

# MARISH ACADEMY TRUST



## Literacy Policy

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## 1. Introduction:

### **Literacy Policy at Marish Academy Trust**

Literacy at Marish Academy Trust promotes the key life skills of effective communication, passion for learning, resilience, critical self-appraisal and analysis in a way that reflects our desire to increase the opportunities for all our pupils. We seek to embed Literacy throughout the curriculum in a way that promotes a positive attitude to reading and writing, rooted in the objectives set out in the 2014 National Curriculum.

Children will develop the skills of:

- reading
- writing
- speaking and listening (see Speaking and Listening Policy for further details)
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Literacy also seeks to aid and support our 4D curriculum approach, using Literacy to make intra-curricular links; strengthening connections between new content and what the pupil has already learnt. Children are taught in a way that skills are learnt, developed and revisited as children progress on their academic journey. This will lead to the children being able to make deeper links between concepts and apply their learning in wider contexts. Here at Marish Academy Trust we also seek to ensure that our Literacy reflects our curricular drivers: Cultural Capital, Raising Aspiration and Developing Resilience.

#### **1.1 Aims**

At Marish Academy Trust, we aim to support children in:

- developing an enthusiasm for reading
- becoming fluent readers
- encouraging their imagination
- extending their knowledge through using a wide range of texts
- accessing the full curriculum
- expressing opinions about texts and their contents
- developing comprehension skills
- understanding the intentions of writers
- using ICT to extend their reading experience
- appreciating that writing is a universal method of communication
- understanding that writing as a process over which the child has control
- writing for pleasure
- writing appropriately for specific real or imaginary audiences
- writing for a variety of purposes
- making their own judgements about the tone, style, format and vocabulary appropriate to the writing's purpose, audience and genre
- writing clearly, legibly and accurately with attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar

- recognising that drafting, incorporating significant revision into their writing and proof-reading are integral parts of the writing process
- achieving independent writing of a high quality

### **The Reading and Phonics Journey at Marish Trust**

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 we teach literacy through the **Power of Reading** programme. In fact, this initiative has now even begun to inform our practice in EYFS. We seek to blur the lines between reading and writing and focus on creating passionate, engaged and creative learning of Literacy. Our focus is on giving all children the opportunity to immerse themselves in 'real' books in an exciting and engaging way. This also enables us to develop our curriculum drivers further, with children immersed in a wide range of reading materials providing a great range of cultural capital.

This world renowned tool that has been implemented in over 2500 schools across England and internationally. Children engage with high quality picture books, novels, poetry and non-fiction through a wide range of teaching approaches. Opportunities are provided to be immersed into the text through music, art, drama, discussion and role-play. Other approaches include responding to illustrations, 'Book Talk', story mapping and book making.

The reading experience at Marish Trust is one that is immersive and seen to be an aspect of all parts of the curriculum. Each classroom will have a dedicated reading area, enabling children to self select appropriate reading materials. Libraries across the Trust are exciting and interactive areas, with a celebration of the written word a key component of pupil's daily lives. This is further supported by the celebration of reading achievements (in terms of completion of books, number of words read and improvements in reading skills) on a weekly basis. This all contributes to children developing a positive, passionate and long-lasting relationship with reading.

Children gain greater independence through our REN reading scheme. This programme monitors and challenges children, enabling them to review their understanding via online quizzes related to books they have read as well as ensure they are constantly reviewed and appropriately challenged.

There are daily opportunities for quiet, independent reading and access to a range of books within the classroom. Regular phonics lessons support the teaching of reading. Pupils have access to the school library. Teachers read to their class on a daily basis to enable pupils to experience a wider range of books that they may not yet be able to read themselves, have fluency modelled to them and expose themselves to a richer range of cultural capital.

#### **EYFS:**

In Nursery, our focus is around developing children's language and communication skills through the EYFS curriculum. To support speaking and listening activities, children completed activities divided into environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration and oral blending and segmenting. Print has a high profile within the Nursery environment. Early matching, categorising and sorting activities are used to develop visual discrimination skills needed for early reading. We aim to promote a love of books through daily story time using props to excite and motivate the children.

