

English at Icen Primary Academy



"The first draft is just you telling yourself the story." Terry Pratchett

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island." Walt Disney

"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." Malala Yousafzai



Intent

At Icen Primary Academy, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills that enable children to access all learning across the curriculum and participate fully as a member of society.

The aim of our English curriculum is to develop each child's abilities in reading, writing and speaking and listening, so that they leave our school with the skills to communicate their ideas and emotions confidently and give them a deeper understanding of the world they inhabit. We give the highest priority to the acquisition and development of language and vocabulary through carefully structured teaching and support.

Our English curriculum is carefully planned to expose children to a wide range of texts, stories, poems and authors from different cultural and contextual backgrounds, so that children can both see themselves reflected in, and develop an appreciation of the diversity of the world, through their learning.

At Icen Primary Academy, we have the highest expectations of all children, providing a broad range of learning and experiences to enable every child to fulfil their potential.

Implementation

As a school we follow the 'Talk for Writing' approach to teaching English. We use the core principles of vocabulary acquisition, high quality text models and a high level of guided teaching to underpin our English teaching. 'Talk for Writing' is a structured programme, which follows the model outlined below:

- Baseline assessment and planning using a 'cold task'
- Imitation – fluency, vocabulary and comprehension
- Innovation – writing closely linked to a model text
- Independent application and invention using a 'hot task'

We strongly believe that reading underpins all learning across the curriculum, so we place the strongest emphasis on developing children's reading skills from the start of their time with us at Icen. We use a range of approaches to teach children how to decode, develop fluency and comprehension and foster a love of reading.

We teach phonics systematically and progressively using 'Little Wandle' in EYFS and year one and provide additional support as needed within Key Stage Two. As they move through school, children start on the Bear Cub project, receiving stickers each week leading to a reward each term, culminating in receiving their very own Bear cubs at the end of reception and Year One. From year two, the children are introduced to the BEAR project, our progressive, colour banded scheme that will accompany children on their reading journey through our school, when children pass on to a new level, they receive a bear or they can visit the bear exchange. Through these rewards the children are encouraged to read regularly at home with their parents and guardians. We have a volunteer reader to spend time and provide some children with an extra opportunity to read. We also use 'Reading Eggs' to provide an alternative way for children to access reading.

Every class has a class novel and daily time that is dedicated to reading this as a whole class with their class teacher. These texts are chosen for a variety of reasons, including to promote love of reading, link to a specific subject area or to consider the diversity of the authors, characters and settings that our children have access to. We use the 'Books for Topics' lists for inspiration. Every classroom has a class bookcase, children choose to read these books in school and at home to supplement their banded reading books.

In addition to our whole class English teaching, children take part in whole class reading sessions every week. The focus of these sessions is to develop children's fluency and understanding of their reading. In Key Stage One the children are introduced to the 'Totally Pawsome' gang, five clever canines that introduce the children to the skills needed for reading. In Key Stage Two we continue our use of the dogs and introduce two new characters in a weekly session aimed at the individual skills. We teach reading fluency, whole class, using the Fluency Factory which exposes the children to a whole host of different high quality texts using repeated, choral, and paired reading culminating in questioning linked to the different reading skills.

We believe that children can only develop into fluent, confident writers when they learn specific skills in isolation before having the opportunity to apply these to a wide range of engaging and meaningful contexts. Using the 'Talk for Writing' model, children learn a model text that they are then able to retell, rewrite and create their own writing based upon.

Grammar, including punctuation, is taught through our teaching of writing to provide a real purpose and understanding. Our focus for the unit is determined from the key features of the model text and identified areas of need through the children's 'cold tasks'. These taught skills are then applied in their innovated and independent writing at the end of each unit.

We place a high focus on the presentation of work and consider it vital that children develop a fluent style of cursive handwriting that allows greater focus to be placed on the content of the writing. Handwriting is taught daily throughout the school.

Speaking and listening form an integral part of the 'Talk for Writing' process and we place great importance on the development of children's language. Within English lessons, teachers identify new vocabulary and teach children to understand and apply this vocabulary throughout a unit of work.

