



English and Literacy Policy

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Introduction

At Small Haven School, we recognise, appreciate and understand that each and every child has a different approach to learning. Our students need theoretical knowledge of English and literacy to be able to make sense of ideas and concepts at word, sentence and text level. In addition to this, our students must be able to develop their social and emotional skills within the context of their learning, including the development of awareness, empathy and responsibility. Finally, our students require regular and varied opportunities to practically apply their English and literacy skills to real-life situations to ensure that they are equipped for further education, employment and life beyond Small Haven School. All of our teaching is underpinned by a careful understanding of each and every child's individual learning needs which enables teaching to be appropriately differentiated to provide our students with the personalised approach they need to achieve their goals.

Policy aims

The key aims of this policy are to:

- Explain the three key principles that underpin our English curriculum at Small Haven School: Head, Heart and Hands in addition to outlining how our English teaching is aligned to the National Curriculum.
- Provide teachers and support staff with a consistent model from which to plan and deliver relevant, engaging and differentiated skills-based lessons to build and develop the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of all students.
- Clarify assessment processes to ensure the delivery of a personalised and relevant English programme for every student at Small Haven School based on their needs.

Organising the English curriculum: The Head, Heart and Hands approach to teaching and learning

This approach to education is explored in Peter Hyman's essay, 'Success in the 21st century: The education of head, heart and hand' (Hyman, P. 2017). Hyman is the head-teacher and founder of School 21, a school in Stratford, East London, which sought to bring balance into the key principles of Head, Heart and Hand to ensure that all three are given adequate time, coverage and opportunity within teaching and learning. As an independent SEN school, which places valuable emphasis not only upon the acquisition and continued to development of academic skills but also on the building of social and emotional awareness and being able to cope and thrive in real-life situations, Small Haven School has designed an English programme of learning using the Head, Heart and Hands principles to ensure that all students have a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to succeed.

The teaching of reading, writing and spoken language is organised into genre 'blocks' or modules for the Lower and Middle School. For each genre block, there is a Head Heart Hands overview sheet with planning suggestions for teachers. In the Upper School and Sixth Form, where the curriculum is designed to build upon prior learning and refine and develop skills for their chosen qualification pathway, there are also Head Heart Hands overview sheets with suggestions of how to consistently incorporate these elements into the teaching of English. It is vital that students are not just taught how to pass exams, but to transfer the skills they have learned to continue to develop their academic knowledge, social and emotional understanding and practical application in real life situations.

HEAD – academic skills and success. Across the phases of the school, students receive differentiated teaching and support in the key English curriculum areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Teaching is supported, depending on student need, by a range of carefully differentiated approaches including:

- Language through Colour
- Communication in Print
- External visits from Speech and Language/STLS/Dyslexia Support
- 1:1 Reading



HEART – social and emotional learning.

Supporting the emotional, social and mental health and development of our students is integral to our approach at Small Haven. Teaching is supported, depending on student need, by whole school initiatives:

- 1:1 Thrive sessions that are driven by personalised targets pertaining to the student's social and emotional development
- 1:1 mentoring for students to discuss questions, thoughts, worries and problems



HANDS – applying learning in practical situations.

Giving our students the opportunities to physically apply what they have learned to real-life, practical situations is another key tenet of what we do at Small Haven School. Students are able to apply their English and literacy skills to a range of scenarios including: planning and hosting assemblies on a range of topics; producing materials to promote key messages around national awareness days such as Safer Internet Day and Comic Relief; developing public speaking skills, and readying themselves for the world of work. Educational trips also provide a wide variety of opportunities to utilise and build upon their English and literacy skills through reading, writing, speaking and listening.



[The English Curriculum at Small Haven School](#)

Small Haven School's English curriculum incorporates key elements of the National Curriculum which are taught through genre-focused modules each term (please see Appendices for the Whole School Plan). In the Lower and Middle Schools, teachers can choose the order in which they deliver the genre blocks. In the Upper School and Sixth Form students pursue a pathway determined by their chosen English qualification; this would be either Functional Skills or GCSE English Language (Edexcel). These pathway decisions are made via consultation with the student, their parents, teachers and the Principal Head.