Across EYFS, an interest in books is developed by sharing songs, stories and rhymes, fostering opportunities to talk and re-enact stories or follow children's interests through information books.

Through Phonics, children are taught simple letter-sound correspondences. Children are taught to sound out and blend in order to read words for example, s-a-t to make sat. Children build on this knowledge and are taught consonant digraphs (sounds made up of two letters e.g. 'ch') and trigraphs (sounds made up of three sounds) e.g. 'igh'. Children move on to learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants for example, trap, strong and crept. Alongside this children are also taught to read and spell tricky words. These are words that cannot be sounded out.

In Reception, child-initiated learning time gives children the opportunity to explore books of their own interest in quiet and inviting book corners. Children have the opportunity to read with their teacher on a 1:1 basis and as part of a small guided group. During this time, children are supported to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills. It also provides an opportunity to promote positive reading and learning behaviours, as well as develop their vocabulary knowledge.

KS1:

In Year One, Phonics continues to be focused on supporting children to read. They build on their sounds taught in Reception by learning new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for known graphemes. For example, in Reception children are taught ow as in cow and in Year One they learn ow as in blow. Children are taught 'best bets'. This is when they learn to use the appropriate grapheme when spelling. For example, ai is 'best' used when writing rain as the sound comes in the middle. In Year One Phonics is used to support children's reading and spelling.

The key skills that underpin reading are a focus, whilst placing these in the broader context of the purpose of written texts. Children experience a wide range of genres and styles of texts, with exposure to classic texts afforded to them. In this stage, a heavy focus is placed on fluency with the reading strands of: Expression and Volume; Phrasing, Smoothness and Pace a focus.

The links between reading and writing are established, with texts being explored for their purpose and impact on the reader. Skills of retrieval and basic inference (through prediction) are also key aspects to the development of reading skills in this stage. The importance of context to help decode, predict and more generally, read for meaning, is also an important aspect of this journey.

KS2:

During the KS2 reading experience, the fundamental reading skills of KS1 are built upon but are now extended. The links between reading and writing are further enhanced, with a greater flow from the discussion of reading and the application of these discussions into children's own writing. Children develop their understanding of the craft of writing through reading, discussion, role-play and other similar activities.

Whilst fluency still is a focus, the ability to infer becomes a stronger focus. Children are encouraged to explore genre-specific features as well as look at the unique writing styles of celebrated writers. The Power Of Reading holds a strong focus on enabling children to explore a book in its entirety, supporting the understanding of how characters develop and evolve and how writers structure, organise and develop their work. The cultural, social and historical contexts of works are explored, with links and comparisons between written styles a focus.

Reading Support:

In Phonics, staff support children in 'keeping up' with their peers through interventions, wearing 'pinnies' to reinforce sounds throughout the day and assessing children using observation in lessons. In addition to this, formal assessments are completed at the end of each half term.

Targeted support and provision ensures that children, at all stages of their reading journey with us, are developed as readers. The bottom 20% of readers in each class is closely tracked, reviewed on a half-termly basis, with a wide range of support put in place to accelerate progress and develop their skill as a reader. A Better Reading Partner program is well established to support nascent readers; a team of Reading Recovery teachers work across KS1 and KS2.

Marish Trust has implemented 'Accelerated Reader' across the Trust. All year groups, from 1-6, implement this as our reading system. Year 1 children and more able readers from Reception take the Star Reader test once they have completed level 10 of our reading scheme. Accelerated Reader allows children to read a book and take a quiz related to the book. This will help the children's comprehension levels. Children are also encouraged to take a vocabulary test linked to the book they read. The teachers are aware of all the children's results and can access data at any time for analysis, tracking the time spent reading, words read, books completed and (more importantly) the level of understanding of what they have read. The system automatically adjusts to their performance and supports them in self managing their reading habits.

