



MERE SCHOOL

English Policy

'English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.' National Curriculum 2014

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Mere School.

Aims

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Main Principles at Mere School

- Spoken language is at the heart of language development
- Activities, where possible, should be linked to our termly topics. This will ensure a rich stimulus and inspiration for writing
- Children learn from good models
- Children learn in situations where they feel confident, with high self esteem
- A rich, progressive language environment is needed for developing learners

- Activities should always be real and purposeful
- Teachers need to be readers and writers too
- ICT should be used to enrich the teaching and learning experience.

This policy is underpinned by the school's teaching and learning and assessment policies.

Spoken Language

Speaking and listening are the foundation and cornerstone of children's language development. As such, it is important that parents understand the priority it needs and support speaking and listening at home. In the Early Years, much English work will be strongly focused on speaking and listening. This could involve role-play where teaching assistants or teachers provide models in imaginary situations, and where the role-play area has high profile. Role-play naturally leads into drama and Talk For Writing in Year 1, which is another significant area that all children throughout the school will enjoy. Children will experience improvisation, polished performances such as school plays at Christmas, as well as theatre visits. They will have opportunities to develop character roles and devise and use their own scripts. As children progress through the school they will also be taught the skills of discussions and debates progressively.

Listening

The development of children's listening skills is hugely important to the development of their English skills. Children need to understand what makes good listening behaviour. This helps with the teaching and learning of phonics, which is critical to the child's acquisition of literacy skills. Musical and listening activities contribute to the early stages of this skill. Structured listening activities are used on a daily basis, based on a wide variety of books, nursery rhymes and songs. As learners progress through the year groups, they are taught how to improve and evaluate their listening skills through the use of talk partners and groups.

Links with Reading and Writing

Speaking and listening are vital in the preparation for and follow-up of writing and reading. For writing, children need to gain ideas, rehearse what they intend to say as well as use drafting partners for re-working and proof-reading. In reading, preparatory oral work helps with understanding of vocabulary, context, audience, and framing questions to further comprehension and extend higher order skills such as inference and deduction.

Talk also extends children's range of vocabulary and style, as they need to use language for so many different purposes in a pair or group activity. In this way it develops expression and is an aid for provoking thought. As a school we often use Talk For Writing to extend opportunities for children to develop their English skills through the learning, retelling and innovation of shared texts. Activities such as the sharing and telling of stories are hugely important to learners' development in English. Children experience this both in the classroom, and through various visiting storytellers, adult readers and each other.

At Mere School, we have an English session when children will be immersed in activities that are planned by teachers with the sole aim of raising standards in phonics, spelling, transcription, composition and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation by linking learning together. This will

give learners in all classes the opportunity to see how development and application of basic skills in English have an impact on outcomes in writing and reading.

Reading

In order for children to develop their word reading and comprehension skills we believe in providing a dynamic and interesting text-rich environment. This involves lively working walls in classrooms and an enticing reading area. We also promote the use of our school library, our local library, resources from the Wiltshire Learning Resources, and reading at home. In addition, the school celebrates World Book Day with active and stimulating resources for children and parents.

Reading is taught through the inclusion of 3 different types of reading session. These are guided reading, shared reading and one to one reading.

To develop their word reading skills, beginning readers start with the 'Look and Say' method, which runs alongside the teaching of phonics with grapheme correspondence. KS1 follow the Essential Letters and Sounds scheme.

Children are encouraged to interrogate text by moving from modelled to shared reading, then through to guided and independent work. In doing this, children work in a variety of ways – with the teacher, in pairs and groups – as well as independently. Children will experience and discuss a range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts. Children's progress is monitored carefully through their work in guided and independent sessions, as well as through the use of termly assessments.

Teachers provide a role model as readers by talking about books they have read, using assemblies as a platform to refer to their own reading or in other ways: for example, in RE talking about books which are special to them. We value range in children's reading experience and ensure that children experience a wide and varied diet of different types of fiction and non-fiction material. We aim for our children to develop a love of reading, gain knowledge, develop their vocabulary and feed their imaginations. We have developed a culturally diverse school 'literature spine' in order to do this and to keep track of the books that we read to classes, so that they are progressive and not repeated.

We encourage parents to listen to their children read daily and we liaise closely through a reading diary. Children are listened to read weekly in school and some targeted children throughout the school will be heard daily. We welcome parents and friends of the school to come in and read with our children.

We also have 'Buddy Reading' sessions every half term and our KS2 children share books with our EYFS and KS1 children on World Book Day. We also get involved with Mere's annual Literary Festival; this year we are welcoming a visiting poet into school to share their work and support the children to write their own poetry.