Assessment for Learning is embedded in English lessons and children are active in reviewing the successes in their work and identifying, with support from their teacher, target areas for development to ensure a continuous and individualised approach to improving their work.

Impact

Assessment at all levels is embedded within our English provision. Throughout KS2, children are taught to assess their own learning, identifying successes and areas of improvement for themselves.

Children are regularly given feedback from teaching staff to move learning on and accelerate progress. Staff use questioning and live marking effectively to identify misconceptions and address these quickly through timely intervention, additional support and adjustments to planning.

Every term, children in Key Stage Two carry out more formal testing, which supports teachers in identifying and addressing gaps in children's understanding.

Children in school enjoy English and develop into fluent readers and confident writers, which is reflected in children's work and our results in end of Key Stage Two assessments. We measure the impact of this in a range of ways, including:

- Learning walks
- Lesson observation and feedback
- Book looks
- Pupil voice conversations
- Team planning and teaching
- Staff meeting training and discussion

- Termly summative assessments
- In-house and trust moderation
- External testing

Marking and Feedback

Work is marked according to the school marking policy by using

- Peer and self-assessment
- Oral feedback
- Written feedback

Inclusion

At Icen Primary Academy, we are committed to ensuring that every child can thrive. We adapt teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Our inclusive approach ensures that children receive the support and resources they need to succeed in every aspect of their education.

Our staff work closely with families, external agencies, and specialists to ensure that provision is continually reviewed and refined. We believe that with the right support, every child can achieve their full potential.

Our SEND Information Report is available on our website. Please ask if you would like us to print a copy out.

English in EYFS

Storytelling and Vocabulary

Each half term, children learn a new story using the **Pie Corbett Talk for Writing** approach. Through actions and repetition, they develop storytelling skills, vocabulary, and memory—laying the foundation for writing across genres, including fiction, non-fiction, and persuasive texts.

As well as teaching phonics using Little Wandle, children also take a sharing book home to encourage reading for pleasure.

Writing

Writing is developed through:

- **Funky Fingers, Dough Disco, and cutting activities** build fine motor skills.
- Writing is embedded in phonics sessions (on boards, in the air, and in books).
- **Talk for Writing:** Storytelling, actions, and repetition
- **Fine Motor Development:** Funky Fingers, Dough Disco, cutting activities
- **Correct Pencil Grip:** Embedded in daily routines

We ensure children learn correct **letter formation** and **sound pronunciation**.

Vocabulary & Interaction

Developed by:

- **Talk Boost** and **Wellcomm** to support speech and language development.
- **Snack time** doubles as a social and storytelling opportunity.
- Adults consistently **introduce new vocabulary** and model correct speech in meaningful contexts.
- **Vocabulary Building:** Through topic sessions, phonics, and weekly Communication & Language sessions:

Communication and Language

At Icen Primary Academy, we recognise that strong communication and language skills are the foundation for future learning, particularly in reading and writing. In the Early Years, we create a language-rich environment where children are immersed in high-quality interactions, stories, songs, and rhymes. Through carefully planned play and adult-led experiences, children develop their listening, attention, understanding, and speaking skills.

We follow the principles of *Development Matters*, ensuring that children are supported to:

- Engage in meaningful conversations with adults and peers.
- Develop vocabulary through storytelling, role play, and topic-based learning.
- Express themselves clearly and confidently in a range of contexts.

- Listen attentively and respond appropriately to questions and instructions.

Our approach is underpinned by the belief that communication is key to unlocking learning. We prioritise early language development through targeted interventions, modelling rich vocabulary, and fostering a love of books and storytelling. These experiences lay the groundwork for phonics, reading comprehension, and writing fluency as children move through their learning journey.

One aspect of this is our weekly communication and Language sessions where we introduce new words and their meaning is our Word Aware sessions.

Please ask for Our EYFS curriculum document for further guidance.

Link to the National Curriculum

[National curriculum in England: English programmes of study - GOV.UK](#)

If you require further information, please do email iceniprimary@attrust.org.uk