### **The Writing Journey at Marish Trust**

Writing is an aspect of Literacy that is evident in all areas of the curriculum. We have a dedicated team of experts who look to promote enjoyment, excellence and accuracy in writing. Children are explicitly taught spelling patterns, linked to phonics, each week. This is often linked with handwriting skills which have a high profile in our Trust. They also regularly learn and apply grammatical features and structures, in line with the National Curriculum.

To ensure that the fundamentals of writing are truly embedded, weekly spelling, handwriting and grammar lessons happen in all year groups (Years 1-6). These are designed to strongly link into that week's Literacy lessons to ensure that the fundamental understanding, as well as its practical application, are strongly tied together.

Writing for pleasure is a key goal, we seek to ensure that every child develops an enjoyment for expressing themselves through their written work. To enable this, we engage in 'Big Writing' lessons with regular opportunities for children to re-visit, edit and 'up level' their work- to better simulate the 'real' writing process. We seek to empower all children to see themselves as 'writers' who understand the process of writing is never over. Furthermore, genres are revisited throughout a child's journey at Marish Academy Trust, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of specific nuances within different styles as well as making links between genres.

By utilising this internationally successful programme (The Power of Reading) we create exciting, challenging and effective writing experiences for children. They learn to apply their writing skills in different contexts, develop their 'writers voice' and participate in a full and rounded writing process; planning, drafting and up-levelling work over a period of time. Children are presented with many unique and exciting experiences to stimulate learning and create a 'buzz' around the whole process of writing.

Writing across the Trust is well supported by a wide range of writing champions, including a large number of Lead Moderators who support the understanding of writing assessment across the Borough, as well as provide training and expertise across Slough.

EYFS:

EYFS promotes the development of writing in these ways:

- Opportunities for mark making and writing are placed all around the environment.
- 'Funky Fingers' activities are always present within the environment to develop fine motor skills. Software is used as a versatile resource to promote fine motor skills as well as the correct pencil grip and accurate formation of letters
- Specified writing outcomes are planned and delivered using key texts for EYFS

Writing opportunities are incorporated into learning throughout the different areas within the classroom inside and outside and developed through adults skillfully intervening in play. Focused adult-led writing tasks are in place for all children to undertake so that writing is taught through an integrated approach and through drawing clubs. The teaching and learning of writing wholly incorporate the promotion of both reading and writing. Fundamental to successful writing is the ability to talk about what you want to say and in turn listen to correctly formulate a response. Through oracy, children learn how other people make sense of the world, how language is used to reason, how emotions and identities are expressed, and how to work together to solve problems.

KS1:

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing will be transferred into their own writing. The Big Talk session continues through the autumn term of year 1, to be replaced with a Big Writing session from the January of year 1. This provides each child with an opportunity to write an extended piece each week and continues through the Primary Phase and beyond.

As in the Foundation Stage, software is used to promote correctly formed and increasingly fluent handwriting, including joining from Year 1, as appropriate (Year 1 are not expected to join but are encouraged if ready for it with all children forming letters with the 'flicks' for joining as part of the process).

Spelling is taught regularly, based on systematic phonics teaching and the SpellingShed programme. Basic punctuation is also a particular focus in order to develop this essential skill of effective writing, in line with the grammar expectations for each year group. Motor skills continue to be developed through support groups for those children who are slow to progress.

Through shared writing the teacher will demonstrate specific writing skills, sometimes acting as scribe. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing, engaging in the 'real' process of writing. Children will explore differences in genres and styles of writing, relating their work to real life experiences.

As they progress through the Key Stage, the exploration of different sentence types (with the impact of that on the readers' experience of their work) as well as extending their understanding of literary skills such as figurative language. Through close examination of other writers' work, they will look to broaden their own style, writing for different purposes. A strong focus is on establishing grammatically coherent sentences, with a drive to give children the skills to become more independent writers.

