

2026

Literacy Policy



**Woolgrove School,
Special Needs Academy**

Live, Laugh and Learn
Together

Owner: Headteacher
Authored by: Subject Leads
Adopted by: Curriculum Committee
Review cycle: Triennially
Next review date: 01/09/2029
WP0071
Version: 1.1

CONTENTS

1. LITERACY INTENT
2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS
3. IMPLEMENTATION & SUBJECT ORGANISATION
4. SPEAKING, LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION
5. READING and PHONICS
6. WRITING
7. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES
8. THE USE OF COMPUTING
9. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING
10. INCLUSION
11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
12. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER
12. IMPACT
14. CONCLUSION

1. LITERACY INTENT

In Literacy we aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking, Listening, Communication, Reading and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to be taught literacy skills through dedicated lessons and through cross-curricular links. A broad and balanced approach to the teaching of literacy across the curriculum has been devised and planning provides opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills. These skills are of paramount importance to the pupils at Woolgrove school and all staff play an important role in nurturing the development of these basic skills.

The intent of the Literacy policy is to ensure that:

- All pupils experience broad, balanced and relevant activities in Literacy, which are appropriate to their developmental stage.
- All pupils experience enjoyable and engaging lessons which reflect their needs, interests and abilities.
- All pupils experience a rich and stimulating language environment
- All children regardless of their ability and pathway are able to make progress proportionate to their potential.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of Literacy are laid out in the National Curriculum in England Document (2014) and Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Document (2014). Woolgrove's Literacy curriculum is based on the Birth to Five, Development Matters Ages and Stages, and Early Years Outcomes and KS1 National Curriculum with occasions where the most able will access elements of the KS2 national curriculum. The Literacy curriculum is personalised for every child with individual targets and next steps being identified for all pupils.

The Governing Body

Governors are kept informed about the teaching and learning of Literacy at Woolgrove School through regular updates.

3. IMPLEMENTATION & SUBJECT ORGANISATION

There are five different pathways the children can follow according to their age, ability, learning style and individual needs. Each pathway follows a modified and personalised curriculum.

In the **Early Years Foundation Stage** children should be given opportunities to:

- Explore methods of communication including sign language, speech, communication books/boards or other forms of Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) and apply these through every part of the personalised curriculum they are following.

- Explore a range of different genres, with teaching and learning being centred around books and experiences.
- Learn to read and write in a variety of forms such as writing names, labels, lists and captions, and some pupils may progress to writing sentences.
- Become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

The focus of learning in the **EYFS/ Pre-Formal/Semi-Formal 1 classes** is that the curriculum is delivered through play. As the children are at the exploratory stage of learning, play is a fundamental way in which the children learn and develop key skills. Children will be provided with a literacy-rich environment that focuses on high-quality texts, introduced to children via the use of sensory stories, songs and rhymes. Classes with the most complex cohorts will follow the Core word programme, which focusses on specific single words in a variety of contexts to encourage meaningful communication to build a solid foundation for literacy. For other classes, a 'Big Book' or text is introduced each half term as repetition is key to the children's development. The focus of one book for the half term means that children have an immersive experience with a familiar text. Children's individual interests will also be followed to encourage engagement with literacy texts and to develop speaking and listening opportunities. For pupils developing early reading skills, they may need to be supported using meaningful photos, symbols and words. Alongside the play-based approach to learning, are a variety of sessions where pupils come together to learn key skills and knowledge, this includes phonics, communication and mark-making sessions.

Semi-Formal 2 classes build on a range of genres and forms of print. The focus is still provided by a text or experience, which changes on a 2 to 3 week cycle. Children will have opportunities to explore the text in depth through lessons such as helicopter stories, role play and other cross-curricular links, including Play and Learn (PAL) activities. Composition is taught with children beginning to articulate or indicate what they wish to convey using an Integrated Visual Coding system or other systems of communication such as AACs and word banks before developing more advanced skills, where children may begin to independently write for purpose.

The **Formal** curriculum is planned each half term or term and is based on the children's interests, which could be taken from a text, experience or author. Texts cover a range of genres including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The curriculum incorporates some active, sensory and cross curricular learning experiences. Opportunities for consolidation and repetition are built into activities to maximise learning opportunities and for children to embed skills and make progress. The curriculum is taught through whole class and small group teaching. For some activities the carousel style of teaching may still be used. The Formal Curriculum focuses on children being independent learners. Many of the strategies used for the Pre-Formal and Semi-Formal curriculum will continue to be used and adapted to meet the needs of our Formal learners with opportunities for the more able to learners to write with greater complexity and with a wider range of punctuation.

4. SPEAKING, LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION

Speaking, Listening and Communication permeates the whole curriculum and underpins the development of reading and writing. Interactive teaching approaches and a variety of communication strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise standards. Promoting effective communication is fundamental in our aim of developing a curriculum of total communication at Woolgrove. Providing our children with a total communication-enabling environment, allows them to communicate using a variety of methods including signing, symbols, AACs and objects. The ability to communicate, whether verbally or using an augmented system, is integral to experiences and participation and underpins the ability to access all other subjects including reading and writing. It is essential that children are able to communicate their needs to staff and peers to develop the social skills and enable their fundamental needs and wishes to be met.

