

Stowlawn Literacy Policy



The Literacy curriculum at Slowlawn is based around the fundamentals of quality-first teaching and automaticity in Reading and Writing. Research has demonstrated how crucial Literacy skills are in improving academic progress for children, enhancing their cultural capital and ultimately leading to better life outcomes, and we embrace this ethos throughout the Literacy curriculum.

Focus is placed on ensuring children are read to and read with as much as possible at school, and they are highly encouraged to do so at home, which is facilitated by our well-resourced library and emphasis on reading for pleasure. The children receive an engaging and varied curriculum offer in Writing, where they are given the chance to write for pleasure with a heavy focus on audience and purpose using a range of different stimuli. Quality-first teaching of Spelling and Handwriting is prioritised to further improve outcomes for reading and writing.

Speaking and listening skills are recognised as the foundation for good Literacy skills, and an Oracy approach based on the Voice 21 programme is used to teach these skills from Early Years onwards and ensure they are refined as children progress through school.

Curriculum Diet

Children in EYFS and KS1 receive one hour of Literacy-based teaching each day, based around weekly story books and focusing on teaching age-appropriate reading and writing skills. In KS2, children receive four lessons of reading and four lessons of writing per week. From KS1 onwards, all children receive daily sessions of Spelling and

Handwriting. All children in EYFS and KS1 also receive daily phonics sessions based on their ability level. Across school, all children read with an adult at least once a week.

Speaking and Listening

Oracy is a priority at Stowlawn. Following the guidance of the Voice 21 programme, a whole-school approach has been taken to embed the importance of speaking and listening into every classroom. Oracy is both explicitly planned for in units of work across school and implicitly used in most lessons to improve speaking and listening skills.

A variety of strategies, such as talk roles, talk tokens and different groupings are used to encourage talk during oracy-based activities, and some lessons in Maths, Literacy or Foundation subjects may be oracy based rather than having a written outcome. Vocabulary around oracy is used throughout school and children are aware of its importance. Listening is also taught and implemented using the listening ladder.

Phonics

We use Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics programme to plan and deliver daily engaging phonics sessions. Children are grouped by their level of phonics understanding. During Autumn term groups include children from Year 1, Year 2 and some children from Year 3 if they need additional phonics support. During Spring term Reception children will also join groups. All staff delivering RWI are fully trained in the scheme.

Our phonics sessions are 30 minutes long every day, and sessions follow the scheme based on their children's ability. At the beginning of the phonics programme, children are taught set 1 sounds and use these to build up to blending sounds together to read simple CVC words. Children are taught and practise their oral blending skills using Fred the frog, develop their blending and segmenting skills by using magnetic letter boards to make and read simple words, and then move onto reading these simple words on green word cards.

When children are able to recognise a certain amount of sounds and can confidently blend these together, they will start to move through the groups building up to starting to read a book. This begins with simple ditty sheets consisting of a few simple CVC sentences. From red group, children will start to use a simple story book to practise their blending and reading skills. They will continue to learn new sounds from Set 2 and Set 3 sounds, as they move through the programme. Once children begin the ditty stage and onwards, they will bring home their phonics sheet/book to share with their adults. We encourage parents to listen to their child read their book as much as possible to help them to develop confidence, fluency and embed their reading skills.

The Teaching of Reading

In EYFS, children are exposed to high-quality texts daily. Engaging activities are planned around stories shared in class to encourage reading for pleasure, and books are displayed throughout the EYFS environment for children to choose and engage with independently.

Reading lessons in KS1 and KS2 at Slowlawn are based on the four main components of the quality-first teaching of reading as outlined in the Department of Education's Reading framework:

- Teachers modelling reading aloud
- Children reading aloud
- Teachers modelling comprehension of a text through higher-level questioning
- Children demonstrating reading comprehension by answering higher-level questions.

The VIPERS (vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summary) model is used to ensure all aspects of reading comprehension are taught in conjunction with the explicit teaching of reading fluency through methods such as echo and choral reading.

In Key Stage 1, children focus on weekly texts based around a theme. Literacy is taught holistically for one hour daily, with the focus being split between Reading and Writing skills – however, all four of these key elements of reading mastery are present within the weekly cycle of Literacy lessons at Key Stage 1.

