



## **KENTISH TOWN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Excellent teaching, excellent effort, excellent progress:  
Every child, every lesson, every day**

# **ENGLISH POLICY**

**A WORKING DOCUMENT FOR ALL OF US**

### Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

### Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

### Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

### Article 23

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

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**Updated by:**

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**Next review date:**

**October 2025**

# Kentish Town C of E School English Policy

## Context

This policy represents the intentions of the school with regard specifically to the teaching of English from Nursery through to Year 6. It should be considered in conjunction with other policies contained in the School Policies File, which give more detail about Inclusion, Equal Opportunities, Behaviour, PSHE, SEND etc.

## Our Vision for English

English skills—reading and writing, speaking and listening—are key life skills; without them, it is impossible to access other area of the curriculum and to flourish in society. Children should leave Kentish Town Primary School able to read and write fluently and with pleasure. They should be able to articulate their own ideas, and to listen and respond to the ideas of those around them so that they leave our school in a strong position to engage not only with their learning, but also with all that the wider world has to offer.

## Our Aim in English

At Kentish Town, we nurture and develop children's knowledge and understanding of reading, writing, speaking and listening from Early Years to Year 6. To do this we:

- Ensure the National Curriculum is reflected in our own, individually designed curriculum, with cross-curricular links where appropriate
- Select high quality texts, library books and book corner books that reflect the children in our school
- Encourage children to draw on the texts they read when writing themselves
- Adapt the English curriculum to support the needs of SEND children through alternative texts and activities where appropriate
- Ensure that children leave our school able to read fluently and for pleasure
- Ensure that children learn to write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, at an age-appropriate level, and across all areas of the curriculum
- Embed speaking and listening within every aspect of our school life and curriculum from Nursery onwards so that children leave our school equipped to articulate their ideas and respond to those of others
- Use GES Letters and Sounds to build a secure knowledge of the phonics skills children need for reading and for writing
- Teach children the transcriptional and grammatical skills essential for written communication.
- Use the Penpals scheme to support the teaching of handwriting
- Teach children to spell correctly using the No-Nonsense scheme

- Support children from Early Years to Year 6 to develop a rich and varied, age-appropriate vocabulary.
- Introduce children to a wide range of high-quality authors, texts and genres including a wide range of modern, classic and traditional stories, poems and plays, and a rich range of non-fiction texts.

## **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

In addition to the philosophy set out in the school's Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policies, we involve all children equally in the teaching and learning of English. We engage all children through the use of carefully selected texts, specially chosen for individual children where appropriate, engaging and appropriately pitched tasks, and a wide variety of enrichment activities to support all children in their English learning.

Children with particular needs are supported to make progress with personalized planning which may reflect their individual special interests or draw on a simpler book which links to the settings and themes of the whole class text. The planning will be developed according to their needs as assessed by their PIVATS and may include supportive technologies, for example using voice recognition software on Chromebooks or the use of Clicker for typing.

Some of our children are supported to build their pre-reading skills with a programme of specially selected books and activities to develop key listening and sound discrimination skills. They might, for example listen to a simple story which includes sound buttons for different animals, pointing to a visual of each animal as they recognise its sound.

## **Reading**

We aim to provide children with the necessary skills and opportunities to develop a lifelong love of reading coupled with the skills they need to read fluently and effectively. We do this by adopting an integrated approach which involves creative teaching using high quality texts, a wide range of genres and authors, regular visits by renowned writers and frequent, varied opportunities to read for pleasure. All children, in every class, are read aloud to every day from the selection of high quality books listed in our personalised Read Aloud Curriculum. These books, which include well-established classics alongside contemporary fiction and non-fiction, have been selected specifically for our diverse intake. Our attractive, regularly re-stocked classroom book corners also reflect our rich cohort. This allows every child to find themselves in a book and encourages the children's love of reading for pleasure. Children are involved in the selection of books for classroom book corners so that the range always involves many peer-to-peer recommendations as well as adult-led suggestions.