Assessment

Children are assessed formally and informally, based on the National Curriculum 2014. Assessments are entered termly on to the *Insight Tracker* system. This is monitored and reviewed by the English Subject Leader, Deputy Head and Head Teacher. Data is analysed and used to inform end of term pupil progress meetings. Early Years learners will be assessed using the

Development Matters criteria throughout the year, and then using the Early Learning Goal criteria before they move to Year 1.

- Tracking of Progress at least once a term, following NC 2014 guidelines.
- Assessments entered termly onto *Insight Pupil Tracker* system. This is monitored and reviewed by the English Subject Leader and the Head Teacher and through termly pupil progress meetings with class teachers.
- Termly reading comprehension assessment for all children from Year 1 to Year 5 (NFER).
- Regular reading intervention for children working at below the expected standard in reading.
- Year 1 Phonics Screening Test (repeated again in year 2 for children who did not pass).
- Year 6 reading SATs paper with ongoing teacher assessment using Year 6 assessment grids.

Writing

At Mere School we aim to develop children's transcription and composition skills as well as their spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. As the children's skills in these areas develop the speed, content and accuracy of their writing will also progress.

Oracy is a vital skill, which underpins writing. It provides stimulus for writing in terms of role-play, drama, and discussion. Children can gain confidence in experimenting with different registers and levels of formality in drama and role-play. In KS1, Talk for Writing is regularly used; pupils are taught to imitate texts by learning them with actions, and then innovate using the language structures learnt before inventing their own texts.

After writing, talk partners are used in the vital processes of editing and re-drafting, giving learners valuable opportunities for reviewing and improving work and embedding the principles of the drafting process, alongside the class teacher. Polishing pens are used by pupils in every class to edit and improve writing and show this process explicitly in English books. Class teachers and teaching assistants follow our school's editing and presentation policy.

Children become more committed as writers if they are given opportunities for writing with real purposes and specific audiences (for example, letter writing, blogging, writing emails, publications, play scripts, competition entries and leaflets). We value writing as an integrated part of children's literacy activities. Author visits also support children's understanding of how writing matters in the adult world.

The text-rich environment we endorse plays an important part in raising the status of writing. Children need to see ample examples of a range of texts. As with reading, children are taken through a steady process in which they start with text, and then writing is modelled by the teacher, shared with teacher and class before moving to guided and independent work. Our carefully chosen class topics and texts, gives children purposeful and stimulating opportunities for writing across the whole curriculum.

We value emergent writing as a way of developing children's confidence as writers. Alongside this, we give emphasis to phonic skills so that children's ability in spelling accuracy increases as they become more confident as writers. We also place high emphasis on the learning of the high frequency words/common exception words in KS1 and lower KS2, so that learners can then more readily apply their knowledge of spelling patterns in upper KS2 before gradually spelling longer and more complex words as they move towards the Year 6 SATs spelling test.

Assessment

- Tracking of progress at least once a term.
- Assessments entered termly on to the *Insight Pupil Tracker* system. This is monitored and reviewed by the English Subject Leader and the Head Teacher and through termly pupil progress meetings with class teachers.
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – assessments based on the Development Matters and Early Learning Goals criteria.
- Teacher assessment in year 6 using Year 6 assessment grids.
- Year 6 Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The standards and quality of the teaching and learning in English will be monitored in the following ways:

- scrutiny of books
- work sampling
- lesson observations/drop ins
- pupil interviews
- learning Walks

All teachers will be involved in monitoring and evaluating children's progress. The English Subject Leader and the Head Teacher will be responsible for other aspects of monitoring and evaluation. The English Subject Lead and SLT will analyse reading and writing outcome data termly to track progress and ensure that our policy is having a positive impact on this.

Spelling Policy

The ability to spell easily enables an individual to become a more effective writer. When spelling becomes automatic, more thought can be put into what is written. The English language is not a regular language but is systematic and patterned. Learning to spell is a process of working out such patterns and applying them to new words. Learning to spell is not just learning lists of words, but is a developmental process of learning to apply different strategies appropriately.

Aims

- to enable children to write independently
- to encourage creativity and the use of more ambitious vocabulary
- to develop and teach children to use strategies for spelling confidently
- to enhance skills of proof reading
- to promote a positive, rather than a punitive approach to spelling.

Teaching and Learning

ELS combined with the National Curriculum (2014) form the basis of our school phonics and spelling planning. Children will be offered a wide range of spelling activities to provide a stimulus for all learning styles. They may take the form of:

- whole class teaching

- displays, word banks etc.
- games
- dictionaries and thesauruses at an appropriate level
- audio visual activities
- writing experiences through play.

In KS1, spelling is part of the progression in learning phonics and therefore links closely to learning to read. Young children are engaged in the following activities on a regular basis; puzzles, games, actions, rhymes, creative work as well as looking at the teaching of phonemes, graphemes and high-frequency words.

- Reception children will follow the *Essential Letters and Sounds phonics* scheme
- Years 1 & 2 will continue the use of *ELS* where appropriate

In KS2, spelling forms a key part of the weekly timetable, when new strategies (letter strings, word families, root words, suffixes, prefixes, rules or word derivations) are introduced, practised or revised, in accordance with the National Curriculum (2014). Opportunities are given for children to work in pairs and groups and to respond in a variety of ways.

- KS2 children will follow the Twinkl spelling scheme, making adjustments where appropriately

Children in both Key Stages are taught strategies to help them to learn independently.

Primarily, this is based on the use of phonics but is supplemented through learning by sight.

Children also have individual spelling dictionaries, which contain such things as high-frequency words to learn, aides-memoir of spelling conventions, strategies for independent learning, and personal spelling lists.

In Years 1 and 2, teachers share termly spelling lists with the children and parents. These lists are based on the appendix from the National Curriculum 2014, and on the first 100 and next 200 high-frequency word lists derived from *ELS*. These spelling lists (sometimes called 'Wizard Words') are practised in school at the teacher's discretion. They are not sent home as weekly spellings, but are focused on at school and at home so that children become fluent and accurate in their spelling knowledge, over the course of KS1.

In Year 3, there is a weekly spelling focus, which is covered in daily SPAG lessons. Where appropriate, spellings are linked to homework. 'Wizard Words' are used to allow the children in Year 3 to learn high-frequency words and words from the Year3/4 National Curriculum spelling list. These are practised in school at the teacher's discretion and tested half-termly.

From Year 4, children are given weekly spellings to learn. The list given to the children includes words that fit a particular spelling pattern (according to the Twinkl Spelling Scheme) and words from Years 3 and 4 National Curriculum spelling list. Dictation and quizzes are used as an assessment tool.

Children's work is sensitively marked to enable all aspects of their writing to be appraised, particularly the use of interesting vocabulary. Attention will be drawn through marking to the mis-spelling of high frequency words or those most recently studied (see Editing and Marking Policy) Up to 5 mis-spelled words can be highlighted for the children to copy out 3 times and learn.

Special Educational Needs

Some children may need additional support in spelling. This is often the case with children who have specific learning difficulties. A variety of approaches will be used to support progress; these include more individual time with their teacher or classroom assistant, specific guidance in how to learn spellings, more structured homework, and greater involvement of parents in supporting homework. If necessary an Individual Education Plan will be introduced and the Learning Support Service may be consulted.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The standards and quality of the teaching and learning of spelling will be monitored in the following ways:

- work sampling
- lesson observation
- pupil interviews
- termly pupil progress meetings

All teachers will be involved in monitoring and evaluating children's progress. The English Subject Lead and the Head Teacher will be responsible for other aspects of monitoring and evaluation.

Handwriting Policy

Handwriting – a useful, elegant and essential branch of education

Objectives

Handwriting underpins a large proportion of a child's educational development and it is important it is taught carefully and thoroughly.

All children should be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school.

Handwriting should become an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of their writing, because if they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work.

Aims

- ☺ For all children to develop a legible style of handwriting in both joined and printed styles, with increasing fluency, confidence and speed.
- ☺ To facilitate a whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting by ensuring a consistent and coherent practice.
- ☺ To link handwriting with spelling and phonics in order to link English learning and to strengthen the visual memory of word shapes and strings of letters.

- ☺ To ensure that a fluent and legible style, with correct letter formation and direction, is embedded by the end of KS1. It is recognised that bad habits are difficult to change by the time a child moves to Year 3.
- ☺ For children to be aware by Year 5 that different forms of handwriting are to be used for different purposes (eg drafting, rough work, final presentation, labels etc.)
- ☺ To make provision for left-handed children to develop free flowing writing.
- ☺ To make provision for children with special needs affecting their gross or fine motor skills.
- ☺ To ensure that children should be taught to write quickly but accurately before leaving primary school. This is a key life skill that will help them in secondary school and beyond.

Discrete Teaching of Handwriting

Teaching handwriting is a priority. Children need to be able to:

- ☺ write without thinking about **how** to write
- ☺ This enables them to concentrate on **what** to write.

The teaching of handwriting is essentially a non-creative activity which involves training, tracing, copying and practising (remind the children: *practise makes perfect!*). It is essential that they watch the teacher demonstrating how to write and subsequently try it for themselves. As handwriting is a movement skill, demonstration by a competent teacher is essential.

By the age of 7, most children have adopted a pencil grip, formed a style and developed habits which are hard to change. It is essential that they have been taught the correct habits by this stage. It is in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 that these should be taught; teachers in this part of the school should regularly check that children are holding a pencil correctly, for example.

Children should then be taught to compare their results very critically with what the teacher has written. Older children can also be taught to constructively criticise each other's efforts (peer assessment). Essentially the approach adopted by teachers to this key skill should be characterised by a rigor and an attention to detail.

As children become generally fluent, a sentence such as below, which uses all the letters in the alphabet, can also be used to look for issues.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Fundamental issues which must be taught to children in Year R/Year 1;

- ☺ An orthodox pencil grip.
- ☺ A pencil must always be sharp before you use it.
- ☺ Tiny pencils, less than 8 cm. long, should be discarded.
- ☺ Sit on a chair properly (do not slouch), sitting up, with a straight back, the chair pushed in a comfortable amount and both legs under the table. The children's thighs should be parallel and their feet flat on the floor.

- ☺ All four chair legs must be on the ground – children should not be rocking.
- ☺ The fact that the non-writing hand (left for right handers; right for left handers) should be on the table in front of the child in a supportive position.
- ☺ When writing, books should be fully open, not folded over. Children should be sitting in such a way that their books are not overlapping when they are writing. A clutter free table is required with adequate space for a number of children to write.
- ☺ Right-handed pupils can tilt their book to the left. Left-handed pupils can tilt their book to the right. In each case the amount of tilt should be no more than 45 degrees. Quite simply, children should not be allowed to write at a 90-degree angle.
- ☺ To assist a child who has a problem with the amount of 'tilt,' a right-angled corner of tape can be stuck onto the desk where they sit so that they can see where to put the corner of their book.
- ☺ Follow the Essential Letters and Sounds mnemonics and rhymes for teaching letter formation (see appendix 1).

Above all, avoid the creation of the following four ingrained habits;

- ☹ Faulty pencil grip
- ☹ Poor posture
- ☹ Poor book/paper positioning
- ☹ Incorrect letter formation (e.g. starting letters in the wrong place).

A few technical terms to teach children

- ☺ The word **cursive** means joined.
- ☺ The letters b, d, h, k, and l are called **ascenders**. The top of the letter should reach very close to the top of the line (**it shouldn't touch!**). The letter **t** is **not an ascender**. The letter **t** is an unusual letter – a three quarters letter, rather than an ascender.
- ☺ The letters g, j, p, q and y are called **descenders**.

A handwriting session

Practising handwriting patterns is essential to gain fluency, flow and to develop muscle memory. This is a good place to start.

Young children may start with using fingers and/or a stylus to draw patterns in the letter in the air, in sand or on iPad apps such as 'Brushes' or 'Paper.'

Once children have learnt how to form letters, they should be practising in books rather than on white boards or photocopied sheets (to ensure correct posture, placement of paper their non-writing hand).

Children who need to trace, can go over a yellow felt pen letter, with a green dot to identify their starting point. The TA could put these in books whilst teacher is modeling or just add some while children are practising if needed.

Teachers must use the Essential Letters and Sounds mnemonics and rhymes when demonstrating letter formation. They must articulate and model letter formation explicitly where the pencil starts goes and finishes. Model what happens if you start in the wrong place and common errors.

After modeling, the teacher and TA need to walk round the class to monitor each child. Carry a pen to feedback, correct, further teach and model in books. Feedback about the handwriting needs to be whilst they are writing and should be very pedantic, picky and even '*overly fussy*'. Assist the children to pay attention to detail. They should be aiming to produce an exact copy of what you have done on the board. Picking out their inaccuracies, whilst of course remaining positive and encouraging, will arrest the development of bad habits. Be very meticulous with children and teach them to be meticulous too.

As you get to know the children, you get to know which children need monitoring more closely than others. Some children with mobility issues or special educational needs will need extra, regular adult support in a small group with a TA.

Look out for children whose pencil lines are too dark or light compared to the norm – they are applying too much or not enough pressure.

Praise good examples of work as this further motivates children.

Children can be assisted to improve by developing their ability to discriminate between handwriting that is of a high quality and that which is of an inferior quality. One way to assist them to do this is to get them to look at each other's handwriting or to look at a sentence written in two different ways and appraise the sentences critically. Teachers should help children to see common errors. They should also exaggerate the errors children produce to make these clear to the children. Allowing children to see errors beside a correct version help develop the skill of discrimination.