By Key Stage 2, children follow a set structure for weekly reading lessons which are based around a small extract from their current class text. This extract is read and taught around for the entire week to ensure an in-depth understanding of the text. The structure of weekly reading lessons in Key Stage 2 is as follows:

1. Oracy focus – The children are introduced to this week's extract, which is read aloud by the teacher. The children discuss what they have read with their peers and ask probing questions to help them deeper understand the text.

2. Fluency focus – The children read aloud during this lesson, practising their fluency in a range of ways. Children practise skimming and scanning skills to retrieve information from the text and improve reading speed.
3. VIPERS skills focus – One specific VIPERS skill is focused on in-depth and taught explicitly during this lesson. The teacher models answering higher-level questions.
4. VIPERS questioning – The children's understanding of the text is assessed using a range of VIPERS questions which they answer independently. On a fortnightly basis, this lesson involves questions on an unseen text (either poetry, non-fiction or fiction) to ensure the children develop the application of VIPERS skills to unfamiliar contexts.

Poetry is embedded into the curriculum through National Poetry Day celebrations in October and through the teaching of stand-alone poetry units, which take place two to three times each year. Close reading of poetry is prioritised to develop comprehension and understanding of poetic devices.

All children receive a coloured band book in addition to their library books. This is matched to their ability level and is used when reading aloud with adults at school and at home to improve fluency and comprehension at an appropriate level for each child.

Vocabulary

The explicit teaching of age-appropriate, higher-level vocabulary is a priority at Stowlawn. Ten 'yellow' words (tier two vocabulary) are displayed and changed fortnightly based on words encountered by the children in their class texts. 'Pink' words

(tier three, subject-specific vocabulary) are displayed and referenced when they arise during foundation subjects.

Vocabulary is a key focus during the weekly Reading cycle across the whole school. It is recapped at the beginning of each Reading lesson, displayed on each slide of Reading notebook files and key vocabulary is displayed across school from Reception onwards. In KS2, these five words are accompanied by the word class and a brief description of its meaning.

KS1 Example

Key Vocabulary:

precious, lopped, cackled, locks, dingy

KS2 Example

Key Vocab:

- plagued (verb) - to cause continuous trouble or distress
- bind (verb) - to tie or fasten something together
- vacantly (adverb) - to do something in an absentminded or thoughtless manner
- amusement (noun) - the state of finding something funny
- coincidence (noun) - an occasion when two or more similar things happen at the same time, especially in a way that is unlikely and surprising.

Reading for Pleasure

We push reading for pleasure at Skowlawn in a range of ways. We use reading rewards to encourage home reading. All children can receive one signature in their reading records per day from an adult at home, and one additional signature if they read with an adult in school. These signatures cumulatively add up to different reading-based rewards for each year group, including use of the book vending machine in the library.

Our school library runs off the Reading Cloud library system. Children can access the system at home to reserve books, write reviews and find recommended reads based on their reading history. Each class is given a weekly slot to visit the library and have the chance to take a book home. Books in the library are categorised by genre for accessibility and to teach children how to care for the library and keep it organised.

Pupil librarians are appointed from Year 3 onwards to promote reading for pleasure across school.

Each classroom has its own reading area, where books are displayed for children to browse and engage with.

The Teaching of Writing

The Writing curriculum at Skowlawn uses a range of stimuli to engage children and encourage writing for pleasure. Children write pieces based around class texts, Visual Literacy examples and poetry.

During Writing lessons, the children are taught about the three purposes for writing (persuade, inform, entertain) and teaching during writing lessons in preparation for this focuses on analysing good examples of text types for them to follow in their own work to create a strong writer's voice. The children write for specific audiences and focus on the impact that their writing should have on the reader. Narrative writing is heavily prioritised as outlined by the National Curriculum, and children can write their own stories as well as retellings based on models they have read.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, children are required to complete at least two longer pieces of writing per half-term. On a termly basis, they publish their work in their Writer's Portfolios. Through this, children see writing as a creative and impactful pursuit and enjoy the opportunity to position themselves as authors using the planning, drafting, editing and publishing cycle:

- Planning – The children use a range of models to plan, such as talk for writing, thought showers, discussion work and picture maps and prompts.
- Drafting – The children, independently or with support where needed, use their plan to draft their writing. They are encouraged not to focus at this stage on making their writing 'perfect', but on writing stamina and getting their ideas down with consideration for audience and purpose.
- Editing – Children are taught explicitly how to edit their work through teacher modelling and do so independently and with their peers. They understand that editing is a crucial part of writing as it is where we refine the impact of our writing.
- Publishing – The children publish their redrafted copy in their portfolio, becoming authors. Where possible, their work is shared with their target audience.

