



**Aston Community
Education Trust**

Lowedges Junior Academy English Policy

DATE: March 2025

POLICY LEAD: Emily Vestey

APPROVED BY: Local Governing Body



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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Curriculum Lead	Emily Vestey	Author	Lindsay Jones
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Please complete this section with a brief summary of the changes you have made or if this is a full re-write/ new policy. The contents of this version control box will be shared with trustees/ the LGB as part of the approval process- Thank you			
V2	MARCH 2023	Replaces the previous English Policy and includes all up to changes in the English curriculum.	
V3	MARCH 2025	Additional information has been added to the following sections: Handwriting and Vocabulary. Testing of spelling has changed from weekly to half-termly.	

Curriculum Statement

At Lowedges Junior Academy, we firmly believe that English in all its forms is the key stone of children's learning. High quality teaching and learning in all aspects of English should enable pupils to read, write and speak fluently therefore allowing them to communicate their ideas and emotions to others. English is a key skill which is essential for all aspects of everyday life including independent learning and the world of work. We want pupils to develop a love for English through their enjoyment of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Intent

When pupils leave Lowedges Junior Academy, we expect them to be avid readers: pupils who read fluently and widely and are able to express preferences and opinions about the texts that they read. We want them to read for pleasure, having had access to a wide range of text types, genres and authors in order for them to make informed opinions about their favourites. We want to produce pupils who write with confidence and accuracy for a variety of purposes and audiences whilst developing their own individual flair.

We want our pupils to be able to write with grammatical accuracy and be able to apply spelling patterns correctly using a neat handwriting style. We aim to expose our pupils to a wide range of vocabulary so that they are able to decipher new words and then use them when speaking both informally and formally as well as being able to apply all of these English skills to all areas of the curriculum. Our aim is to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences so that our pupils become enthusiastic, confident and independent users of language in the spoken and written word.

We will enable pupils to achieve this passion for English through providing stimulating and exciting experiences based around high quality materials and opportunities for learning which will lead to every child reaching and fulfilling their full potential.

Implementation

Reading at Lowedges Junior Academy

During a typical day at Lowedges Junior Academy, pupils are exposed to a wide range of explicit reading opportunities both within the English curriculum and across the wider curriculum. This can include reading a Reading into Writing text, whole class reading texts, listening to their class 'Love for Reading' text at the start of the academy day, along with reading for research within the Wider Curriculum and home reading. In all aspects of reading, staff encourage the pupils to regularly clarify unfamiliar language, and this is placed on the yellow bricks on the class word wall. Pupils are encouraged to magpie this ambitious vocabulary and use it in their independent writing. The Reading into Writing, whole class reading and Love for Reading texts are mapped out across the academic year for each year group to ensure a range of coverage of key authors; classic texts; inclusive texts and diverse texts.

Our academy has a vibrant, text rich library full of 'Reading for Pleasure' books for all ages and stages which the pupils access in order to extend their independent reading, as a research tool or just to enjoy a good story. These are regularly changed and updated to match the wider curriculum through the local library loans service.

Phonics and Early Reading

In order to teach all pupils to become fluent, confident readers, who have a love of reading; Phonics is a high priority within the academy. Lowedges Junior Academy follows the systematic, synthetic ACET Phonics scheme (DFE accredited) for the teaching of phonics and early reading. This is an ambitious, rigorous and fully comprehensive programme, which is taught daily to all pupils in Reception and Year 1 and any other pupil who is working within that level. Pupils are streamed across Reception and KS1 and receive a 45-minute daily session, targeted specifically at



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their current level. At the end of each half-term, assessments are completed and any gaps in learning are targeted through a series of bespoke interventions. As pupils complete their phonics journey at Lowedges Junior Academy, they then move onto FTC (Fluency to Comprehension) books to support and develop their fluency and comprehension development before becoming a free reader, where they develop their author choice and love for reading.

Whole Class Reading

Whole class reading sessions take place for pupils who have completed their phonics journey. These sessions are 30 minutes long and occur daily. Within these sessions, the Reciprocal Reading approach is followed, which covers all of the reading domains. The Reciprocal Reading approach is a talk-based approach which follows a set structure: Predict, Clarify, Question, Summarise. This structure is repeated three to four times per session. High quality texts are chosen to ensure that pupils have an opportunity to read age-appropriate texts with high quality vocabulary and appropriate themes, whilst also ensuring opportunities for reading a full text.