(See Communication Policy for more detail)

Drama

Pupils are encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express their thoughts, feelings and social understanding both verbally and non-verbally. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate drama both as participants and observers so that they communicate their ideas through a range of means. A few children may need to be supported in understanding the symbolism used in drama.

5. READING AND PHONICS

Reading

We recognise the importance of reading, and we strive to provide a range of opportunities to ensure pupils have a positive view of reading and are able to make as much progress as possible in this area. For many of our pupils learning to read or understanding what they have read may be challenging and so Woolgrove has created a series of reading targets at different levels. This enables each pupil to work on a personalised reading journey by identifying and working on their next steps. Pupils gain and develop these skills by working through a range of activities. Some activities may not involve direct reading of books but may be developed through the use of iPads, computers, singing nursery rhymes or by talking about pictures or objects linked to a story. Teachers model and use a variety of texts including nursery rhymes, poems, fiction and non-fiction.

Reading Schemes

Woolgrove use Twinkl 'Rhino Readers' books. These books are part of the DfE validated Twinkl synthetic phonics scheme and are designed to match phonic reading levels. Each class has its own sets of Twinkl books. In addition, all other books are clearly labelled, according to the National Book Banding Reading Levels (see below). Children may use these books to support their comprehension if this differs from their phonics reading level or if pupil is a Gestalt Language Processor (GLP). This enables staff to select the most appropriate books for each pupil.

Band	Colour	National Reading Age Guide
0	Lilac (Silver Stars)	5-6 years old
1	Pink	
2	Red	
3	Yellow	
4	Blue	
5	Green	
6	Orange	6.5 – 7 yrs
7	Turquoise	7 – 7.5 yrs
8	Purple	7.5 – 8 yrs
9	Gold	8 – 8.5 yrs
10	White (Silver)	8.5 – 9 yrs
11	Lime (Emerald)	9 – 10 yrs
12	Ruby	10 – 11 yrs
13	Sapphire	11 – 12 yrs

Reading Assessment and Monitoring

Woolgrove has produced their own reading target assessment system which is tracked using the whole school assessment system (TrackAble) individual reading targets are identified for the pupil to work on and are recorded on the assessment system and within the reading record. Subject leaders are responsible for monitoring reading records kept by individual teachers, as well as analysing data across the school and delivering staff training.

Promoting the enjoyment of reading and the love of books.

At Woolgrove we strive to promote an enjoyment of reading and the love of books by providing regular opportunities for our children to listen to and enjoy stories, nursery rhymes, poems and non-fiction books. Pupils have access to a range of books within their class reading area, as well as access to fiction and non-fiction books in the school library.

Phonics

A firm foundation of phonics is built by following an incremental, structured approach to level 1 phonics, which has been designed based on research and visits to specialist settings. All children need to be secure in the strands of level 1 phonics before they begin level 2, see below.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
1a	Environment sounds	Instrument sounds	Voice Sounds	Body percussion	Based on assessments	
1b	Rhythm and Rhyme	Alliteration	Rhythm and Rhyme	Alliteration	Based on assessments	
1c	Blending and segmenting	Blending and segmenting	Blending and segmenting	Blending and segmenting	Based on assessments	
2	Phonics Reading and Spelling/writing					

We have adopted a whole school approach for the teaching of level 2 phonics and beyond, which is based on the DfE-approved Twinkl Synthetic Phonics Programme. Our assessment system carefully matches the phonics scheme which enables staff to pitch lessons at the appropriate levels. Children progress at their own pace and this also allows for a more personalised approach to the teaching of phonics, in line with each child's ability. Woolgrove use a range of active and multi-sensory activities including mnemonics visual letters, song, rhyme, sign and actions to ensure our pupils can make the best possible progress in this area. Phonics is delivered three times a week in a variety of formats depending on the pathway class.

In addition to phonics, Woolgrove has produced its own programme to support the development of high frequency word recognition, pink/yellow flash cards. These include the 'common exception words' that the children work through to help commit the words to memory.

For a small number of our pupils, we use the 'See and Learn' method of reading, alongside our usual reading practice. This is an intervention that has been specifically created for pupils with Down Syndrome or those with a relative strength in learning visually.

Links with Home

Children have a reading book to take home daily and some pupils will have 'pink/yellow words' or See and Learn activities. Parents are encouraged to comment on how their child reads at home.

Level 2: Phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) are introduced systematically. Pupils also learn to develop and apply, blending and segmenting skills for reading and writing.

- *Blending* – Bring these sounds together l/o/g/ to make a word (log)
- *Segmenting* – Separate the sounds in log (l/o/g)

Letter progression order

s a t p	i n m d	g o c k	c k e u r	h b f f l l s s
---------	---------	---------	-----------	-----------------

Level 3, 4 and 5: Children develop and broaden their knowledge of graphemes and phonemes and by the end of level 5 will have knowledge of the 44 phonemes with alternative graphemes also being taught.

Level 6: Children build fluency and accuracy in reading and spelling, explore spelling patterns and grammar and develop skills in the spelling of common exception words.