The school is organised into four distinct phases: Lower School, Middle School, Upper School and Sixth Form. Within each of these phases are mixed age and ability classes. The English curriculum incorporates the following statutory requirements depending on the student's needs and any existing gaps in their learning, and students follow the English curriculum pathway appropriate for their ability and needs. Therefore, the Key Stage that a student is in will not necessarily equate to the level that they are studying at.

Aims (taken from the National Curriculum for English, 2013)

- 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.

Timetabling Requirements for English and literacy lessons and sessions

In line with the personalisation of the English curriculum and its delivery, the timetabling requirements will vary across the phases of the school depending on the needs of each class cohort. Across the school, the timetabling expectations for English and associated lessons is as follows:

- At least 15 minutes per day focused on spellings including initial and end of week assessments with focused, personalised support around word definitions, spellings rules and phonics.
- Daily Phonics input in EYFS/KS1 – additional tailored support and intervention is devised when needed.
- At least 4 English lessons of 40 minutes - 1 hour per week.
- Dedicated reading sessions incorporating independent reading, 1:1 guided reading and class reading including 'Drop Everything and Read'.

Supporting and developing reading across the school

Small Haven School's reading curriculum is centred upon a personalised approach that seeks to support children in developing a love of reading and allowing them to experience a range of different texts in different formats. The teaching of meaningful reading is achieved through a variety of methods:

- through a chosen class reader and specific guided reading sessions, whereby the class reads as a whole or is split into groups with differentiated tasks and outcomes.
- using regular 1:1 reading sessions whereby a student is supported by a TA to work on specific targets pertaining to the building blocks of reading (see Building Blocks of Reading: A Guide to 1:1 Reading for further information).
- text maps used in class and key stage planning to ensure coverage of fiction, non-fiction and poetry consistently throughout the year in line with the key elements of reading: Motivation and interest to read; Print awareness; Word reading (including phonics and phonological awareness); Literal understanding; Inferential understanding; Fluency and phrasing; and Response to texts (see class text maps for further information).
- using Pearson's Bug Club Phonics Programme to develop children's phonological awareness and reading skills.
- using personalised interventions dependent on student need including Language through Colour, various phonics resources and multi-sensory approaches such as the IDL programme.
- celebrating national literary events such as World Poetry Day, World Book Day and Storytelling Week as a whole school community and within classes.

Small Haven uses the Bug Club phonics programme in the teaching of phonics. This scheme is then supplemented with a range of resources including Letters and Sounds activities and resources and games from the Phonics Play website in addition to phonetically decodable reading books matched to the student.

Supporting and developing writing across the school

Writing can be a significant challenge for students with additional learning needs, but it also provides chances to explore imagination, experiment with ideas and build resilience. The teaching of writing at Small Haven does not follow one singular approach, but incorporates elements from different methods including 'The Write Stuff' and 'Talk for Writing.' Students are encouraged to plan, draft, reflect and revise their written work in a supportive environment in which both their peers and teaching staff encourage constructive feedback and the building of confidence in expression ideas, thoughts and opinions. Multi-sensory approaches such as oral rehearsal, the use of visual cues and audio-visual stimuli are also used to engage different learning styles.

In terms of spelling, students in the Middle and Upper Schools and Sixth Form are assessed on a weekly basis. At the beginning of the week, they undergo an initial assessment or 'spelling quiz'; they then receive daily input and support including multisensory approaches depending on their learning style. At the end of the week, they are re-tested and progress is recorded. The word lists are determined by the student's most recent summative spelling assessment, which measured using the New Group Spelling Test.

In Lower School, spellings input focuses specifically on the learning and mastery of high frequency words through regular activities and teaching personalised for each student. Assessments may be less formal and take the form of games or quizzes to judge progress and attainment but should occur every two weeks.

Supporting and developing speaking and listening

Being able to articulate and express thoughts, ideas, wants and needs is integral to our students' development. Some students will encounter significant difficulty with this element of the English curriculum and – as with the other components of Reading and Writing – and so flexibility of assessment in addition to compassion, encouragement and support must underpin the teaching of these skills. Students will be provided with regular opportunities and situations to verbally express themselves in conversations with peers, staff and visitors; presentations to peers and the wider school community; and discussions across lessons around a wide variety of topics.