During this stage of writing, all pupils will have access to a range of resources and support materials which they can choose to use. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Word Mats

- Examples discussed/ explored previously
- Dictionaries/ thesauruses
- Writing frames

KS2:

Building on what they have learnt in KS1, children continue to focus on the fundamentals of writing (through their spelling, handwriting and grammar lessons). However, they will also be given the opportunity to examine different authors' works in greater detail, pulling apart the grammatical and language features that have created a unique style.

Through this, they are encouraged to apply these new skills to their own work, combining styles and skills of different authors as well as making decisions over what specific skills to apply to which specific contexts within their own writing. This includes making decisions over different levels of formality, with more able children being encouraged to skilfully weave writing styles together.

Alongside 'real life' examples from published texts, children will also experience modelled work and shared writing where class targets and personalised targets will be a focus. Children will still have the support of various strategies encountered in KS1, where appropriate, enabling them to extend their vocabulary and structures whilst maintaining sound grammatical construction of their sentences. Through role-play, art and other related activities they will deepen their understanding of the creative process and develop a passion for the written form.

As in KS1, the 'journey' of writing is a central aspect; with ample opportunity for children to plan, write and revisit their work. Across the Key Stage, children will explicitly be shown different aspects of editing and redrafting, working independently and collaboratively to improve and 'publish' their own work. Support materials used in KS1 will still be available to children during their writing experiences in KS2.

Grammatical features of writing are extended further, with a greater focus on the impact of these different features on the reader. Writers are encouraged to consider how different features can be skilfully woven together to make their meaning clearer for the reader- improve the experience of their work. The continuation of SpellingShed to support spellings remains a feature as well as explicitly taught handwriting skills.

### **The Teaching of Spelling**

Children will be taught to:

- Identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
- Recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/ grapheme correspondence)
- Segment words into phonemes for spelling
- Acquire a knowledge of high frequency words
- Identify onsets and rimes as an aid to spelling
- Investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules
- Attempt a spelling before checking with the teacher
- Identify misspelt words in their own writing
- Develop and use independent spelling strategies
- Use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work

At all stages, teaching of spelling on a one to one basis can take place while children write. Teaching spelling patterns at the same time as practising handwriting skills, provides useful reinforcement.

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas for writing scribed by an adult and they may occasionally copy this writing. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record final and medial sounds.

At all times, children are encouraged to develop confidence in their increasing ability to spell independently. Wow word displays are used across the school to provide a print rich environment which children are encouraged to incorporate in their own writing. Children are also encouraged to 'have a go' at spelling words of which they are unsure. The teacher responds by ticking a correct word or taking the opportunity to remind the child of a spelling pattern/mnemonic etc. for the particular word.

From Year 3, as the child's spelling competence develops, use of a dictionary will become more frequent to check spellings; although it is important that the child can use a dictionary quickly and easily, so that fluent writing is not impeded.

### Handwriting

#### Aims of Handwriting:

- To understand that each letter has only one correct formation and orientation
- To develop a sense of pride, pleasure and enjoyment in their handwriting
- To adopt fluent, legible and joined handwriting
- To adapt lettering styles for different purposes

The teaching of handwriting will follow the pen pals framework. A variety of aides, such as pencil grips and tracing cards, are available to support handwriting in the early stages. As correct letter formation becomes established, the teaching focuses on consistency in size, shape and general clarity of writing. As pupils' handwriting skills develop, they are given opportunities to write on narrower lined paper and develop skills in using guidelines with plain paper.

Year 1 will complete discrete handwriting sessions twice per week. Years 2-4 are to embed their handwriting within their literacy lesson by practicing handwriting at the beginning of each lesson. UKS2 will complete 1 discrete lesson per week alongside interventions to target misconceptions.

Children will need guidance as to the best way to orientate the paper on which they will be writing, particularly if they are left-handed. Left-handed children should sit on the left or beside another left-handed child when paired. In addition, they may benefit from the use of a pencil grip.

Once pupils establish a fluent, joined style, they are free to personalise their joined writing. Children in all years up to Year 2 use pencil. Children in KS2 will be awarded a pen licence, when they have proved they can write in a fluent joined style consistently with pencil, they may use pens, supplied by school. Ballpoint pens are not permitted and we discourage the use of rubbers.

## 4. Speaking and Listening

Our curriculum is underpinned by the importance of spoken language in pupils' development. During their time at school, our intention is to develop our childrens' ability to express their own opinions, articulate their feelings, and listen to and respond appropriately in a variety of situations. In addition to this, we provide opportunities for our children to participate with different groups of children in order to present ideas with confidence, valuing the views of others. Children are encouraged to speak audibly and confidently before an audience. It is our aim that this will encourage children to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

We provide:

- Curriculum enhancing experiences (enrichment) - we provide opportunities for children to confidently speak in front of a variety of audiences. For example, engaging with school visitors and speaking in assemblies.
- Child-Led - we use children's interests to inform and provide opportunities to develop their communication skills.
- Professional freedom - teachers have the professional freedom to utilise their knowledge of the children's understanding and interests in order to shape Speaking and Listening opportunities for their children.
- Quality Texts - all children explore, through a variety of media, a breadth of inspiring literature to encourage language development and discussion. Through delving into a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, children will have the opportunity to discuss, question and further investigate their interests, drawing on and building their communication skills. This can be through digital literature as well as physical texts in school.

## 5. Planning

The literacy team is currently reviewing the literacy planning to ensure a clear progression of genres, skills, and comprehensive coverage aligned with the National Curriculum (NC) objectives. This review aims to enhance

Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 2
Review and plan for Spring1	Implement the plan for Spring 1.  Review and plan for Spring 2. Literacy team to delegate and support year leads for planning.	Take feedback from teachers and use summative assessment to check the impact.	Check the summative assessment to check the bigger impact of new planning.
Continue the cycle for the rest of the terms; review on the basis of staff feedback and plan for the following term.			
Summer 2, staff will be ready to plan for the Autumn 1, 2025-26			

instructional coherence and rigor across all stages. The timeline for this review process is as follows.

## 6. Monitoring, assessment and moderation

### 6.1 Monitoring

We will monitor teaching and learning of English and literacy in our school to make sure that all of our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Literacy subject leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Conducting learning walks as part of our impact schedule
- Reviewing marking and feedback
- Impact meetings
- Planning scrutinies
- Book scrutinies

Reading is monitored by REN and a tracking spreadsheet to ensure adults within the school are consistently reading with children. To ensure progress and knowledge gaps are identified.

## 6.2 Assessment

We will track pupils' progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment following our assessment schedule. Live marking approach is used to enable all children to receive effective and instant *in the moment* feedback. Verbal feedback and dialogue is embedded within every session. (please see [Marking & Feedback Policy](#) for further detail).

Children's skills in writing will be assessed not just in Literacy but across the curriculum. Information from assessments is used to inform our planning and to set class/group/individual writing targets.

Each child from Reception to Year 6 has a reading record book which indicates the range of books recently read independently. Teachers, other adults and older children reading with the child write comments in the record, and the child may comment on progress. Adults reading with groups usually complete a guided reading record sheet with individual or group comments. Other records are often kept, for example to indicate a child's progress in reading high frequency words on sight or phonic recognition.

In Year 1 pupils who have not started to read are assessed by a Reading Recovery teacher in the term they turn 6. The lowest achieving pupils are put on the Reading Recovery Programme to enable them to catch up with their peers within two terms. All pupils causing concern throughout the school are assessed using a single word reading test to establish a Reading Age, and PM Benchmarking to select books at the correct level. They are monitored at regular intervals until they have caught up with their peers. Newly arrived pupils from Year 1 onwards are also assessed within their first week in school.

