ENGLISH POLICY

Approved by:	**Castlefort Governing Body**	**Date: September 2026**
Signed by:	**Chair of the Governing Body**	
Last reviewed on:	**September 2025**	
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Policy Statement
At Castlefort Academy, we aim to help children to develop a love for the English language through the spoken and written word. We recognise that English is a core subject within the National Curriculum and a pre-requisite for educational and social progress. Language empowers children to communicate, creatively and imaginatively, as well as allowing them engagement with the world at large.

Aims
At Castlefort Academy, we believe that language is fundamental to the overall development of our pupils and their access to the curriculum in all its aspects. We aim to develop pupils' abilities by delivering high quality teaching, which is monitored closely. Our pupils are given opportunities to consolidate and practise taught English skills by giving them real life experiences and a purpose for writing.

We want all our children by the end of Year 6 to be able to:
- speak clearly and audibly in ways that take account of their listeners;
- listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- 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 read for enjoyment.
- have an interest in words, their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- a development of the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.
- gain and use English skills to enable them to access other areas of the curriculum.
- Know and be able to write various forms of poetry.

Teaching and Learning in Early Years
In the EYFS (Nursery and Reception) children are given opportunities to:
- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and English in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and opportunities to communicate.

When children enter Reception, they complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within their first six weeks. The baseline assesses the child's early Literacy and Communication and Language understanding and is used to as a progress measure as they move throughout school. At the end of Reception, children will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals and will work alongside Year 1 teachers to provide an overview of each child's areas of strength and development in Reading and Writing.

Communication and Language and Literacy are two of the seven areas of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers and practitioners support children in developing their understanding of speaking and listening, reading and writing in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. We believe that children's spoken language is a key building block that enables children to learning across all seven areas. The Early Years staff help to develop this through quality conversations with adults and peers within language-rich environment.

It is really important to everyone at Castlefort Academy to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. To develop language comprehension, the children are read to frequently and encouraged to engage in a variety of text types including stories, non-fiction, rhymes, poems and songs. They are given the chance to story tell and role play, which helps to give them a rich range of vocabulary and language structure. Word reading is taught later on through the use of the RWI scheme. Writing is also developed through daily RWI sessions, cross curricular writing and fine motor skills activities.

Reading in the Early Years
In Nursery, reading is taught discretely daily through RWI lessons, but is also seen through daily continuous provision using our creative curriculum topics. Every child is given a 'story card' sheet to talk about at home with parents. This is part of our mobile library system, where parents can change the 'story cards' as many times as they like throughout the week. We also offer the '1000 stories' initiative through our mobile library system, where parents can borrow a book daily, to read to their child. Parent RWI workshops also take place at the start of the year. Our RWI leader and Early Years leader explain how RWI is taught in Nursery and parents are given an information booklet and pack to take away.

In Reception, reading is taught discretely daily through RWI lessons, but is also seen though daily continuous provision through our sequenced half-termly topics. Every child is given a reading book (book bag book) which matches their phonic ability. This is changed in accordance to their rates of progress. All children are listened to read with an adult at least once a week. Children are given high frequency words in a 'speedy reading book' in January to practise reading at home. These are also practised two times per week during 'morning job time'. We also offer the '1000 stories initiative' through our mobile library, where parents can borrow a book daily to read to their child. We offer a parent session on Phonics with the RWI leader and Early Years leader to explain how RWI is taught in Reception. Parents are given an information booklet and 'goody pack' to take away.

Writing in the Early Years
In Nursery, writing is taught through RWI, daily fine motor activities and through daily continuous provision activities through our half-termly topics. We offer a parental workshop on how to support writing at home. The parents have a talk with the EYFS team and receive a pack to support writing at home. They also get one hour to spend with their child completing some planned writing tasks linked to the weekly topic to enhance their learning

In Reception, writing is taught discretely weekly, through RWI and in daily continuous provision through topics. Children also have a weekly writing task linked to their topic and story of the week. We also offer a parent workshop on how to support writing at home. The parents also have a discussion with the EYFS leader, have a chance to try out some writing activities with their child and receive a pack to support their child's learning at home. They also get 1 hour to spend with their child completing some planned writing tasks linked to the weekly topic to enhance their learning.