Children need to be taught to look carefully if they are to become good at handwriting. They should look at a letter shape for a long time, analyzing it so they are able to get it exactly right. **Children tend to exaggerate the non-essentials.** As teachers we should be very pernickety about what children produce.

Children with very mature handwriting should be challenged: all their down strokes should be equidistant, for example. Can children do this with a word like **minimum**?

Children's handwriting when practicing handwriting should be neater than when doing other writing. Once letter formation has been taught incorrect letter formation is compositional work should be picked up and correct formation practiced under the piece of work so bad habits do not become established.

Some strongly held convictions

In general, children who feel good about their handwriting are far more motivated to write and are proficient at spelling. Those who have a negative self-image of themselves as a writer (and a speller) are resistant to writing and usually have poor handwriting that they are unhappy with.

Underachievement in writing and all other curriculum areas which involve some form of writing is often the result of poor ability in handwriting, often combined with poor layout and

organisational skills (there appears to be a far higher prevalence of this amongst boys than girls).

Left handers

- ☺ There is no doubt that it is harder to learn to write left-handed, as during the act of writing you are covering what you are writing. Our writing system favours the right-handed child.
- ☺ Left-handed children should always sit on the left-hand side of the desk. This makes writing infinitely easier for them. Children must be taught this and continually reminded of it.
- ☺ Left handers tend to write lower down, so they should tilt their page to the right. To stop them tilting too far, masking tape can be used (as described above) to provide an outline for their book position. Left handers will often kneel at the desk: this is because they need to write lower down. Often a left hander may be too low down. To correct this cushion, a lower table or a higher chair can be used.
- ☺ Left handers tend to need a slightly longer stem to write with.

Key points about letters

- ☺ Letters heights are thought of in thirds. Short letters are one third, ascenders another third and descenders another third - the only letter that takes all 3 thirds is f. t is the only $\frac{3}{4}$ height letter.
- ☺ All capitals take the top two thirds.
- ☺ The cross on t and f should be at the height of a short letter.
- ☺ s is a short letter – children often have this as a tall letter, particularly at the beginning of words.
- ☺ The round bits of all letters should be the same width; b and p and a and g etc. Often these are uneven sizes.
- ☺ When using basic lines tall letters should not touch the top.

Letter families

- ☺ There are 5 main families to practise in order, as detailed below;

Family 1	l i t j u y
Family 2	m n r b p h k
Family 3	c a d o q g f s
Family 4	e
Family 5	v w x z

- ☺ c, a, d, o, q, g, f and s all start with a c. The c does not start at the highest point nor finish on the line – this needs to be explicitly taught. If children have an 'a' with a gap at the top it is because they are starting at the highest point. When going 'back up' the line should not curve over to get to starting point.
- ☺ m, n, r, b, p, h and k (with a loop from Year 3 up) down up and over letters - all start like an r. When going back up you don't go right to the top. The n and h over bits are

exactly the same. Children must be taught about placing letter p – often this often sits on the line as a capital even in year 6.

- ☺ e – this is the only letter without proper joins and changes shape depending on the letters it joins with.
- ☺ v w x z - w is usually straight not curved. This should be linked with letter patterns (zigzags/continuous v).
- ☺ The cross stroke of the t and f should be the same height as the other letters.

Teaching letter formation in letter families;

- ☺ start by just doing one letter
- ☺ use the Essential Letters and Sounds mnemonics and rhymes to aid letter formation
- ☺ each session revises and builds on the previous one
- ☺ eg lesson 1 looking at c, lesson 2 c revised then look at o and practise then c and o
- ☺ when looking at children's letters you are looking for consistency and correct size as well as formation.

Joining letters;

- ☺ letters that end at the top join horizontally: f o r t v w
- ☺ letters that end at the bottom join diagonally: a b c d e h i k l m n p q s u
- ☺ The only letter which we do not join is the letter x. A z will have a join coming from it but not a join leading to it.
- ☺ the letters g, f, y and j will be looped and the loop should cross at on the line.
- ☺ capital letters do not join.

A child is ready to **join letters** when:

- ☺ they have learnt to form letters correctly
- ☺ letters are of a consistent and suitable size
- ☺ letters are positioned appropriately on the writing line as well as in relation to one another.

Children generally begin to join letters from the age **of 6 to 7** years old, (Year 2)

Teach children that the join takes you from the end of one letter to the start of the next. We do not change how we write the letter. If we rub out the join we should still have the letter - particularly easy to show with a to n/m where children often use the join stroke as the first part of the n or m.

When joining, just start by learning how to join 2 letters. Practise others with the same join.

There are 4 main joins;

Diagonal join (short and long)

E.g. from a to n join (short) a to t join (long).

Up and over join

E.g. from a to c join.

Horizontal join

E.g. from o to w join.

Looped join

E.g. from y to o join.

There should be gentle progression but with rigor and pace – change and add one thing at a time (e.g. an, then am, then ma or na, then ah or ha).

Then start making small words (e.g. and, hand, hang, ham etc).

Then phrases/sentences (e.g. a hand and ham). Link these to learning in phonics/spelling and English lessons.

Books and lines

Progression through lines;

- ☺ no line, one basic line, 'pink blue' lines KS1, 'pink blue' lines KS2, one line no lines.
- ☺ For children finding letter size challenging, 'pink blue' lined books can be used instead of single lined English books

Pen licences

- ☺ Pen licences will be given out from Years 2 onwards
- ☺ pen licences will be given out by the class teacher, at the discretion of the class teacher when he or she feels that a pupil has consistently shown the ability to write in a joined, fluent style in all written work
- ☺ pen licences should be signed on day of issue by the class teacher and the pupil, with a promise that handwriting will stay neat and joined
- ☺ pen licences can be taken away from pupils whose handwriting becomes inconsistent.

Teaching methodology & time each week

Research shows that children make most progress when they have short, focused handwriting sessions.

In the Foundation Stage, staff should focus closely upon the formation of correct habits. They should closely observe what children do with a writing implement and teach children the correct conventions to follow.

- ☺ In Year R and KS1 - short handwriting sessions are needed every day, as part of the phonics session between 9am and 9:30am (through Essential Letters and Sounds) and then applied during daily English lessons
- ☺ in Year 2, there should be at least one session per week where the focus should be on teaching children to join
- ☺ in KS2 there should be at least one discrete handwriting session per week (possibly more in the first term)
- ☺ if pupils in KS2 are spotted (following early handwriting assessment) to be not joining, then they should start intervention with a TA where they follow the KS1 handwriting

content, as exemplified in the Mere School Handwriting Scheme. **This intervention should take place for 20 mins; at least 3 times per week, daily if possible (use start of day moments, assemblies and afternoon sessions to do this).**

At the start of an academic year in particular, or the start of a new term or half-term, it is quite acceptable for teaching staff to spend more time than this on assessing and practising handwriting in order to obtain 'quick, positive gains' for the children which result in them being motivated to write due to the improvements they have made.

Mere School expectations;

- ☺ we use the Essential Letters and Sounds mnemonics and rhymes to aid the teaching of letter formation. We use the Twinkl continuous cursive handwriting scheme from Year 3 to Year 6.
- ☺ by the end of Reception, children should be forming letters correctly
- ☺ by the end of Year 1, letters should be the correct relative size and placed on lines correctly
- ☺ by end of Year 2, most children should be joining
- ☺ teaching and practice in Year 3 should reinforce and develop fluency & move into the continuous cursive style. For most children, handwriting and letter formation should be automatic by the end of Year 3
- ☺ in composition work, handwriting may not be as neat but incorrect letter formation in any piece of work must be addressed – ie a line of letters done correctly
- ☺ once letter formation has been taught, incorrect letter formation must be addressed so that bad habits do not form
- ☺ handwriting is muscle memory so it is very hard to break bad habits.

Handwriting is a movement and memory activity, rather than an explicitly visual activity. This can be proved to children by asking them to write their name with their eyes closed – they can do this, although perhaps not quite as neatly as with their eyes open.

Regular, guided, focused, discrete teaching of handwriting will improve pupil's handwriting.

Cursive and then continuous cursive handwriting should be used by the class teacher in Year 2 and KS2 at all times when modelling writing and positive, diligent attitudes towards the teaching and learning of handwriting from pupils, teachers and TAs are vital to achieving success.

Twinkl font – pre-cursive and cursive - (the font used to write this policy) should be used when typing words that will be viewed by pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The standards and quality of the teaching and learning of handwriting will be monitored in the following ways:

- scrutiny of books
- work sampling
- lesson observation
- pupil interviews.

All teachers will be involved in monitoring and evaluating children's progress. The English Lead and the Head Teacher will be responsible for other aspects of monitoring and evaluation.

Progress will be tracked closely by the Subject Lead to ensure that the policy is having a positive impact.