In EYFS, the teaching writing focuses on developing fine and gross motor skills to ensure children have the physical strength to write with stamina and automaticity as they progress through school. The children are provided with a range of writing tools to experiment with independently.

SPaG

Outcomes for extended writing focus on audience and purpose, however, SPaG skills may be explicitly focused upon during Writing lessons where necessary. These skills are taught progressively and at an age-appropriate level and are recapped as children progress through school where gaps are found in their understanding. SPaG based lessons are complimentary to writing lessons which focus on text type, audience and purpose and objectives are pulled from the National Curriculum.

Spellings

The Spelling Shed scheme is used to teach and resource Spellings from Year 1 onwards, and children are given small Spelling books for home and school practice. Each class will be tested weekly on ten words based on a different, age-appropriate Spelling rule, with some children receiving support in smaller intervention groups focusing on Spellings from previous year groups to consolidate.

In KS1, the scheme is followed along with the inclusion of common exception words. Children are tested on five words from the scheme and five common exception words weekly, and common exception words are repeated on a cycle to ensure they are embedded into memory, as shown below:

Week 1	Year 1 a do to no go	Year 2 find kind mind behind	Week 10	love	clothes both everybody even pretty
Week 2	be he we me she	old gold cold hold told	Week 11		sure sugar could should would
Week 3	I so by <u>my</u> was	door floor poor because child	Week 12		busy people water again half
Week 4	of the put are is	grass pass plant path bath	Week 13		money Mr Mrs parents Christmas
Week 5	were there here one one	fast last past father class			
Week 6	his has today friend said	children wild climb most only			
Week 7	Some come they your you	great break steak beautiful after			
Week 8	ask school <u>says</u> push full	hour move prove improve eye			
Week 9	<u>where</u> pull house <u>our</u>	who whole any many			

Children practise Spellings daily in school using a range of methods, such as in books, on worksheets, and via the Spelling Shed website. Children are given logins so that they can access the website at home to practise the weekly spelling assignments set by their teachers. Children are given access to their online Spelling assignments once weekly within school.

Termly assessments for Spellings are conducted to measure progress. These are unseen tests comprising of a mix of spelling words from the rules the children have been taught within their year group.

Children accrue Spelling certificates for consistently scoring 10/10 across a number of weeks. When children reach 5 weeks with 10/10 they are awarded with a bronze

certificate, at 10 weeks a silver certificate, at 15 weeks a gold certificate, and at 20 weeks a platinum certificate.

Handwriting

We follow the Kinetic Letters Handwriting scheme. The scheme is focused on improving writing skills by building physical strength to improve stamina and comfort for writing, ultimately leading to automaticity. The scheme has four threads – making bodies stronger, holding the pencil, forming the letters and flow and fluency – which are taught explicitly, aiming for automaticity in Handwriting. Letters are taught grouped into letter families and a range of physical movements and strategies (air, sand, whiteboards, paper) are used to embed them.

The START structure (set-up, target practice, a, reinforcement and target setting) is used in most Handwriting sessions to teach letter formation and joining, with some sessions focusing on a single focus based around one of the four threads where necessary. Children demonstrate what they have learned in Handwriting sessions by doing 'practice patches' in the back of their Literacy books.

The scheme starts from Year 1 onwards, with children being expected to have mastered a cursive style of handwriting by the end of Year 3. Once children are capable of writing in a joined, legible style with automaticity, they will be given a pen to write with. The ways of building of physical strength outlined in Kinetic Letters are used in lessons and around school throughout the day and not just during Handwriting sessions as it is recognised as a fundamental to success in writing. All notebook files

and printed resources use the Kinetic Letters font, and teachers model the writing style when marking in books.

Assessment

Teachers use live marking and feedback heavily in Literacy lessons to measure progress and include children in their learning journey using green and pink highlighters. Children are aware of the marking code used by teachers and can use this to make changes to their own work, independently and with support.

