



English  
At  
St Herbert's RC Primary School



How to help your child in  
Year 4

# English in Year 4

In Lower Key Stage 2, your child will build on their work from KS1 to become more independent in both their reading and their writing. Children will be confident at decoding most words - or will have extra support to help them to do so - and so now they will be able to use their reading to support their learning about other subjects. In Year 4 English is taught through a scheme, Literacy and Language, which develops children's comprehension, writing and spoken language. It uses a unique layered approach to build children's comprehension and writing and teaches grammar in context, with a comprehensive grammar bank to build their knowledge. Literacy and Language engages children and develops their vocabulary using drama and discussion. Within the scheme they will begin to meet a wider range of writing contexts, including both fiction and non-fiction styles and genres.

## Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop.

In Years 3 and 4, some focuses include:

- Use discussion and conversation to explore and speculate about new ideas
- Begin to recognise the need to use Standard English in some contexts
- Participation in performances, plays and debates
- Explain thinking and feeling in well-structured statements and responses

## Reading skills

- Extend skills of decoding to tackle more complex words, including words with unusual spelling patterns
- Read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Recognise some different forms of poetry
- Use dictionaries to find the meanings of words
- Become familiar with a range of traditional and fairy tales, including telling some orally
- Identify words which have been chosen to interest the reader
- Ask questions about what they have read
- Draw simple inferences about events in a story, such as how a character might be feeling
- Make predictions about what might happen next in a story
- Summarise ideas from several paragraphs of writing
- Find and record information from non-fiction texts
- Take part in discussions about reading and books
- Begin to identify how authors choose words for effect, for example by selecting 'wailed' instead of 'cried', or 'enraged' rather than 'cross'. They may begin to make such choices in their own writing, too.

## Writing skills

- Write with joined handwriting, making appropriate join choices
- Spell words that include prefixes and suffixes, such as anticlockwise
- Spell some commonly misspelt words correctly, taken from the Y3/4 list
- Use a dictionary to check spellings
- Use possessive apostrophes correctly in regular and irregular plurals, such as children's and boys'
- Use examples of writing to help them to structure their own similar texts
- Plan out sentences orally to select adventurous vocabulary
- Use paragraphs to organise ideas
- Use description and detail to develop characters and settings in story writing
- Write interesting narratives in stories
- In non-fiction writing, use features such as sub-headings and bullet points
- Review their own work to make improvements, including editing for spelling errors
- Read others' writing and suggest possible improvements
- Read aloud work that they have written to be clearly understood
- Extend sentences using a wider range of conjunctions, including subordinating conjunctions
- Use the present perfect verb tense
- Use nouns and pronouns with care to avoid repetition
- Use conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to add detail about time or cause
- Use fronted adverbials
- Use direct speech, with correct punctuation

Children have a tendency to repeat nouns or pronouns, leading to several sentences containing 'He' or 'They'. They can use alternatives to make writing more interesting. For example, alternatives for describing an individual character might include: he, the burglar, Mr Smith, John, the criminal, the villain, etc. To add information to a sentence about its location, children might use conjunctions ("Although it was still early..."), adverbs ("Early that morning...") or prepositions ("At about six-thirty that morning..."). Often these techniques allow children to write more complex sentences.

# Ways for you to help your child at home...



## Speaking and Listening:

Encourage expression when they are talking and engage them in talk about topics they like. Encourage them to justify their opinions.

Try to get them to follow multi-step instructions or repeat information you have told them.

Many games involve thinking about the meaning of words, drama or spelling. There are many child friendly versions, including:

- Children's Scrabble
- Pictionary
- Charades
- Boggle
- Eye Spy
- 'Yes/No game'
- 'I went to the shops and I bought' etc.