In addition to the above, children are supported to develop a love of reading through a rich range of activities. These include:

- Children of all ages are regularly encouraged to read / perform their own work as a means of celebrating their accomplishments in both reading and writing. They might, for example, read a favourite story to their peers or to younger children.
- 'Free reading' opportunities are given during all guided reading cycles of activities.
- KS1 children sometimes have an older child in the school as their 'Reading Buddy' with whom they share their favourite books.
- All classes have 'Listening Stations' where children can listen to audio books by significant children's authors.
- All English units are based upon high quality texts that are read to the children by their class teacher.
- In the younger years, parents are encouraged to sign up to read to their child's class.

- Vibrant and carefully curated book corners are regularly replenished with fact and fiction books. Fiction and non-fiction books related to a range of subject areas are ordered each term from Islington Education Library Services to supplement the titles held in our own library and book corners.

We are also part of a joint practice research group, Every Child a Reader by 7. As part of this, we collaborate with other schools across the borough to undertake and implement research to promote the high-quality teaching and learning of reading for our younger children. This might involve, for example, coffee mornings for parents, sending home booklets to explain the value and importance of reading, the use of a carefully developed flow chart to support teachers and TAs to analyse difficulties in early reading, and regular enrichment events, including author events provided by the British Library.

Children and parents are made aware, from EYFS onwards, of the close link between reading and writing and we encourage use of books to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills across all curriculum areas. Daily guided reading, whole class shared reading and “book talk” help to develop children’s comprehension skills and their awareness of the fact that reading conveys meaning.

All children in our school regularly take home, age appropriate reading books to share with adults or older siblings at home (and/or to read independently) to encourage their love of reading for pleasure and to encourage parental involvement in their child’s learning. Details of their reading are filled in in their reading records which are checked each week by parents and adults in school.

We support children to develop the phonetic skills they need to ‘decode’ by daily teaching of systematic synthetic phonics in Reception and Key Stage 1, and for those students who need it in Key Stage 2, following the **Global Education Services Simple Letters and Sounds** Systematic Synthetic Phonics program which was validated by the DFE in 2022. These lessons are designed to be as varied and enjoyable as possible.

Children's progress in phonics is tracked on a half termly basis (more frequently in Reception). In Reception, children at risk of falling behind are supported right from the start of phonics teaching with 2-3 additional small group reinforcement sessions a week to make sure they keep up and apply new learning.

### **Reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

In **Nursery** and **Reception**, children enjoy a wide range of nursery rhymes, traditional tales and books based around their own interests. They are read to as a whole class or in small groups on a daily basis and their topic work is themed around books and stories. They are given plenty of opportunity for role play and retelling, as well as for sharing their favourite books. Parents and Carers often drop by to read stories both in English and other languages. Children have free access to books in an engaging book corner, as well as opportunities to read books outside. In the Reception (Oak class), children also begin learning letters and sounds through phonics activities.

Core books read aloud in Nursery include:

**Leaf Man**

**We’re Going on a Bear Hunt**

**Stanley’s Stick**

**Errol’s Garden**

**Mr Wolfs Pancake**

In Reception, core books read to children include:

**I am the Hungry Finch**  
**So Much**  
**The Gigantic Turnip**  
**Leopards Drum**  
**The Magic Paintbrush**  
**The Hyena and the Jackal**

**Nursery** children take part in activities based on listening and sound discrimination. They might, for example, follow a rhythm using percussion or try to create and describe different animal sounds. They are encouraged to look at print in their environment and later in the year, to begin to orally sound out words or 'blend' words sounded out by an adult.

In **Reception**, children are encouraged to begin reading and writing more independently. They are taught phonics in a discrete daily session. They begin with **Phase 2 phonics** – alphabet sounds – in the Autumn term, then move on to **Phase 3** in the Spring term, learning to read and write using two and three letter sounds like 'ee' and 'igh'. In the Summer term, they tackle **Phase 4** phonics. There are plenty of opportunities for both guided and independent reading of phonetically decodable books. YR are also taught key word recognition alongside phonics to assist with sentence structure.

As well as choosing free choice books to take home for pleasure, children begin reading phonetically decodable books from the very beginning of their phonics learning.

In the Summer term, **Reception** children begin **Daily Supported Reading**. They read a decodable book every day in a small group either independently or supported by an adult. DSR runs alongside and complements their phonic learning. Children are encouraged to take home or look at 'real' books as well as decodable texts.

### **Key Stage 1 Reading**

The National Curriculum programmes of study for reading at key stage 1 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading (including phonics)
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

We ensure that we cover the statutory requirements, as outlined in the National Curriculum October 2013, through detailed attention to planning, and take opportunities for cross-curricular planning wherever possible.

In Key Stage 1, reading builds on work completed in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children's literacy units are based around high quality books, for example. **Beegu** or **The Tiger Who Came to Tea**. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of stories and books - being read to by adults as well as reading independently. As in the EYFS, children are taught in daily phonics lessons, following the **GES Letters and Sounds** programme. In Year 1, most children move on to Phase 5 phonics, learning different ways to write the same sounds, eg: a, ay, ai, aigh, eigh. In Year 2, they begin to learn spelling rules. There is a **Keep Up** intervention for those who may not have consolidated learning and a **Sustained Intervention** for those children who may need more time before they know the phonetic code securely. Children in Year 1 are additionally assessed in the Spring term and those who need additional support to pass the Year 1 Phonics Test receive additional support both in and out of class.

In Year 1, children continue to read phonetically decodable books using the Phonics Bugs scheme, both in class and through the on-line element. Books are matched to the phonics they are learning in class. Children also take part in Daily Supported Reading, reading independently or with an adult every day throughout the school year.

In Year 2, usually at the start of the Spring term, DSR gives way to daily 'guided reading' with a greater focus on independent reading or book-based activities. In both year groups, children are encouraged to choose and listen to 'real' books for pleasure as well as taking home 'phonetically decodable' readers.

## **Key Stage 2 Reading**

The National Curriculum programmes of study for reading at Key Stage 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

We ensure that we cover the statutory requirements, as outlined in the National Curriculum October 2013, through detailed attention to planning, and take opportunities for cross-curricular planning wherever possible. Children are taught phonics throughout year 1 and into Year 2. This intervention may run in KS2 for children who are still securing the code.

In Key Stage 2, as decoding skills become increasingly more secure following the daily phonics teaching received in key stage 1, children are taught to understand the meaning of words they read through knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes. Children are also encouraged to develop a greater understanding of an author's intentions through word choices and use of, for example, inference and deduction, and to articulate and justify their own views upon texts / author's intentions / language use etc. Children who are not yet secure in the phonetic code receive a **Sustained Intervention** to support them to catch up with their peers.

In Key Stage 2 our children further develop their vocabulary and breadth of reading across a wider range of books including poetry, plays, stories and information books. This is done through use of carefully chosen class texts (both linked to English units and stand-alone texts which are read to the children for pleasure), daily guided reading sessions in which children work in groups on a range of reading activities based upon carefully selected and levelled texts; shared reading in whole class teaching and playscript reading for class assemblies. They also continue to develop their ability to express and justify their own opinions on a range of texts and genres and to hone their wide range of reading skills and strategies.

## **Enrichment**

Our school's use of Islington Education Library Services and our close relationships with a specialist children's bookshop ensures that quality texts are always available to the children, in addition to the wide range of books found in our recently restocked classroom book corners and school library. Children take an active role in selecting books for book corners, with support and guidance from adults including regular visits from a Children's Bookshop with a pre-selected range of high quality diverse and inclusive books from which children can make a selection. Dual language books are also available in classrooms and in the library, including a high number of Bengali / English books to reflect our high numbers of Bengali children.

Our Key Stage 2 children enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular reading based opportunities in school. These include:

- assisting in the running of the school library

- maintaining classroom book corners (arranging books by text type and swapping books with those in the school library)
- participating in annual 'World Book Day' activities (for example, dressing as a favourite book character, recommending books in assembly)
- reviewing and recommending books to peers
- reading to peers and younger children
- visits from the local library to promote their summer reading programme.

In addition, a selection of our pupil premium children have regularly worked with the National World Book Day team on selecting the World Book Day £1 books which are available nationally each World Book Day.

We have a strong tradition of hosting stimulating author visits from a high profile selection of children's authors. These help to stimulate children's love of reading and familiarise them with the process of writing – not least, the importance of editing. Authors who have visited our school include:

Anthony Browne  
 Anne Fine  
 Michael Rosen  
 Chris Riddell  
 James Mayhew  
 Alexis Deacon  
 Jane Ray  
 Sita Brahmachari  
 Mini Grey  
 Chitra Soundar  
 Jane Elson  
 Nazneen Ahmed Pathak  
 Jamie Littler  
 Onjali Q. Rauf

When authors visit, our children meet them, have been made familiar with some of their work and then we encourage parents and carers to buy books at a book signing. Children are encouraged to discuss the books and recommend them to their peers both before and after the event. The school always purchases some copies so that all children may borrow and take these books home to read.

## **Writing**

Throughout the school, we teach writing in as creative and stimulating a manner as possible using a range of high quality texts and teaching approaches. We provide varied stimuli to motivate the children and support them prior to writing such as use of visual imagery and artefacts, speaking and listening / drama activities / games / art / DT / class assemblies to support writing. We also provide exciting real life experiences which children can then draw upon in their writing such as school-wide trips to the seaside, to pantomimes and puppet shows, to Hampstead Heath, to museums and dance venues. Children are able to use iPads, Chromebooks and Clicker to research and publish their written work.

We celebrate children's writing in a wide variety of ways such as publishing / illustrating their work in book format or on displays, giving children the opportunity to present and discuss their work with authors, encouraging children to read their work to peers and younger or older children, entering writing-based competitions eg: Camden Poetry Competition, the BBC 500 words short story competition.

Each year group from Year 1 up will have a list of non-negotiables for writing which will be stuck into the front of every child's English book (unless a set from an earlier year is more appropriate for a particular child). These can be opened during writing for ease of reference. They include the non-negotiables from earlier years so that children understand their ongoing importance and can refer back to them.

From the summer term of Year 1 onwards, teachers regularly 'mark for improvement' the children's extended writing. 'Golden writing' is highlighted and celebrated and children are asked specifically to edit/improve one section of their work. Suggested improvement prompts are given where necessary. Children then edit and improve their work and are encouraged to share their original and improved work with peers.

From Year 2 onwards, after appropriate adult modelling, children are encouraged to self and peer edit and assess written work, and to express opinions as to why they consider pieces of writing to be effective and how they think writing can be improved.

Teachers use structured Guided Writing sessions, working with groups of children with similar needs, to ensure that all children make progress in their writing.

From Years 1 – 6, independent, writing is assessed formally at least once a term, usually based on a specially selected film. This is then assessed using portfolios of moderated work which have been put together by a group of schools from across the borough, overseen by a former Borough Literacy consultant, now one of our own Governors.

A number of pupil premium children, and others who need additional support, receive additional tutoring in small groups to enable them to make accelerated progress.

### **Writing in the EYFS**

Children in the Early Years make marks at every opportunity, both indoors and outdoors. This could be painting with mud or water, using crayons, chalk or ink or writing on whiteboards. They are encouraged to explain and interpret the marks they make. They are also offered plenty of opportunity to develop the fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination they need to manipulate a pen or pencil to write. Once they have mastered this, they begin to practise writing their own names.

In Reception, children are encouraged to write in daily phonics lessons, in small guided groups and independently, often with a motivating real-life purpose. This could be taking orders in a role play restaurant, writing a story to read to the class, making a Wanted Poster for a missing toy or sending a postcard to friends and family. Children use their phonics both to read (sound out/blend) and to write (segment or break down) words. They are also taught a number of high frequency words like **you**, **we** or **the**. Over the year, children move from writing simple two and three letter words to whole sentences and stories. We use 'talk for writing' to build on their independence and knowledge of story language and structure. This involves retelling a story, often a traditional tale, as a class using actions. Once they can orally tell the story, children might story map it to support re-enactment, sequence pictures from the story or act it out using small-world characters before they attempt writing.

Reception children also have a weekly hand-writing session using the whole-school scheme PenPals for Handwriting Scheme. This encourages correct letter formation and pen control.

### **Key Stage 1 Writing**

The programmes of study for writing at Key Stage 1 are constructed in accordance with those for reading and include:



- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

We ensure that we cover the statutory requirements, as outlined in the National Curriculum October 2013, through detailed medium term and weekly planning, and take opportunities for cross-curricular planning wherever possible.

Children use their phonetic knowledge to help them to write. Spelling objectives are taught via the **GES Simple Letters and Sounds** program in Year1 and continue to be taught (along with termly grammar objectives and handwriting skills) both discretely and in the context of regular, high quality modelled writing, throughout the school. All children are taught handwriting using the PenPals for Handwriting scheme with regular handwriting practice.

In daily English lessons, children spend time reading high quality texts to provide them with examples of writing genres and styles. They also take part in spoken language activities across the curriculum, such as drama and role play, to develop their vocabulary and to rehearse orally what they would like to write. Children are also encouraged to express their ideas for a range of different purposes such as story-telling, poetry writing, list making, instructions, letter writing.

Wherever possible, children are given a specific purpose or context for learning at the outset in order to motivate them to write. For example, children may be told that they will be writing their own version of a story which will then be published and illustrated in a book format and 'launched' to parents or they may be asked to contribute ideas to an assembly playscript which they will later perform on stage for peers and family members.

Children are given regular opportunities to write. These writing opportunities might be during an English lesson, or within another curriculum area, such as science, History, Geography or Religious Education (RE). They are encouraged to plan their writing as well as to correct and improve it.

## **Key Stage 2 Writing**

The programmes of study for writing at Key Stage 2 are constructed in accordance with those for reading and include:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

We ensure that we cover the statutory requirements, as outlined in the National Curriculum October 2013, through detailed attention to planning, and take opportunities for cross-curricular planning where possible.

In Key Stage 2, grammar, spelling and handwriting continue to be taught discretely as appropriate and, especially in the in the case of grammar, as part of class work on high quality class texts, as well as through regular modelled writing. Wherever possible, from Year 2 onwards children are expected to use cursive script and a handwriting pen in order to increase their writing fluency.

Children are frequently given the opportunity to write for real purposes in order to develop awareness of their audience and an ability to write in a range of styles and formats. For example, posting persuasive letters to members of the business community or politicians, contributing to our school blogs, writing playscripts which they know will be performed by their peers and/or filmed for showing to parents, writing their own versions of a story or poem which they know could later be read by the original author on a visit, writing questions which will then be posed to visitors, completing an extended written project which will then be presented to peers and to parents in

'pop up' museums, completing work which children know is to be used for a classroom or corridor display.

Children are encouraged to take great pride in the content and appearance of all written work, across all curriculum areas, and are praised for doing so, both in their books and via texts sent home and by the display or publication of their work on school walls and in the newsletter / on the website.

## **Grammar**

Grammar is taught in context where possible, using examples from the class text or from children's daily activities. Children learn to understand grammar, sentence structure and Standard English. They are taught the difference between the grammar and syntax appropriate for formal speech or writing, and that appropriate in a more colloquial setting and to feel confident using Standard English where that is not their customary syntax.

## **Spelling**

We use a wide range of strategies throughout the school to develop and maintain children's spelling ability ie: the ability accurately to spell a wide range of words and to use phonics, and knowledge of spelling patterns, rules and morphology (word meaning) to enable them to spell unfamiliar words. Children are taught to use a range of skills, knowledge and understanding in tackling spellings which are unfamiliar, and reminded to be adventurous when selecting vocabulary.

Discrete, regular spelling lessons are taught from Year 1 upwards using the No Nonsense Spelling scheme. They are taught to use a range of strategies to learn new spellings including high frequency words and the spelling lists for children in Key Stages 1 and 2. Strategies used include: L S C W C (look, say, cover, write, check), the use of pyramids, 'spellmadoodles,' boxes, different colour pens for tricky elements in a word, and noughts and crosses-style games as well as strategies to use at the point of writing.

Spellings sent home for home-learning reinforce work done in school and give children and opportunity to practice newly-learnt words.

The NNS scheme also has a focus upon the morphology of related spellings. For example, knowing that:

- 're' means 'again' or 'back' for example redo, refresh, return, reappear, redecorate
- 'sub' means under for example subdivide, subheading, submarine, submerge
- 'inter' – means 'between' or 'among' for example interact, intercity, international, interrelated
- 'auto' means 'self' or 'own' such as autobiography and autograph

In addition, individual spelling rules are also taught during discrete spelling and phonics sessions as well as being highlighted by teachers during their modelled writing. Examples of this include:

- Pointing out that words ending in 'y' (party, baby, lady) are spelled 'ies' when made plural (parties, babies, ladies).
- Explaining that the suffix (word ending) 'ation' is added to verbs to form nouns for example information, adoration, sensation, preparation, admiration [Children would also be taught, at that stage, that the 'e' at the end of the verb has been removed prior to the suffix being added]
- Showing that the suffix 'ly' is added to an adjective to form an adverb for example: sadly, completely, usually.