Assessment for Reading

Children are assessed formally in Reading on a termly basis. This is based on teacher judgements collated from their work during lessons, formative assessments made during one-to-one reading sessions and termly summative assessments provided by the local authority.

Assessment for Writing

Children are assessed formally in Writing on a termly basis. From Year 1 onwards, children complete one piece of independent writing per term by planning, drafting and editing their work, with each year group covering the three purposes for writing (**inform, persuade and entertain**) once per year as an assessment piece.

As with all pieces of extended writing, writing is completed under one learning objective which focuses on audience and purpose. This is written under the date as normal in

Literacy books, and under headings which indicate the year group and term in Writer's Portfolios, for example:

Year 5

Autumn

Monday 21st June

LO: To write a suspenseful story to scare the reader.

The process for planning, drafting, editing and publishing an assessed independent piece of work is as follows.

- **Planning** – The children receive input through the learning cycle about the text type they will be writing and their audience and purpose. Teachers can aid during the planning phase by providing resources and stimuli for the children to use in their writing.
- **Drafting** – For an assessed piece, **children are required to complete their first drafts independently** using their plan but with no teacher input during the writing process. Some lower-attaining children may require a scribe to get their ideas on paper, but most children write with complete independence.
- **Edit** – As with drafting, children edit independently using green pen to redraft their work using the editing skills taught during lessons.
- **Assessment/Marking (Completed by the class teacher)** – The teacher assesses every child's work against highlighted grids with age-related expectations for that year group (green for Autumn, pink for Spring and yellow for Summer) which are then stuck into the children's Literacy books beside their edited draft alongside a positive comment.
- **Publish** – Children publish their completed and marked independent writing in their Writer's Portfolios.

Writer's Portfolios

Writer's Portfolios serve several purposes: primarily, to raise the profile of writing for the children and encourage them to have pride in their work as author's in their own right, and also as an assessment tool to follow their writing progress throughout school and to provide an exemplification model for teachers of what strong writing looks like.

Displays

All classrooms have the following Literacy-based displays. Examples are shown below:

- A beehive Spelling display to showcase the progress the children have made in achieving 10/10 on their tests over a cumulative period of weeks.
- A vocabulary display showcasing ten key yellow (tier two) vocabulary words from the class text and pink (tier three) words from the wider curriculum as appropriate
- A Reading display which explicitly shows what each letter of VIPERS stands for
- A Kinetic Letters display showing the six letter families that are taught within Kinetic Letters
- A sign on the door of each classroom which states which text the class are currently reading

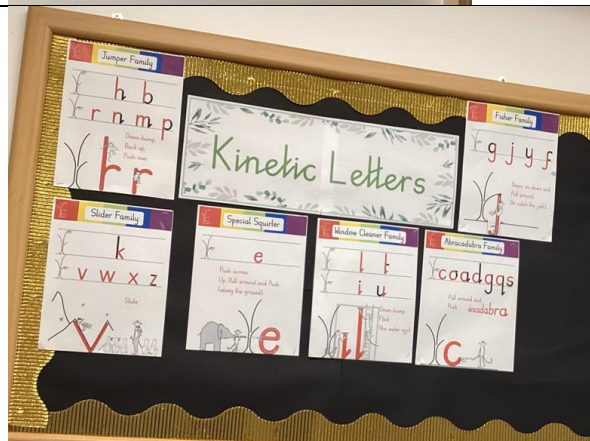
VIPERS Reading Display



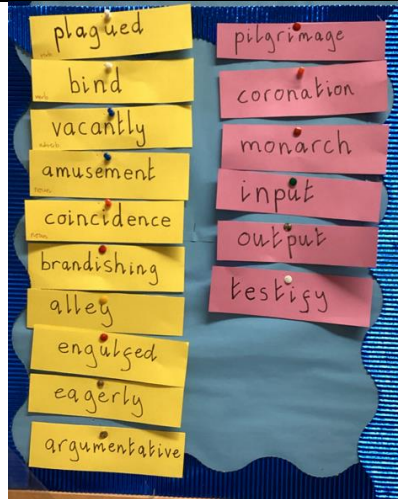
Spelling Beehive



Kinetic Letters



Vocabulary Wall



'We are Reading' Door Sign