## Reading:

- Share comics, magazines, bedtime stories and information books with an adult/older sibling.
- Encourage them to read with expression/voices.
- Look at illustrations (read the picture) and ask them to put a story to the picture.
- Question them about what they have read:

*Opinions - Do you like this word the author has chosen? Why?*

*Which words tell you about the sort of person the character in the story is? Can you find words within the text? Where is the key word \_\_\_\_\_?*



## Writing:

- Encourage the use of capital letters and full stops to show sentences and extend to question marks and exclamation marks.
- Give them a reason for writing - thank-you letters for Birthday and Christmas presents, writing to pen-friends etc.
- Encourage them to describe things they see (adjectives and adverbs or WOW words).
- During school holidays encourage your child to keep a diary (aim for 5 -10 sentences a day). This will help to avoid the "holiday dip" many children experience after a long time without writing.

## Grammar:

For many parents, the grammatical terminology used in schools may not be familiar. Here are some useful reminders of some of the terms used:

- Present perfect tense: a tense formed using the verb 'have' and a participle, to indicate that an action has been completed at an unspecified time, e.g. The girl has eaten her ice-cream
- Fronted adverbial: a word or phrase which describes the time, place or manner of an action, which is placed at the start of the sentence, e.g. "Before breakfast,..." or "Carrying a heavy bag,..."
- Direct speech: words quoted directly using inverted commas, as opposed to being reported in a sentence

By the end of Y4, your child should be able to read and spell the following words easily, in and out of context:

accident	century	experiment	interest	particular	remember
accidentally	certain	extreme	island	peculiar	sentence
actual	circle	famous	knowledge	perhaps	separate
actually	complete	favourite	learn	popular	special
address	consider	February	length	position	straight
answer	continue	forward(s)	library	possess	strange
appear	decide	fruit	material	possession	strength
arrive	describe	grammar	medicine	possible	suppose
believe	different	group	mention	potatoes	surprise
bicycle	difficult	guard	minute	pressure	therefore
breath	disappear	guide	natural	probably	though
breathe	early	heard	naughty	promise	although
build	earth	heart	notice	purpose	thought
busy	eight	height	occasion	quarter	through
business	eighth	history	occasionally	question	various
calendar	enough	imagine	often	recent	weight
caught	exercise	increase	opposite	regular	woman
centre	experience	important	ordinary	reign	women

## How we teach Speaking and Listening

The aim is for children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions clearly and, as well as listening to and reflecting on the ideas of others.

We encourage children to turn-take in conversations and adapt their speech to a range of situations and audiences.

The children are encouraged through drama activities (and in many other curriculum areas) to investigate and experiment with movement, speech, space, physical objects and sound. They may be told to mime situations in drama to increase inventiveness and to develop non-verbal communication skills.

Through group work the children's skills for negotiating and decision-making are developed e.g. role play, mime, and puppetry.

The children are encouraged to offer a personal response to the performances of others, e.g. other pupils, amateur and professional groups.

Speaking and Listening is promoted through class assemblies, circle time, discussion, turn taking, role-play activities, hot-seating, acting out of play scripts, improvisation and debating opportunities.

## How we teach Reading

We aim for the children to be able to read fluently and accurately for pleasure. We want them to become fluent readers with the skills to access, engage with and enjoy a wide range of texts.

We encourage children to read voluntarily for pleasure and to develop the ability to read fluently and with understanding.

We teach the children about different styles of reading material; fairy tales, reports, etc.

In Guided Reading sessions children are involved in lots of discussion, reflection and questioning about the text. They follow the same text in groups, usually with an adult to support.

## How we teach Writing

Children are taught to match their writing style to differing audiences and purpose and to regard themselves as 'writers'.

We aim for the children to write independently and to develop their ability to write in a wide range of genre, both fiction and non-fiction. They are taught the skills of planning, drafting, revising and editing their work and that of others.

Handwriting lessons encourage children to form their letters in a cursive script. They should be joining their letters together to produce neat, fluent handwriting.

## Spelling

Our aim is to encourage pupils to become independent and accurate in their spelling. We also want children to be confident in using a wide vocabulary in their writing and to be aware of the difference between spoken dialect and written Standard English.

The "Look, Cover, Write, Check" method of spelling is a good visual approach to the learning of spelling.

## Handwriting

Your child should be aiming to join all letters in their written work. Every pupil should develop a clear, legible and fluent cursive style that is capable of being written at reasonable speed.

English & RWI Lead, February 2017