We believe that if children are taught spelling in this manner (ie: by understanding the meanings of words and the rules that govern spellings of related words) they are more likely to understand, remember and – crucially – enjoy the process of spelling.

Children in years 2-6 are also regularly given spelling related investigations / activities both in school and for home learning to improve their wider spelling knowledge and ability to spell unfamiliar words.

Those individuals in Key Stage 1 and 2 who we identify as requiring additional assistance with phonics/spelling are offered additional English interventions and/or regular small group reading/writing/spelling sessions with experienced non-class-based practitioners and/or regular access to software programs such as Nessy and Units of Sounds.

## **Handwriting and Mark Making**

Children are expected to take care over their work and to present it to a high standard. They are reminded of this school-wide expectation through assemblies and in class.

Teachers are aware that the classroom environment, including tools provided, needs to support and encourage pupils in their quest to develop mark-making skills. This will ensure that appropriate pens, pencils and pencil grips and writing slopes are provided to support children as needed.

Displays and other environmental print demonstrate exemplary handwriting, as well as giving examples of typed labels and, where appropriate, good models of children's handwriting.

## **EYFS**

In EYFS, both indoor and outdoor writing and mark making opportunities are provided every day using a variety of tools from felt pens to water and paintbrushes. There are daily opportunities for developing the gross and fine motor skills needed for writing, eg: threading, cutting, using playdough, the workbench and outdoor climbing equipment. In addition, each classroom has a Fingergym area offering independent fine motor activities.

In Reception, children begin the whole-school PenPals for Handwriting scheme in the Autumn term. Initially, they focus on pre-writing skills like forming crosses, circles and spirals. They go on to practice letter formation which reinforces the work they do on letter formation in daily phonics lessons.

## **Key Stage 1 and 2**

From Years 1 - 6 children do multiple handwriting sessions each week using the PenPals interactive Resources as well as the PenPals books. The sessions focus not only on formation of letters and letter joins, but also on exercises to strengthen writing muscles. They form a progressive sequence which allows children to learn and practise individual letters and joins.

In Key Stage 1, children are taught to develop a comfortable and effective pen/pencil grip with increasing confidence and skills to develop a fluent cursive and printed style

In Key Stage 2, regular handwriting practice based around use of the interactive Nelson PenPals handwriting scheme and teacher modeling of printed/cursive style helps to develop children's style, stamina and speed.

By the end of Year 6, children should be able to write neatly, fluently and using their own preferred version of the different joins taught as part of the scheme.

## Speaking and Listening

We aim to develop children's confidence, competence and ability to use language clearly, audibly, appropriately and effectively in any situation. We want children to be able to articulate their own ideas and to listen and respond to those of others. Our school is a Rights Respecting School and children are taught to explain and justify their views, using the language of the UNCRC. When they leave our school, children should be equipped with oracy skills that will help to transform their learning and their life choices. Speaking and listening skills are embedded across the curriculum and in our wide range of enrichment activities.

School policies underpin our aims for children's oracy. Throughout the school these include:

- Use of InPrint visual symbols to support the learning of new vocabulary
- Use of Maketon to support vocabulary learning (for example during singing assemblies)
- Providing children with a wide variety of stimuli for talking eg: extensive class trips and visits, visitors to school, discussion of 'big ideas' in, e.g., R.E. and P.S.H.E., parental involvement
- Class Assemblies, which take place twice a year, are staged, dramatic performances which support children in learning to use rich, complex language in front of an audience
- Regular class / group discussions across the curriculum – learning partners, small groups, class wide, working collaboratively to develop ideas and solve problems.
- Use of picksticks to ensure all children speak in class
- Regular changes to learning partners and working groups
- The role of school council in developing children's ideas and taking them forward
- Use of peer mentors and older role models, for example to resolve playground disputes
- As members of a Rights Respecting (Gold Level) School, children learn to express themselves using both the UNCRC and their own class charters
- Regular Circle Times help children to voice their ideas in a supportive, problem-solving environment
- Games (PE and otherwise) that promote/require verbal cooperation
- Involvement of speech and language specialists and learning mentor to assist with particular issues / confidence etc.

We teach children to listen actively and carefully, and to demonstrate their understanding by considered responses, which are appropriately timed and delivered in a sensitive, constructive manner. These include:

- Daily reading aloud and discussion of what is being read
- Giving, receiving and acting upon instructions
- Use of audio equipment (talking books / listening corners)
- Providing appropriate thinking / response time
- Promoting a positive, considerate listening culture across the curriculum

Over twenty languages are spoken by our families. We value all our children's home languages, providing dual language books and, where possible, staff in school who can translate as needed. We have a high number of Bengali children and have enriched their learning by the provision of dual language books which the children can take home and keep, sharing them with parents and siblings, to read aloud in whichever of the two languages they prefer.

In **EYFS**, staff:

- Encourage active listening by creating opportunities for children to listen attentively to others in a range of situations, helping them develop understanding, concentration, and patience.
- Foster expressive language, encouraging children to use spoken language to express themselves clearly, articulate their ideas, ask questions, and engage in discussions with peers and adults.
- Support vocabulary development, expanding children's vocabulary through stories, songs, rhymes, and everyday conversations, introducing new words in meaningful contexts.
- Promote turn-taking and social interaction through structured activities and play which support turn-taking, sharing ideas, and listening to the contributions of others.
- Ask open-ended questions to prompt critical thinking and deeper conversation, allowing children to expand their ideas and develop reasoning skills.
- Are aware of pre-verbal communication, teaching children to recognize and use gestures, facial expressions and body language to enhance their interactions.
- Provide time for processing and responding, allowing children sufficient time to process what they hear and formulate their responses, thereby supporting different paces of language development.
- Model clear and rich language with clear pronunciation and sentence structures, and a rich variety of language, providing children with examples to emulate.

In **Key Stage 1 and 2**, children:

- Make regular use of drama and role play to develop their ideas before writing
- Learn a wide range of new vocabulary for different contexts and rehearse this orally before using it in their writing
- Learn about vocabulary, syntax and register appropriate to different environments
- Learn to use rhetorical techniques where appropriate
- Learn how to give reasons to support their own argument, and to argue for and against a proposition. For example, children learn to debate whether the Benin Bronzes should be returned to Nigeria.
- Learn to summarise sections of written texts orally
- Rehearsals for class assemblies develop children's ability to speak confidently in public, to adapt their tone as appropriate for their character and to respond to an audience.

Drama is a strength in our school and every class produces two dramatic production each year for class assemblies or, in the case of Year 6, an assembly and an end of year show. In addition, in Year 5, children work with the Primary Shakespeare Company to take part in the performance and study of a Shakespeare play to an audience of parents, teachers and children from other schools. This enriches their linguistic skills, their vocabulary and their performance skills and has a lasting impact on their confidence in public speaking.

### **Links with partners**

Parents play an essential role in supporting children's language development. A class letter is sent to parents at the start of each term informing them of the English units to be studied that term. Termly maps for each year group are available on the school's website and the English curriculum maps are also available to view on the website.

Children are expected to read regularly as part of daily homework routines and we expect parents to comment regularly on their child's reading in their Reading Record, which goes home every

day. This helps to build a relationship between parents, teacher and child based around the child's book choices.

Regular coffee mornings are held to encourage community links and to answer parent's queries about the subject.

Kentish Town C of E Primary School works with Beanstalk volunteer readers to provide extra reading support for those children who need it.

Regular contact with Schools Library Service allows us to offer a wide range of books in school, many of them tailored to individual children's needs.

Regular sessions with a Literacy Specialist and former Borough Literacy Advisor, now one of the school governor's, support the Literacy and Phonics Leads, and all teachers to develop and enhance the teaching and learning of English.

One of the English Leads regularly attends the Borough Literacy Leads group training sessions.

Speech and language therapists regularly work with children with particular needs.

The School English Leads, often working in conjunction with our governor who is a literacy specialist, monitor and observe the teaching and learning of various aspects of the English curriculum at least once a term. They then create impact statements evaluating efficacy across the school. These are fed back to governors for their input.