Home School Reading

Home school links are very important in reading. Teachers and support staff listen to pupils read frequently and this is recorded, monitored and celebrated regularly. Pupils who are learning Phonics and those who are reading the FTC books take home two books: phonics reading book or FTC book and a 'Love to Read' book (Library book). Pupils learning Phonics within Reception also take home a Phonics Home Learning Booklet in order to consolidate their learning. Pupils who are 'free readers' will take home their reading book of choice through discussion and guidance with their teachers. We encourage parents/carers to support with reading by engaging in this activity regularly with their child at home. Pupils share their books with parents/carers and any comments made during these sessions by either party are recorded in the pupil's planner.

Parents/carers are partners in their child's educational journey and are invited to regular Phonics and Early Reading workshops. These sessions are used to support parents in gaining knowledge and understanding of how phonics is taught and provides them with the skills to support phonics, early reading and writing at home.

English Lessons at Lowedges Junior Academy

Lowedges Junior Academy follows the Rising Stars: Reading into Writing (RitW) scheme of work for teaching English. English lessons occur daily. The texts that are studied in the RitW curriculum have been carefully selected to give pupils a breadth of reading experience that includes exploration of themes, philosophical questions, context, the pupil's own experiences as well as the emotional journey the characters go on in the stories. Thus, RitW helps pupils to develop in the ways intended from the purpose of study, whilst acquiring knowledge and broadening their vocabulary, using all that they learn to express themselves in writing. In this way, RitW develops children's understanding of themselves, others and the world.

Spelling

Lowedges Junior Academy believes that foundations in spelling should be put in place from an early age. Within Reception and Key Stage 1 the focus is on Phonics and pupils are immersed in the world of phonics (closely linked to their early reading development) as soon as they enter school and access a daily phonics lesson. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 also learn the common exception word lists for their year groups. As pupils complete their phonics journey, the focus changes from phonics to the acquisition of spelling rules and strategies.

At Lowedges Junior Academy, from Year 2, Spelling Shed is followed to support the teaching of spelling rules, common exception words (for Y2) and word lists from the national curriculum (Y3-Y6). Spelling rules are explicitly taught and then practised throughout each week, following a set lesson structure. When a new spelling rule is introduced and taught for the first time, it is added to a blue brick on display for reference throughout all lessons not just in spelling lessons. Assessment of spellings is completed through half-termly spelling tests, where pupils are tested on the application of the previously taught spelling rules. Any gaps in learning is identified from the

assessments and are focussed on during additional intervention or assigned on spelling shed. Pupils are encouraged to use Spelling Shed when at home in order to practise their weekly spellings.

Spelling is important to all pupils and it is essential that they are given every opportunity to embed key spelling rules so that they are then able to apply them to their own writing.

Handwriting

Within Reception, Lowedges Junior Academy follow the handwriting scheme linked to the ACET Phonics scheme as this works alongside their learning of phonics. As pupils begin to learn to form letters correctly, they are taught handwriting rhymes to support them with remembering the formation and the shape. These rhymes are used consistently across all lessons in EYFS and during any relevant sessions KS1 upwards e.g. Phase 3 phonics.

From Year 1, this is then followed by a progressive scheme, based on the works of Martin Harvey, which contains consistent language and focuses on the four-letter formation families. At the end of Year 2, the letter formation progresses onto joined handwriting. Handwriting is also used to support spelling work and vice versa. Handwriting is planned and taught at least three times per week. Teachers provide individual correction and support for all pupils during lessons, including letter formation, correct posture and pencil/pen grip. All pupils will practice writing in pencil, purple pen and a handwriting pen.

Assessment of handwriting will be undertaken continuously within handwriting lessons and other lessons on a one-to-one basis. Assessment of pencil grip is assessed in Reception and for any pupil leaving foundations without the correct pencil grip.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary acquisition is at the heart of the academy and across all subjects. We have a whole school approach to teaching vocabulary. This approach is the Word Aware STAR approach (select, teach, activate, review). New vocabulary is consistently displayed on a yellow brick and actively used and referred to with the pupils. Vocabulary development is prioritised right from Nursery through to Y6.

In Foundation Stage, vocabulary is carefully planned and taught throughout the curriculum. Vocabulary is planned to follow the Word Aware approach and is therefore split into anchor words, Goldilocks words and step-on words. These words are displayed on yellow bricks, with corresponding borders (red, amber or green). The words are taught using my turn, your turn approach and each word has a Communicate In-Print symbol on the brick. The words are taught with a short definition and an action to support the children's understanding. Children are encouraged to verbally use these words during lessons and within the provision. Vocabulary has also been carefully planned within each provision area and area specific words are displayed to promote a wide range of vocabulary.

English in Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage, Literacy is predominantly based on building children's communication and language development and expanding vocabulary.

A love of reading begins in in the EYFS. Whole class Literacy lessons are based on a wide range of texts to promote a love of reading. These texts are mapped out across the year and progressively build up specific vocabulary as the year goes on. Pupils explore key features which enable them to identify different text types. Author knowledge begins here as pupils are introduced to and enjoy engaging with books by different authors. The pupils are encouraged to talk about their favourite authors and the books that they have read by them.

Key reading skills are also introduced in EYFS. These include: predictions about stories by looking at the front cover and listening to the blurb; sequencing and re-telling familiar stories; describing different characters and talking about their favourite parts of the texts. During the week the children complete different tasks linked to the story, including book reviews, story maps and role play.

Nursery, Reception and Year 1 participate in daily 'Rhyme Time'. This is a dedicated time to learn specific, mapped out Rhymes in order to build their confidence, their spoken ability, their understanding of rhythm and rhyme and

their vocabulary. 'If a child knows 8 nursery rhymes by heart by the time they are 4 years old, they are usually among the best readers and spellers in their class by the time they are 8'. (Fox, M. (2001). Reading Magic. San Diego, CA: Harcourt.)

In Nursery, the children carry out a range of activities to promote their gross and fine motor skills in order to prepare their muscles for early writing. This is covered through daily dough disco, squiggle while you wiggle, early mark-making and carefully planned provision activities. During snack time, children are encouraged to participate in simple, social conversations in order to further develop their spoken language. The curriculum ensures that children leave nursery being able to write their name, orally blend and segment and hear initial sounds. These skills prepare them for Phase 2 Phonics in Reception.

In Reception, the children complete an adult-led written piece of work that is linked to their phonics learning and ability. This is not always linked to the weekly text but is used to develop independence within their writing. These tasks are carried out at a table to encourage correct posture whilst writing and to promote correct pencil grip in order to form letters within the handwriting lines. The pupils are also encouraged to use capital letters, finger spaces and the correct punctuation within their writing.

Assessment

Lowedges Junior Academy continually assesses pupils and records their progress. The assessment process forms an integral part of the teaching process and ensures work is correctly matched to the needs of the pupils, thus ensuring maximum progress.

Assessment for Phonics or pupils who are reading FTC books is ongoing throughout each term, with a minimum amount of six times per academic year. These assessments provide information for what groups they access, what interventions they may need and what book they take home.

Summative assessments in Reading and Writing take place three times throughout each academic year, where teacher assessments are formally recorded. To ensure that judgments are secure, collaborative work is conducted with engagement within the Trust and Local Authority wide moderation sessions where writing and reading evidence is shared and judgments are agreed.

The Assessment policy outlines this in more detail.

Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All pupils will receive quality first teaching. Any pupils with identified SEND may have work additional to and different from their peers in order to access the curriculum dependent upon their needs. As well as this, Lowedges Junior Academy offers a demanding and varied curriculum, providing pupils with a range of opportunities in order for them to reach their full potential and consistently achieve highly from their starting points.

In order to engage all pupils, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. The English curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of different pupils.

Parents play a large part in the education of their pupils. At Lowedges Junior Academy, parents and staff work together in partnership to encourage the qualities, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and competences which are necessary to equip pupils for adult life.

Impact

Phonics

- Pupils are assessed at least every six weeks and are making progress in line with the ACET phonics programme.



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- Gaps in phonics acquisition are identified in assessments and addressed through various phonic interventions.
- Pupils in Year 1 are secure in Phase 5.
- Pupils score full marks in the Y1 or re-sit Y2 phonics screening check.

Reading

- All pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- All pupils can read fluently by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils can read a range of age-related texts confidently and demonstrate a passion for reading.
- Pupils engage in a range of fiction and non-fiction texts which challenge them at an appropriate level in order to ensure accelerated learning.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about reading and understand the importance of this life skill.

Writing

- Pupils are taught reading and writing progressively and at a pace appropriate to each individual child.
- At the end of each year, we expect the pupils to have achieved age related expectations (ARE) for their year group. Some pupils will have progressed further and achieved greater depth (GD).
- Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge receive appropriate support and intervention to help them keep up.
- Books and displays evidence high quality writing outcomes for all pupil groups.
- Pupils write with confidence and accuracy for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Pupils feel proud of their work and can talk confidently about their learning.

Appendix 1 – Order of Books (From Phonics –Fluency to Comprehension Books)