Appendix 1 – Essential Letters and Sounds mnemonics and rhymes to aid the teaching of letter formation

Mnemonics and Rhymes to Support ELS

RECEPTION/PRIMARY 1 AUTUMN 1: PHASE 2

s – snake – swerve around the snake
a – ant – around the head, down the body
t – teacher – down her body and cross her shoulders
p – parrot – down his body, around his face
i – inventor – down her body, spot her idea
n – nest – down the bird and over her nest
m – meerkat – meerkat, mound, mound
d – duck – over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet
g – goat – start at his ear, around the face and down the beard
o – ostrich – around the ostrich's body
c – camel – curl around the camel's back
k – kid – down the body, up the arm, down the leg
ck – a camel and a kid – the camel stood by the kid
e – elephant – around the head and down the trunk
u – umbrella – under the umbrella and down to the tip
r – runner – down her body, up over the arm
ss – two snakes – sunbathing snakes
h – heron – from his head to his feet, up and over his back
b – bike – down the person and around the wheel
f – fox – over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw
ff – two foxes – two foxes facing forwards
l – ladder – down the long ladder
ll – two ladders – ladders in a line
Plus: words with /s/ at the end (sits, fits, cats, bats)

RECEPTION/PRIMARY 1 AUTUMN 2: PHASE 3

j – jellyfish – swoop down the tentacles and dot the body

v – viper – down the tongue, up the tongue

w – wallaby – hop to the top, land and hop, land and hop

x – x x x – criss-cross the kiss

y – yacht – under the hull and down to the anchor

z – zigzag – zig and zag

zz – two zigzags – a zigzag duet

qu – quill – around the feather and down the pen

ch chew the chunky chips

sh the shabby ship shook

th they were thirsty

ng ping pong

nk oooh! a pink sink

ai wait for the train

ee bee on my knee

igh light up the night

oa float on the moat

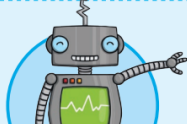
Plus: words with /z/ at the end (dogs, beds, bees, zigzags)

Words ending in s and –es

Appendix 2 – Twinkl handwriting scheme to aid joining from Year 3 up

How to Write Continuous Cursive Letters

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



Equal Opportunities

We, at Mere, take into account children's differences in terms of race, ability, gender, class and disability. Texts and resources are selected from a range of countries, cultures and traditions. Opportunities are provided for higher achieving children to take part in additional activities.

Monitoring/Updating of Policy

This policy was reviewed and updated Autumn 2026 by the English Subject Lead and English Governor.

This policy, and its impact on the teaching and learning of English across the school, will be monitored through the year and reviewed/updated Autumn 2027. Any action points will be reflected in the new action plan and policy.

Editing & Presenting our Writing at Mere School

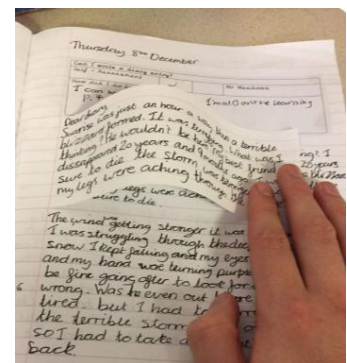
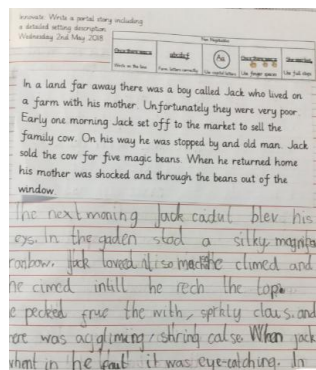
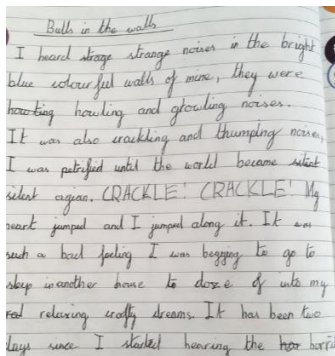
In KS1:

- Teachers consistently have high expectations of presentation
- Children are encouraged to draw one straight line through a mistake. We do not allow rubbing out
- Children must start their writing at the margin – the margin can be highlighted by T/TA if needed
- Incorrect letter formation is identified early & regularly and corrected by T/TA
- Children to write on every other line, to allow ample space for editing and teacher comments
- Children are given regular opportunities to look back at their work and respond to teacher's feedback or next steps (either verbally or written)
- Children are encouraged to use their talk partners for peer assessment
- Children are regularly encouraged to look back in their books and recognise and review the progress that they have made in writing
- Finished pieces of work are displayed when possible – at children's eye level where possible
- Handwritten text (that follows the school handwriting policy) or Twinkl font is used for display lettering
- Pens are awarded from Year 2 onwards – for legible, fluent and joined handwriting that is of consistent size
- Writing is done for a purpose, when possible
- Green polishing pens are used – starting in Year 1 - to improve writing
- Lines are missed between paragraphs in Year 2

In KS2:

- Teachers continue to have consistently high expectations of presentation
- Green polishing pens are used regularly to edit and improve work
- Children may use a pen of their choice (agreed by the teacher) as long as it has blue ink and is not a fountain pen

- Children continue to draw one straight line through a mistake. Rubbing out or scribbling out is not allowed
- Children to continue to write on every other line, to allow ample space for editing and teacher comments
- Children continue to be encouraged to use their talk partners for peer assessment
- For a larger section of unwanted text, children are encouraged to use brackets instead; new drafts can be written again below the omitted part or on an editing tab
- Children can use every other line in their English book to aid editing & marking (at teacher's discretion)
- Lines are missed between paragraphs
- 'Tram lines' can be used to help children with their handwriting. Teachers can draw these into a child's English book if appropriate/needed
- The drafting and editing process, and a finished piece of work is shown in a child's English book for every unit of work
- Writing is done for a purpose, when possible



Library Policy

Aims

To provide a wide range of materials that can both inform and enrich the learning experience for those at Mere School. The library will provide an area for study, leisure and pleasure, in order to foster a love for books. The library aims to provide materials for pupils and staff to learn independently and with enjoyment.

"The school library's role is to help create confident, enthusiastic readers, and to engage children in lifelong learning"

The Primary School Library Guidelines. The Library Association. 2000

"Research shows that when children read for pleasure they get better grades at school, show more empathy towards others and report higher levels of wellbeing."

The National Literacy Trust, 2025

Objectives:

- to maintain and develop a wide selection of material that is easily accessed and organised
- to provide a simple borrowing procedure
- to develop information-handling skills through knowledge of how the library works
- to provide an environment that is welcoming and accessible to all
- to engender a love of books through provision of up to date and exciting material
- to support the teaching and learning process, and extend the school's curriculum
- to help pupils develop lively and enquiring minds capable of independent thought
- to involve children in the maintenance and organisation of the Library
- to help pupils develop the ability to use the library so that these skills can be used in adult life.

Resources

The library contains the following resources:

- library server using the *Junior Librarian* Library system
- barcode scanner
- non-fiction books and small fiction and poetry areas
- reference books
- 'big' books for class sharing
- a networked and Internet-linked computer.

Catalogue System

The library contains fiction and non-fiction books. They have been coded according to the Wiltshire Book Tracker Scheme using a colour code and simplified Dewey system. Books are grouped by colour and sorted by number. Classification Index booklets are available for users to

find books about a particular subject. Searches may also be carried out on the *Junior Librarian* system.

Book Borrowing

The library uses the *Junior Librarian* computer system. Each book has a resource bar code inside the front cover. Staff and pupils each have their own borrower barcode shown on individual library cards. Resources and borrower barcodes are scanned into the system using a barcode reader. Instructions on how to borrow and return books are available in the library. Books are not stamped.

Pupils will be able to borrow 1 book. An adult must be present to assist in the borrowing and returning of books. Pupils will be encouraged to return books to their proper places and to show consideration for the library and other users. Books may be changed fortnightly.

School Organisation

In order to achieve the smooth running of the library, the Librarian as well as a small group of children, may be involved in organising, maintaining and promoting the library resources. This will involve the issue and return of stock, sorting and tidying, making repairs, cataloguing new stock and deleting old or damaged stock.

Promotion of the library

The aim of library time is to:

- help children understand the Dewey system and encourage them to find books for reference and private study
- encourage children to care for books and value them as an important and enjoyable way of spending leisure time
- foster a love of books by providing attractive materials for all age ranges
- provide a quiet place where children can feel at ease to enjoy reading, studying and relaxing
- encourage reference and study skills.

The library as a resource for teachers

The library provides a range of materials for staff to use to enhance the learning experience of children. Books are available relating to the needs of specific subject areas and topics.

Monitoring

- What use do pupils and staff make of the library and its resources?
 - Monitored regularly to assess use.
- Are the resources relevant and of good quality?
 - Stock should be reviewed annually to discard damaged or out of date resources.
- Are there sufficient resources in the library to meet the needs of the various curriculum subjects and cater for pupil's personal and leisure interests?
 - Talk to staff and pupils annually to assess stock deficiencies.
- How does the library ethos contribute to educational standards within the school?
 - Annual monitoring by English Lead

Responsibilities of the library co-ordinator:

- to ensure that the library is well organised.
- to monitor quality of stock and to order new resources as necessary (including using the annual book fair commission)
- to maintain the *Junior Librarian* system and back-up records regularly.
- to organise and oversee parent and pupil helpers.
- to monitor and evaluate the role of the library within Mere School.

Updated: September 2026 (DS/CG)

Reviewed: September 2027