The teaching of speaking and listening is informed by the Spoken Language statutory requirements from the National Curriculum:

Students should be taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)

- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

Assessment and Marking

English work at Small Haven School is continually and formatively assessed as teachers and teaching assistants provide meaningful and relevant verbal feedback throughout the academic year. Due to their anxieties, some students may really struggle to access and complete assessments.

The outline of summative assessment below is ideally what should be completed, but **adjustments can and will be made** in the event of a student needing an alternative programme to monitor and track their progress in English. Any changes or alternative accommodations should be discussed with the English Subject Lead who will offer support and guidance.

Area of assessment	Method of assessment	Frequency and recording
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Group Reading Test (NGRT) • Toe-by-Toe • IDL-dyslexia • York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) • Tasks associated with reading as part of 1:1 reading sessions <p><i>Assessment method is chosen depending on student ability to access the test; lower ability students would not be able to access the NGRT.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGRT/Toe by Toe/IDL/SSRT/YARC • Terms 1, 3 and 5 • Report/results printed and filed in class/student assessment folder. • Reading ages recorded on school system. • Tasks from 1:1 reading sessions – kept with 1:1 reading record sheet in class/student folder with targets regularly reviewed

	<p>Phonics screenings as part of diagnostic package for new students/students who present with reading difficulties.</p>	
<p>Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Group Spelling Test (NGST) • Toe-by-Toe • IDL-dyslexia • Spelling tests • Extended writing piece relating to genre block/exam focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGST/Toe by Toe/IDL – Terms 1, 3 and 5. <p>Report/results printed and filed in class/student assessment folder.</p> <p>Spelling ages recorded on SIMS mark sheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling tests – weekly <p>Results and accompanying evidence of input e.g. worksheets, photos filed in class/student spelling folder.</p> <p>Results entered into class mark sheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts of extended writing piece in book to be marked using school marking policy. ‘Final’ neat piece – one unmarked copy with date and genre recorded in Best Book; one copy marked using Kent Assessment Statements/Exam

		Specification criteria and filed in class/student assessment folder.
Speaking and Listening	One assessment per term chosen and set by the class teacher in line with what has been studied. This could be a class assembly, debate within a Question Time lesson or individual presentation.	Once per term if possible – it may be that more informal and formative assessment takes place if a child’s anxiety of presenting and public speaking is something they need support with.

English work is marked in accordance with the schools’ Assessment and Marking policy. The Subject Lead for English will create and monitor moderation sessions to support staff and identify any areas requiring further training.

[The Role of the Subject Lead](#)

The Subject Lead for English is always available to offer support and guidance in the implementation of this policy and all associated planning, assessment and activities. With regards to this policy, the English lead will do the following to support its implementation:

- With the support and input of MMT, devise a schedule for observations to ensure that the requirements outlined in this policy are being met and upheld. These observations are not judgemental exercises but to gain insight into what is working well and areas where staff and students may need further support i.e. training, resources.
- With the support and input of MMT, devise a schedule for book looks to audit assessment and record-keeping and offer help with any areas that are proving difficult. This is also integral to ensuring consistent coverage of curriculum content across the school and that a clear but flexible assessment system is in place to guarantee that **all** students’ progress is recorded, acknowledged and celebrated.
- Schedule ‘drop-ins’ during the term where staff (including teaching assistants) can meet to discuss ideas/resources/critiques etc. with the English Subject Lead so that all staff can be supported in the delivery of the school’s English curriculum.
- Discuss with MMT how to create and sustain regular opportunities for the moderation of reading, writing, speaking and listening across the school.

[Appendices](#)

This policy should be read and considered in conjunction with these documents:

- The English Curriculum: Phase by Phase
- EYFS Development Matters
- English at Small Haven School Whole School Plan
- Building Blocks of Reading: A Guide to 1:1 Reading
- National Curriculum for English (2013)
- Pearson Edexcel Exam Specifications for Functional Skills Entry Level 1 – 3 and Levels 1 and 2
- Pearson Edexcel Exam Specification for GCSE English Language (9-1)
- Head Heart Hands Topic Overview sheets