Parent workshops in Early Years
In EYFS, the following workshops are offered to parents to support their English skills:

- Writing - To learn how to hold a pencil and develop early writing skills to be able to form letters and write words and sentences.
- RWI/ Reading - To develop a love for reading, develop role play skills and comprehension skills talking about pictures within books.

For each workshop, parents are invited into school for a 1 hour 15-minute session. For 15 minutes, the Early Years leader will talk to the parents about the workshop focus and how they can support their child's learning at home. Following the input, the parent will spend 1 hour completing activities with their child, EYFS Leader and EYFS team will be on hand to offer advice and suggest some activities they may want to try at home.

Homework in Early Years
Nursery
Weekly the children will receive:

- Word of the week - a word to practise saying and to repeat in a sentence. This is to be modelled in school and at home to develop the child's vocabulary.
- Story cards - Picture sheets with questions to develop speaking skills and their imagination.
- *Parents can choose to take a story from the 'Mobile Library' every day.*

Reception
On a weekly basis, the children will receive:

- Home reading record - share a book and record comments in the reading log.
- RWI phonic sound sheet (Friday) - according to what sound the child has learnt at school.
- High frequency words in a 'speedy reading book' changed twice a week. These are to be practised regularly so the child can read all of them before moving to Year 1.
- *Parents can choose to take a story from the 'Mobile Library' every day.*
- Grandma's basket - Synonyms for a word linked to the weekly story which has been read and discussed with the children in class. These are shared on class dojo.

Teaching and Learning in Key Stages 1and 2
We follow the 2014 National Curriculum Framework for English and other guidance to enable quality learning and teaching to take place. A range of teaching approaches are used in school.

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds. Children are given opportunities to speak and listen throughout all subject areas.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6) children learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

The new English programme of study (2014) is based on 4 areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar, punctuation and glossary.

Timetable
Apart from when there is a specific off-timetable event, there should be a daily English lesson for the age-appropriate recommended time. For most off-timetable events, a piece of writing is still completed around the theme of the day.

A typical unit of English includes:

- Handwriting activities
- Spelling practice
- Four 'Reading and Writing' lessons a week
- One 'Reading focus' lesson a week (Y1-6)
- Examples of exploring texts and unpicking the key features
- SPaG starters linked to the text type being studied (Y2-Y6)
- Chance for the children to draft, edit and publish their own writing
- Weekly discrete spelling lesson

All daily English lessons should provide opportunities for AFL for both the teacher and children. This may be in the form of self-assessment/peer assessment against the success criteria or success against set targets. How this is facilitated is down to individual teachers, by taking into consideration the aptitude and age of the learner.

Writing
We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well-structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling.

Children are encouraged to write every day and given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group.

To get the best pieces of writing out of children, English lessons are now based around a given text, which often has a film version of it. This allow year groups to study texts in detail and produce pieces of writing for different text types based around this. The texts are age related and aim to inspire their imagination and build their creativity as a writer. The range of text aims to build their vocabulary knowledge and act as a stimulus for their own writing.

Our approach to teaching writing is based on **Rosenshine's principles of effective instruction**. The 10 main principles are as follows:

1. Begin each lesson with a short review of previous learning.
2. Present new material in small steps, followed by practice.
3. Ask questions and check for learners' responses.
4. Provide models and examples.
5. Guided pupil practice activities.
6. Monitor pupil comprehension.
7. Aim for a high success rate.
8. Scaffold difficult tasks.
9. Require independent practice, and monitor it.
10. Regularly review students' progress.

Each genre is taught in 2-3 week chunks following a clear pattern. We call this the **'I, We, You'** approach. We start by modelling what a good example looks like (modelled text) and we work to deconstruct the text into its text features. We then complete a 'shared write' based on the text we are studying. This allows the pupils to see the writing process first hand and the instant editing which takes place with 'effective writers'. It also allows pupils to think carefully about their choices of grammar and sentence structures. Finally, children are given a new context for writing and asked to write their own version of the genre. Once a half term, pupils are expected to go through the 5 steps of the writing process with one task which demonstrates the following features:

1. Prewriting (or planning)
2. Drafting
3. Revising
4. Editing
5. Publishing.

The children's published pieces then are written into their published pieces book and many are selected for their classroom display boards.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)
In Years 2 - 6, SPaG is taught throughout a unit of work which is linked to the text type being studied. Tasks will be split between contextualised and non-contextualised activities. Most tasks will be covered in short, sharp bursts of SPAG starter activities to English lessons.

In EYFS and KS1, children will have spelling input through their daily RWI sessions, as well as in KS1 following the spelling overview. This links to the National Curriculum and aids to teach the children different spelling rules and patterns as well as the common exception words that they will expected to know at the end of the year. Spelling

from the pattern being taught will be sent home weekly alongside a selection of high frequency words. Spelling lessons are also taught on a weekly basis based on a spelling programme provided by Spelling Shed. Pupils are given spelling dictionaries which are kept on their tables to develop independence.

Reading

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during whole class reading sessions. Independent reading provides time for both assessment and 1-1 teaching.

Reading: Early Years and Key Stage 1

Daily discreet RWI lessons in EYFS and KS1 enable children to decode efficiently (see the RWI policy for more detail). Pupils in Year 2, who have completed the RWI scheme, complete a daily fluency lesson, which is stand alone to the English lesson, based on 'Little Wandl' fluency.

Reading: Key Stage 1 and 2

Children in Years 2 to 6 complete a weekly hour Reading lesson which links to the text being studied in the English lesson. This is recorded in children's Reading books. The children follow VIPERS (vocabulary, infer, predict, explain, retrieve and sequence/ summaries). During each lesson, the children will have the opportunity to read as a class, in partners and individually to build their fluency. They will then complete activities linked to one of the VIPERS areas. To ensure that the children have read each book from start to finish, teachers will read chapters of their focus book at the end of the day.

We encourage all readers to share a book at home with their grown-ups. We believe that this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading. We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

Home Reading

Pupils must carry an appropriate reading book/s in their bag to read in school and at home. In the EYFS & KS1, pupils also take home an RWI book bag book linked to the level they are reading in class. As part of their homework, the children are expected to read at home to an adult. Comments about their reading should be made in their home school reading record.

A member of staff must listen to each child reading their home reading book weekly. They should record this in the teacher reading file – indicating what book was read and the discussion that took place. The child will then make a comment or answer a question on the sheet too. Whilst listening to children read their books the teacher will record the content domain that the child has achieved. To ensure children who are behind catch up, we RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rate the readers according to their levels of attainment. Those who are significantly working below age related expectations (Red) are listened to 3 times a week. Those who are working below age-related expectations (Amber) are listened to twice and week and those who are on track (Green) or above are listened to once a week.

In EYFS, we also offer a home reading book which is purely for pleasure. This book is designed for pupils to share with their parents/ carers and is not matched precisely to their reading level. We call this book their mobile library book and this can be accessed on the playground daily. When pupils complete the RWI programme (predominantly in KS2) pupils are given a 'Collins Big Cat' book which is our main KS2 reading scheme. Library texts and age appropriate texts can be accessed in individual classrooms and KS2 pupils can take these home to read for pleasure too. Each classroom contains poetry books and books around famous authors. To encourage reading at home, children have the opportunity to be the year groups 'Star Reader' in our weekly celebration assembly where they receive a certificate and a free writing piece of equipment.

We also have a reading certificate reward programme which rewards children for reading books at home.

Every time a child reads a certain amount of books at home, they will receive a small reward from the English leader. The certificates are given for the following number of books as well as a number of castle coins which pupils can spend in the Castlefort Emporium. These books can be those provided by the school's extensive library.

BRONZE CERTIFICATE (24 books) – 50 Castle coins.
SILVER CERTIFICATE (42 books) – 100 Castle coins.
GOLD CERTIFICATE (68 books) – 150 Castle coins.
PLATINUM CERTIFICATE (92 books) – 200 Castle coins.

This will be recorded on a whole class display in the classroom as the children. Children are also encouraged to read a variety of text types out of school such as a menu at a restaurant, a comic, magazine, newspaper, fact book, sports programs, manuals, poetry books, etc... These types of texts can also be recorded in their reading record, so we can celebrate different types of reading.

Speaking and Listening
The Four Strands of Speaking and Listening: Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction, and Drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

Opportunities to develop these skills include: class assemblies, talk partners, drama and performances including performances and 'Castlefort's Got Talent' for KS2. Children who require extra support in speaking and listening benefit from the expertise of a Speech and Language Therapist which is through our SENCO.