Our pupils will sit the following formal assessments:

The phonics screening check at the end of year 1

National Curriculum tests in the summer terms at the end of KS1 and KS2

We will provide regular targets for pupils, and provide termly verbal reports against these at parents' evenings. Pupils will receive a written report annually.

## 6.3 Moderation

We will standardise writing samples to:

Demonstrate how pupils' work meets National Curriculum attainment targets for KS1 and KS2, to help with assessment

Make sure staff have a consistent approach to marking pupils' work (see marking policy)

We will refer to the Standards and Testing Agency (STA)'s exemplification materials for [KS1](#) and [KS2](#) to support with this.

We will moderate teacher assessments of reading and writing termly. Our lead writing moderators support teachers across the school to use an agreed assessment checklist alongside exemplification materials to ensure assessments are accurate.

## 7. Resources

### 7.1 Books

We will select and use books that:

- Engage pupils emotionally
- Cover a wide range of subjects
- Elicit a strong response, such as curiosity, anger, excitement, laughter or empathy
- Have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings
- Extend pupils' vocabulary
- Have illustrations that are engaging and reflect children from all backgrounds and cultures
- Help pupils connect with who they are
- Help pupils to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own
- Include stories set in both the UK and around the world
- Include both modern and traditional stories
- Include fiction and non-fiction

It's unlikely that just 1 book will meet all of these criteria, but our full selection as a whole will.

Once we've chosen our books, we will:

- Identify a core set of stories for each year group
- Refresh the list regularly (at least once a year), as new books are published and as our school welcomes new teachers
- Encourage teachers to familiarise themselves with the stories their pupils will know from previous years
- Get teachers to choose their own books to read aloud alongside the core set of stories
- Share the list with parents, and explain its purpose, so they can buy or borrow the books

### 7.2 Book corners

When visiting their book corner, pupils will be able to:

- Browse the books
- Revisit the ones the teacher has read to them
- Borrow books to read or re-tell at home
- Spend time there

When arranging the book corner, teachers will:

- Avoid displaying too many books at once
- Choose a space in the classroom that is well lit and of an adequate size
- Display books pupils have listened to recently, at their eye level on outward-facing shelves
- Make the books look attractive and easy to find – removing any that are dull and dog-eared, unless these are particularly well-loved
- Refresh the display to highlight topics, titles or authors that might engage pupils
- Involve pupils in this process by getting them to help return books to the central school library
- Keep any books that have been previously read in extra boxes for pupils to read and retell again, at school and at home

### 7.3 Rhymes and poems

We will choose rhymes and poems that will develop pupils' language skills. These will include:

- Rhyming poems
- Poems where alliteration is a strong feature
- Word games
- Traditional songs and rhymes
- Nonsense rhymes

### 6.4 Dictionaries and thesauruses

To support writing and spelling, we will make sure that pupils have access to dictionaries and thesauruses in all lessons.

## 8. Enrichment

Other activities take place in school to enrich the reading curriculum. Amongst these the following have recently taken place:

- A KS1 and KS2 reading club
- Reading after school clubs
- Annual book week
- World Book Week celebrations
- Library visits – Links with local libraries
- Workshops for parents
- Accelerated writer clubs
- Saturday Day Club (targeting Year 6 children, including Reading and SPaG focus, during the Spring Half Term)
- Writers visit (in conjunction with World Book Week)
- A focus on reading environments and the creation of exciting Book Corners in every classroom

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Curriculum policy
- SEND/Inclusion policy
- Marking policy and Practice
- Assessment, Reporting and Recording policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Behaviour policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

## 10. Strategic Board of Trustees' Approval

This policy is reviewed by the whole staff team trust wide and Strategic Board on their recommendation.

Version	Approved	Next Review	Comments
1.0	September (writing) and November (Reading) 2012	January 2014 (Writing) Autumn 2014 (reading) December 2016	
2.0	December 2014 (writing and reading)		
3.0	September 2017		
4.0	November 2022	November 2024	