6. WRITING

It is important for pupils to develop as independent and enthusiastic writers, who can write in a meaningful way; a multi-sensory approach is used to achieve this. Pupils should regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others. Opportunities for writing

are presented across the curriculum and children are regularly involved in shared writing as well as being given the chance to write by themselves. Children benefit from meaningful experiences to write about as well as being immersed in a subject before being expected to write about it. Speaking and Listening is vital in preparing children for the experience of writing. Children are encouraged to think carefully about the structure of their sentences and a variety of strategies are in place, for example using the Integrated Visual Coding system.

Composition is taught once children are working at range 4 in communication to ensure they have the prerequisite skills to be able to communicate through symbolic or abstract methods e.g. IVC symbols or written format.

Shared Writing

Where appropriate Teachers will model the writing process with the children and encourage their involvement, this may be as a whole class or individually. Children also have opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers to reinforce this learning. This can involve sharing ideas, planning, drafting and editing work.

Mark Making & Handwriting

Children are encouraged to develop both their gross and fine motor skills to prepare them for the experience of writing, through activities such as sensory circuits, fizzy hands, clever fingers, tummy writing and other fine motor skill activities. Woolgrove use a multi-sensory approach to mark-making and letter formation. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to rehearse handwriting skills through a variety of activities such as drawing marks and letters in shaving foam, using chalks outside to using iPads.

When at the emergent stage of writing, children follow the Woolgrove progression in Mark Making Scheme and children are encouraged to mark make as a way of representing their ideas. Once children have progressed through these skills, they then follow a progressive programme, Hand Writing without Tears, where the formation of letters are practised through to cursive writing. These two approaches are amalgamated within our assessment to ensure all learners have the ability to make as much progress as possible. Handwriting is practised in a wide range of cross curricular subjects with multiple opportunities to record being made available to all pupils, including through PAL.

Independent Writing

Independent writing is a useful tool for formative assessment and for informing the teacher of the next steps for pupils. For this reason, when writing, children should be encouraged to be as independent as possible, calling upon the strategies taught previously. Pupils may require scaffolds which they can use independently such as word banks, sound mats or specific writing structures. The nature of this task can give children a real sense of achievement and boost their self-esteem.

7. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

There are clear links between the Literacy curriculum and with other subjects. Reading and writing elements of the curriculum are regularly covered in other subjects, such as;

Understanding the World, Physical Development and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD). Such subjects encompass a wide range of gross and fine motor activities that feed into mark-making/handwriting and writing. Speaking, listening, communication and vocabulary building also have strong links to all subject areas including PSED, music and supplementary maths. Links between lessons make learning more meaningful and enjoyable for the children whilst also providing greater opportunities for learning and the reinforcement of skills.

8. THE USE OF COMPUTING

Opportunities to use Computing in Literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate. Computing can be used effectively as a tool for both teaching and learning. All classes have access to a Smart TV to model writing, share images or stories or use a stimulus for teaching. Staff consistently use communicate in print to facilitate the comprehension of learners within tasks, questions, instructions or timetable structures. Many pupils benefit from digital AACs and from using a variety of recording/ typing programmes such as Communicate in Print, Clicker or Word processor depending on identified needs.

9. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

At Woolgrove we assess the children using TrackAble. This means that each child has a personalised curriculum based on their needs. Teachers set personalised targets using TrackAble and then teach, observe and assess children to ensure that they have mastered their target in a variety of contexts and as independently as possible. Assessment is continuous throughout the academic year. Evidence towards assessments can be gathered digitally or on paper, depending on what works best for the individual pupil. When writing is completed independently in Play and Learn, staff may use observations to capture the evidence. All staff assess pupils' learning and this feeds into subsequent planning.

Pupil progress meetings are used as opportunities to share subject successes and challenges of pupils. Advice is given and teaching strategies, support/further assessments or interventions are implemented as a result.

Summative assessments are submitted for end of EYFS against the Early Learning Goals and at the End of Key stage 2 for the pre key stage standards; additionally the phonics screening check is carried out with pupils in Year 1 or 2 who staff feel it would be appropriate for.

10. INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in Literacy according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils who are under-achieving and take steps to improve their progress with targeted interventions or provision, strategies or equipment, that they may need in order to access their learning more effectively. The most able will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

11.EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children are provided with equal access to a Literacy curriculum specifically tailored to their learning style. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

12.ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- Careful monitoring of individuals, groups (including pupil premium), classes and whole school assessment data, as well as the provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
- The quality of the learning environment and resources available, inside and outside of the classroom
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing training needs and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising relevant resources
- Keeping up to date with Literacy developments

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

13.IMPACT

- All children have experienced literacy activities and develop and increase their skills and knowledge according to their age and developmental stage.
- All children experience a range of books and stories
- All children develop communication skills to enable them to communicate with others according to their age and developmental stage
- All children are able to independently use their literacy skills to communicate with others.
- All children regardless of their ability and pathway are able to make progress proportionate to their potential.

14. CONCLUSION

This policy also needs in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- Communication Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Computing Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy