

Inspirational Learning Academies Trust

ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed September 2026

INTRODUCTION

At the Inspirational Learning Academies trust, we believe that English is a fundamental life skill. English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. We believe our English curriculum is the gateway to cultural, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development.

TRUST AIMS/INTENT

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy, by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

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.

DfE English Programmes of Study, 2014

IMPLEMENTATION

- English skills are taught daily across all year groups. We provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and to meet their individual targets on a daily basis.
- Our long-term English overviews are derived from EYFS guidance in the Early Years and the National Curriculum in KS1 and KS2. The overviews guide teachers in the planning process to achieve effective and accurate coverage.
- Pupil progress is assessed and monitored daily: where pupils have not made sufficient progress, interventions are put into place immediately to ensure that gaps are closed. Each term 'Assessment Profiles' are collated which celebrates pupil's learning and achievements and informs parents of next steps. We have pupil progress meetings at the end of every half term to ensure that children are staying on track against our benchmarks. Any children falling behind will be identified promptly and intervention will be put in to place immediately. A 'no progress' form will be completed between the teacher and parent to discuss barriers to learning and next steps.
- 'Closing the gap' marking is used daily in order to develop individuals understanding and move their learning forward (see marking policy for further details).
- Teachers are supported by senior subject leaders to be confident and passionate in the teaching of English through Professional Development Meetings and feedback questionnaires.
- Subject leaders are able to effectively monitor the implementation and impact of our English curriculum through regular learning walks, book scrutinise and pupil interviews. Where a development has arose, a professional and helpful conversation will be had amongst staff and the subject leader. The subject leader will ensure to provide the appropriate support to resolve any issues. Review of monitoring ensures that feedback has been actioned and addressed.

Please see below further details on how we prioritise reading, writing, spoken language and poetry:

Reading

- All Aboard Phonics is followed for children in Nursery - Year 1. Children in Year 2 and above who still require phonics sessions will be provided with this support. Please see Phonics, Early Reading and Spelling policy for further details.
- Children in EYFS and KS1 read to an adult on a daily basis. In KS2, those children identified as the bottom 20% will be prioritised and will continue to read every day. Other children in KS2 will read at least three times per week to an adult.
- Our Reading Curriculum identifies key reading skills that we expect the children to develop: vocabulary, inference, prediction, retrieval, sequencing(EYFS/KS1)/summarising (KS2 only), comparing and contrasting (KS2 only). Each of the reading skills are linked to one of the 'totally pawsome' Twinkl reading characters to build the children's familiarity with each skill.
- Each half term, children dive deep in to a key 'love of reading' text. The texts that children focus on have been carefully selected to ensure that children are gaining rich and varied literary experiences at each stage of their primary journey. We believe that reading is at the start of the writing process and as such, each class text is used as a stimulus for writing opportunities. Children use their developing reading skills to comprehend the story, spoken language to perform aspects of the story and they use their writing skills for different purposes. These skills are then transferred to other areas of the curriculum through our topic-based approach to learning.
- Every classroom has a specific reading area which includes all 'Love of Reading' texts so that the children can frequently go back and re-read books taught. Other books in the classroom include our end-of-day SMSC books and non-fiction supplementary texts.
- Each week reading successes are celebrated by awarding a certificate during assemblies.

- Comprehension skills are taught daily through questioning and high-quality discussions with teaching staff and each other. Specific English lessons are dedicated to comprehension, which provides children with the means of analysing and thinking critically about what they have read. Reading is at the core of the rest of the curriculum. Children are exposed to a variety of non-fiction texts to support the teaching of the wider curriculum and they will be required to use their critical thinking skills to comprehend information.
- We partake in many different events throughout the year to ensure that a love of reading is promoted. This begins with our 'Love of Reading' board in each classroom. These boards celebrate the reading successes for each reading skill that the children have developed throughout each half term. Other strategies include:
 - 'Recommended read' books in each class are sent home weekly and we even have our own library for the children to use and enjoy.
 - After-school clubs are a big part of our personal development and children take particular interest in our reading club, which provides children with the opportunity to visit the local library. Every year, each class visits the library at least once.
 - We have a fully working and functional library in school which children visit on a weekly basis. Children can choose a book to take home to enjoy and change it the following week.
 - Children have a 15-minute reading session at the end of every day where children have the opportunity to listen, share and discuss quality books with their teachers and peers. This really helps to promote a love of reading, increase vocabulary and feeds pupils' developing imaginations.
 - It is expected that children read at home at least three times per week. Where this has been recorded in a child's diary, reading stickers are used to celebrate this achievement.

Handwriting

- Handwriting successes are celebrated in our weekly assembly by awarding a 'hand writer of the week' to each class. Each winner receives a certificate and will have their work displayed on our eye-catching corridor display.

- Children have the opportunity to refine their handwriting skills through guided practise on a daily basis in their handwriting booklets. Teaching of handwriting is based upon Age Related Expectations; thus, progression is ensured.
- Handwriting is also a priority in all other aspects of the curriculum and is discretely taught in all other lessons. When handwriting errors occur, class teachers ensure that the individual gets appropriate support. For example, if a child is struggling with ascending and descending letters, their intervention time would focus on addressing this immediately so that errors are enforced. All staff model a handwriting style appropriate for each pupil's age as stated below:

EYFS:

- In nursery, our pupils' journey to writing will begin. Before even picking up a pencil, children will strengthen their fine motor skills through a range of fine motor activities including dough disco. Encouraging large movements with ribbons and other apparatus also strengthen large motor muscles. Pupils will then to mark make with a range of different means including chalk, paint, crayons, foam, sand, glitter and more.
- Children are encouraged to produce horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines before circles and other patterns. They are then ready to begin to form printed letters as part of their All Aboard phonics lessons. They apply these skills during continuous provision, English lessons and other areas of the curriculum. Lead out strokes are taught where they occur naturally:

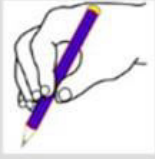
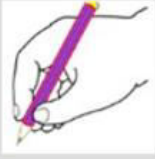
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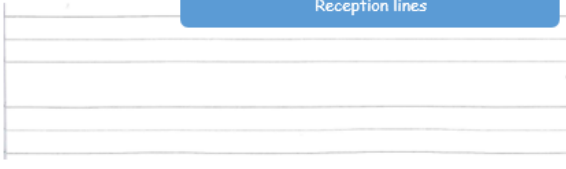
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Children are taught to hold a pencil correctly in line with age related expectations and are encouraged to sit correctly and comfortably at the table.

Nursery Autumn term		Nursery Spring term	Nursery Summer term
			
Fisted Grasp and Fist grip.		Five finger Grasp and Pincer grip.	Tripod Grasp (Three finger)

Children will have lines in their books in the below format, which aims to facilitate the children in forming letters of the correct size.

Nursery lines	Reception lines
	



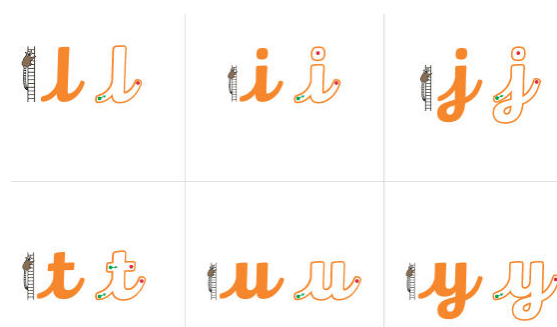
Year 1

Children in year 1 will be taught to sit correctly at a table whilst holding their pencil comfortably and correctly. Children will be taught lead in and lead out strokes for all letters, along with capital letters and numerals. Children will focus on putting each letter in the correct positioning on the line. During daily handwriting sessions, children will focus on the handwriting families:

Curly caterpillar letters:



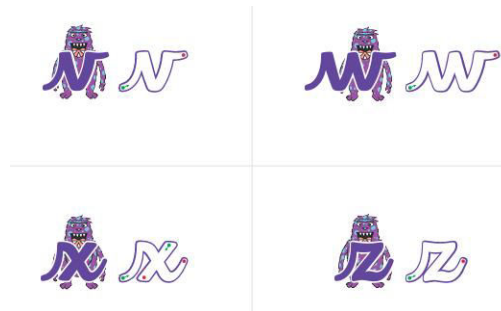
Long ladder letters:



One-armed robot letters:



ZigZag monster letters:



Year 1 will continue on lines similar to Reception in their exercise books to ensure that they are forming letters of the correct size. When a Year 1 child becomes ready, they are able to move on to standard lines in preparation for Year 2 and beyond. Please see below how we model and teach pre-cursive handwriting:



Year 2

Handwriting practise continues however children in Year 2 will begin to learn how to join letters. They will be taught to understand which letters, when left adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined. Daily handwriting practise will focus on writing letters with base joins, top joins and anti-clockwise joins, as well as writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters. Children in Year 2 who are identified as the bottom 20% in handwriting will books with the handwriting guide lines in- this is their scaffold.

Key Stage 2:

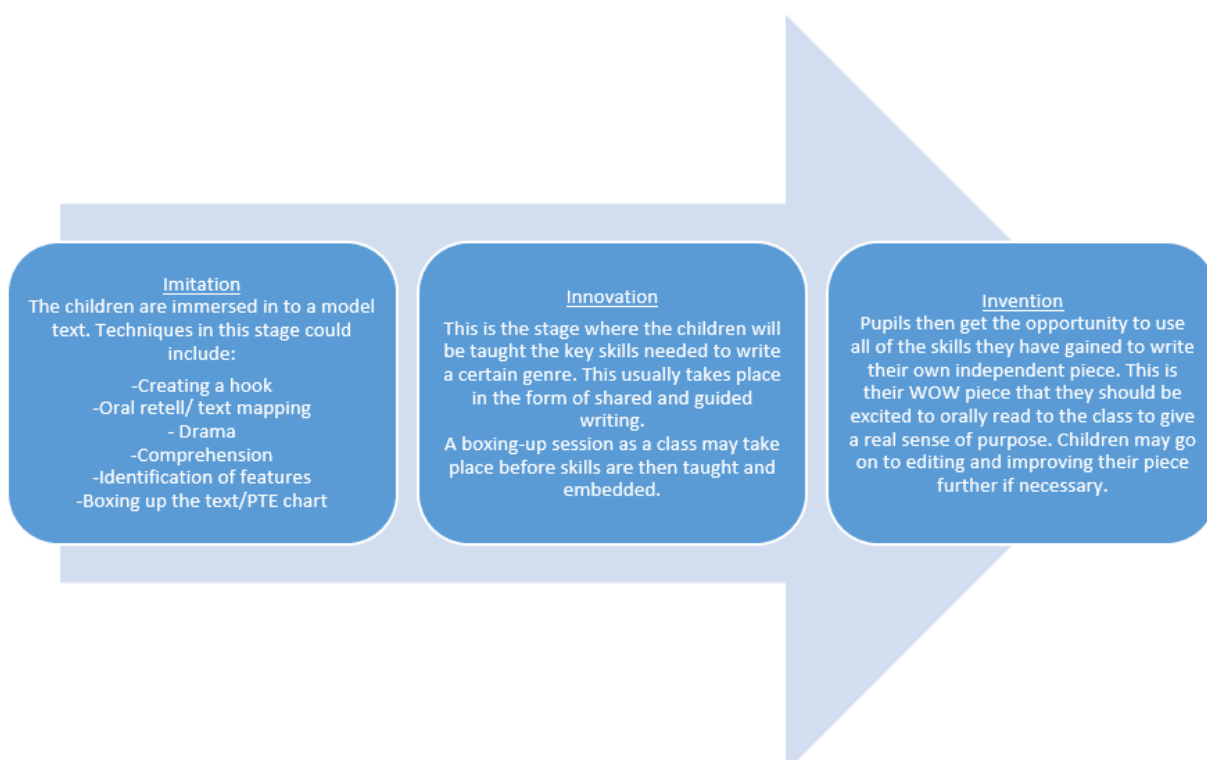
As children enter KS2, daily handwriting will continue to increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting by ensuring that the down-strokes

of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch. Handwriting sessions in KS2 will apply Age-Related spellings and SPaG during this time. Any child who is not yet fluent in handwriting will still receive targeted support at an appropriate level to them.

Writing

- In English lessons. Children use their key texts as a basis for their writing. When writing, children are asked to consider the text type, their audience and the purpose of their writing (to entertain, to inform, to persuade and to discuss). A variation of text types under these purposes are taught. In the EYFS and KS1, children will be focusing mainly on writing to inform and to entertain. As children progress to LKS2 they will be exposed to writing to persuade and then moving on to writing to discuss in UKS2. For any writing piece, a process is adopted whereby children have the appropriate time to explore a model text in depth before they are expected to write. Details are stated below of our writing process:

The Inspirational Learning Academies Trust writing process



Spelling

- All children have spellings when they are ready which match their phonic ability in EYFS and KS1. Spellings are in line with All Aboard Phonics. In Year 2 and above (when ready), spellings are in line with Age Related Expectations and are taken from the National Curriculum from the Twinkl Planit spelling scheme. Please see our Early Reading, Phonics and Spelling policy for further details.

Poetry

- Every term, each class focus on a different poetry type. This poetry type is displayed in the classroom along with a bank of poems from that genre for the children to explore frequently. Our poetry coverage document ensures that children have exposure to different poetry forms and develop the correct skills and passion to write and read poetry effectively.
- Where applicable, poetry is built in to every aspect of the curriculum, not just English lessons. For example, when Year 2 children delve in to the Great Fire of London, they may choose to look at Haiku's to further their understanding.

Spoken language

We believe that spoken language is imperative to development across the whole curriculum. Since spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing, we ensure that it is taught at an appropriate level for the pupil and is split into four aspects:

1. Drama, performance and confidence
 - ❖ Skills are built in this area across the curriculum from performing play scripts and narratives in English and performing in our annual Christmas performance, to delivering presentations on a geography topic or a scientific hypothesis. However, we believe this skill should be celebrated and focused upon. Therefore, at the end of each year, children will carry out a final 'performance' based on their year group theme. This will take place in the summer term. The children will be graded on this performance, they will receive a certificate and will receive constructive feedback. This is to not only improve their

knowledge and skills but to also establish secure foundations in Spoken Language for future years in primary school and beyond.

Year Group	Certificate Awarded (Bronze, Silver or Gold)	Assessment (Based on Spoken Language progression)
Nursery	Building blocks	Performance: Sing a familiar rhyme as part of a small group. Speaking: Talk about family to small group - 30 seconds. Answering questions: Answer a 'why' question about a rhyme.
Reception	Foundational speakers	Performance: Sing a familiar rhyme independently to a small group. Speaking: Talk about friends to class - 30 seconds. Answering questions: Make a comment about rhyme.
Year 1	Emerging speakers	Performance: Recite a poem to the class. Speaking: Talk about favourite toy to class for 1 minute. Answering questions: Ask a friend a question about poem. Answer in a simple sentence.
Year 2	Developing speakers	Performance: Recite poem to year group. Speaking: Talk about family holiday / day trip for 2 minutes. Answering questions: Answer questions about poem using clear sentences.
Year 3	Secure speakers	Performance: Recite poetry to key stage. Speaking: Present D&T/Art work, discussing strengths and weaknesses (3 minutes) Answering questions: Begin to offer support for their answers to questions about poem with justifiable reasoning.
Year 4	Splendid speakers	Performance: Recite poetry to key stage. Speaking: Talk about the themes and authors intentions in a book (3 minutes). Answering questions: Offer answers about poem that are supported with justifiable reasoning.
Year 5	Expert speakers	Performance: Recite own poetry to group of familiar adults / whole-school. Speaking: Deliver a group presentation on history/geography topic. Answering questions: Answer questions that require more detail about poem.
Year 6	Advanced speakers	Performance: Recite own poetry to group of familiar adults / whole-school. Speaking: Deliver a presentation on scientific hypothesis. Answering questions: Articulate and justify answers about poem to whole-school.

2. Listening, responding and discussing

- ❖ This is a skill that the children have the chance to develop in throughout each and every aspect of school life.
- ❖ Our dedication to ensuring that our children are exposed to a rich and varied Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural curriculum provides the perfect opportunity to hone in on their listening, responding and discussion skills. Through our class SMSC assemblies, RE lessons, end-of-day SMSC story time and SMSC days, our children are challenged to appropriately respond to such topics.

3. Asking and answering questions

- ❖ Our safe and stimulating classrooms are the perfect environment to ensure that all children ensure that they feel that they are able to ask questions, however small or big. Our pupils' ability to ask and answer questions are developed on a daily basis through encouragement and modelling. Our progression document ensures that staff are aware of the

standard of questioning and answering required from pupils in each year group and will respond appropriately, for example a Year 3 child will be encouraged and prompted to provide justifiable reasoning to their answers.

- ❖ The children's ability to answer and ask questions will also be assessed during their end of year assessment.

4. Vocabulary and Standard English

- ❖ Attention is paid to increasing pupils' vocabulary, ranging from describing their immediate world and feelings to developing broader, deeper and richer vocabulary to discuss abstract concepts and a wider range topics. This will allow them to enhance their knowledge about language as a whole.
- ❖ Specific time is dedicated in English lessons for children to become familiar with key vocabulary. This includes defining new words, linking them to new word meanings and understanding them within context.
- ❖ At the start of each lesson, children are exposed to the key vocabulary that is relevant to each lesson. Time is given for children to understand what each word means as well as giving ample opportunity to use these words within contexts. We ensure that the key vocabulary that the children are exposed to is progressive throughout each year group and in each subject via our vocabulary progression documentation.

Our progression document, which is split in to the four entities of Spoken Language, ensures that it is clear to pupils what is expected of them and also ensures that teaching staff give pupils the chance to build on the oral language skills that have been taught in preceding years. They will build on skills as they effectively transition across year groups and key stages in order to move on to the next stage of learning. The children will develop a love of reading, writing and poetry to become confident readers, writers and performers for their next stage of learning.

Inclusion

Within our Trust, we have a high ambition for all children, regardless of their barrier to learning. This is achieved by:

- Early identification of barriers - for example, any child falling behind in reading will take part in an All Aboard Intervention baseline assessment.

This assessment will clearly identify a child's area of need (e.g. short-term memory weaknesses, optilexia) and thus, an appropriate intervention is devised. This ensures that children are getting targeted support which is purposeful and appropriate for each individual.

- Other interventions for reading take place on a daily basis including Better Read which aims at promoting fluency.
- Pre-teaching of new vocabulary. We will also reduce the amount of vocabulary exposed so as to avoid cognitive overload.
- Appropriate scaffolds and adaptations are provided.
- The use of TrainerText to support a child's ability to access reading material (adding the pictophone above the grapheme to enhance recognition).
- Appropriate support for parents on how to support their child at home. This includes opportunities from attending phonics workshops delivered by senior leaders within the trust to accessing English courses delivered by Stoke on Trent College through our recent partnership.

Please see SEND policy for further details on how we ensure our SEND children make outstanding progress.

IMPACT

- The impact of our English curriculum is that children will possess the literacy skills and knowledge to confidently support and develop their ideas and opinions across the curriculum.
- At our school, we ensure that our youngest pupils receive the very best start in life when they leave the EYFS with outstanding phonics knowledge, a rich vocabulary and great communication skills. The excellent progress is highlighted in our outstanding data which is above the national average across all key stages.
- Children will make effective transitions across key stages by working at age related expectations or above in order for them to progress into their next stage of learning.
- Our children are able to confidently talk about their work in English lessons and can apply age-appropriate skills and knowledge within their

reading and writing. They are willing to take risks and learn from their mistakes, showing both perspective and resilience in English learning.

- Our ambitious poetry curriculum ensures that children have varied opportunities to lift poems from the page and bring them to life. It encourages connections to children's personal experiences, builds confidence in writing and reading poetry in a variety of forms and appreciates that poetry supports reading, phonics and language development. Above all, it gives the children the opportunity for children to publish and perform their poetry to celebrate their successes.
- Handwriting is a skill, which affects written communication across the curriculum. By year 6, children will be using cursive handwriting using flowing movements and patterns. This handwriting is used in all writing across the curriculum. Writing is fluid in style to allow children to focus their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves. The impact is that children are able to express themselves legibly through the written word. Children meet Age Related Expectations which allows confidence and self-esteem to be increased as the children see themselves as successful writers.
- Children enjoy writing and are motivated to express themselves through the written word. They see themselves as successful writers and becoming life-long writers as a result.
- Children demonstrate exceptional fluency, accuracy and creativity in their writing, showcasing a deep understanding of language conventions and the ability to express themselves with confidence and clarity across various contexts.