1 basis, via the school website. To answer parent's questions and queries about English teaching as and when they arise.
- To monitor pupil progress through analysis of whole school data, identifying gaps and areas for improvement.
- To provide a strategic response to improving whole school English progress, identifying pupils who need additional support and ensuring appropriate support is put into place.

### **Role of the Class teacher:**

- To aim to develop English skills with pupils using the whole school approaches outlined above.
- To provide and regularly update a classroom environment that facilitates the development of student's literacy skills.
- To model positive and creative attitudes towards reading and writing.
- To develop and update own skills, knowledge and understanding of English.
- To identify inset needs in English and take advantage of training opportunities.
- To keep appropriate on-going records for English.
- To plan effectively for teaching English, liaising with co-ordinator when necessary.
- To inform parents of students' progress, achievement and attainment.
- To analyse progress data in conjunction with assessment co-ordinator and suggest further interventions where appropriate.



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

We incorporate English into a wide range of cross curricular subjects so that students learn to understand the importance of English in a range of contexts and environments. All students have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their learning need, gender or ethnicity. This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.