At Castlefort Academy, we recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is of prime importance. It is our school policy to model our own language to the children which encourages Standard English both in speaking and writing.

Poetry
The love of poetry plays a major part of Castlefort Academy's English journey. In the EYFS, pupils engage with a range of nursery rhymes and learn various traditional poems. Starting in Year 1, all pupils receive at least 4 weeks of Poetry-specific weeks through the academic year, one of which is poetry performance week. This week culminates in a special Friday assembly where pupils perform to the rest of the school and parents/ carers who are invited into school to celebrate their successes. Staff use 'Poetry Shed' materials which provide a comprehensive programme of study covering over 30 forms of poetry including free verse.

Handwriting
See separate handwriting policy – Letter-Join.

Interventions
In the unfortunate instance when pupils may fall behind their peers in terms of their academic achievement, Castlefort Academy use a range of interventions to support pupils and close the educational gap. These interventions may occur on a daily, weekly or termly basis. Interventions can include various aspects of the English curriculum including Early Talk Boost, Wellcomm, additional handwriting practice, RWI catch up (known as wobbly wallets), fluency practice through Little Wandl resources, precision teaching, additional 1:1 reading, and additional writing intervention. Castlefort Academy is guided by the best practice documents from the EEF (Education Endowment Foundation.

Assessments

Writing Assessment – At the end of every half term, the class teacher will plan a writing task for the children in their class. Staff will then use our assessment criteria to identify which skills/objectives the child has included independently in their writing. This informs future planning as it identifies gaps in the children's learning.

Reading Assessment – Once a term, the children will sit the NTS reading test. Children in KS1 also complete a WRAPs test. Reading levels will be based on the test scores along with the information collected from whole class reading sessions.

SPaG Assessment – Once a term, children in Years 2-6 will sit the NTS SPaG test. SPaG levels will be based on the test scores along with the information collected from SPaG sessions.

Key Stage 1 and 2 Homework

All homework from Year 1- 6 is differentiated and given out according to the pupil's ability to ensure they are able to complete the work independently or with little support. Homework will be based around something that has been taught in school, so therefore the homework is consolidation.

Year 1

Weekly the children will receive:

- Home reader: a book to read and share with an adult 4 times a week. The adult is expected to record comments in the reading log and sign it, before a new book is sent home.
- RWI phonic sound sheet: according to what sound the child has learnt at school.
- 5 Spellings - 10 Spellings: A spelling list will be provided each week and tested on the following week.

Year 2

Weekly the children will receive:

- Home reader: a book to read and share with an adult 4 times a week. The adult is expected to record comments in the reading log and sign it, before a new book is sent home.
- 10 Spellings: A spelling list will be provided each week and tested on the following week. The spellings are based on what pattern has been taught at school, as well as some common exception words. Handwriting is part of this, as the children have to Look, Say, Cover and write the words.

Year 3 and 4

Weekly the children will receive:

- Home reader: a book to read at least 4 times a week. Parents to sign and complete reading log.
- 10 Spellings: A spelling list will be provided each week and tested on the following week. The spellings are based on what pattern has been taught at school, as well as some common exception words. Handwriting is part of this, as the children have to Look, Say, Cover and write the words.

Year 5 and 6

Weekly the children will receive:

- Home reader: a book to read at least 4 times a week. Parents to sign and complete reading log.
- 10 Spellings: A spelling list will be provided each week and tested on the following week. Handwriting is part of this, as the children have to Look, Say, Cover and write the words.

Cross-Curricular English Opportunities

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school. Children are given the opportunity to complete cross-curricular writing in different areas of the curriculum from Science to History. Cross-curricular texts are planned into foundation subject lessons so reading skills can be embedded across the curriculum.

Use of ICT
We recognise the important role ICT has to play in our school in the development of English skills. ICT is used to enhance the teaching of English through the use of videos, sound clips, interactive games, word processing and research.

Inclusive practice
We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided. Children who are placed onto the special educational needs register are planned for to ensure that their individual needs are met and appropriate resources and support are available to ensure that they achieve their full potential.

Equal Opportunities
Castlefort Academy has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children. We believe in 'valuing what the child brings to school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

The role of the subject specialist
The subject specialist is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English:
  - pupil progress
  - provision of English
  - the quality of the Learning Environment.
- Taking the lead in policy development.
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD.
- Purchasing and organising resources.
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments.