

## North Hill House School English Procedure – Guidance for Writing

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<b>Related policies &amp; procedures include:</b>	Curriculum Teaching and Learning Assessment and Progress Marking and Feedback

### The purpose of this procedure:

- This procedure reflects the vision and values of North Hill House School. It ensures all stakeholders, including staff, governors, parents and students, are working towards the same goals.
- Set out a framework for all teaching and non-teaching staff, giving guidance on planning, teaching and assessment.
- Demonstrate how we consider the National Curriculum objectives and guidelines.
- Provide clear information to parents and carers about what their children will be taught.
- Allow all quality assurance leads to monitor the curriculum.
- Provide evidence of curriculum planning and implementation.

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## **Intent**

### **1.Vision & Aims**

At North Hill House, English lies at the heart of Learning for Life and Beyond. Through English, our pupils gain the vital skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening that enable them to succeed in school, in further study, in employment, and in life. We believe that every pupil deserves the opportunity to experience the power of language and literature: to tell their own stories, to access the voices of others, and to engage critically with the world around them.

Our curriculum is autism-aware: it provides clear structure, predictable routines, and visual supports so that all pupils can access ambitious content. We use adapted resources and flexible teaching approaches to reduce barriers, while ensuring that expectations remain high for every learner. By valuing different ways of thinking and communicating, we celebrate individuality and support pupils to find their own voices.

Our aims are that pupils will:

- read with confidence and understanding, accessing a wide range of texts that broaden horizons and build cultural capital
- write and speak with clarity, developing the communication skills needed for both daily life and future success
- enjoy literature, exploring diverse stories and ideas that encourage empathy and imagination
- develop independence and critical thinking, enabling them to question, analyse and reflect in a way that is meaningful for them.

The study of English also reflects our Otter Values:

- Resilience – pupils persevere through challenging texts and tasks, learning that effort leads to progress.
- Teamwork – pupils collaborate through structured discussion, debate and shared reading, learning how to listen as well as contribute.
- Safety – our classrooms are safe, autism-aware spaces where pupils can express themselves without fear of judgement.
- Excellence – we set ambitious goals for all pupils and support them to achieve their best.
- Ownership – pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and to see themselves as lifelong learners.
- Thoughtfulness – pupils are supported to reflect carefully on their own ideas and to consider the perspectives of others.
- By studying English at North Hill House, pupils are equipped with the communication, creativity, empathy and confidence they will need for life beyond school.

## **2. Curriculum Overview**

At North Hill House, English is central to our vision of Learning for Life and Beyond. The English curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, autism-aware, and trauma-informed. Many of our pupils join us having experienced disrupted education and previous trauma; therefore, our curriculum prioritises safety, structure, and consistency, giving pupils the confidence to re-engage with learning.

Our curriculum is designed as a spiral: key skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening are revisited and deepened as pupils move through each key stage. This allows pupils to build secure foundations and make meaningful progress, regardless of their starting point.

### **Primary (KS1 & KS2)**

- Rebuilding confidence and enjoyment in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Use of phonics and structured reading programmes to support fluency where there are gaps in phonic knowledge.
- Exposure to a wide range of stories, poems, and non-fiction to develop imagination and vocabulary.
- Focus on oracy: speaking in full sentences, sharing ideas, listening to others.
- Small-step grammar, spelling, and punctuation taught through engaging texts and cross-curricular themes.
- Trauma-informed strategies: repetition, predictable routines, and creative expression to build trust.

### **Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)**

- Consolidating reading, writing, and communication skills.
- Exploring a broad range of texts: classic literature, modern novels, plays, poetry, and non-fiction.
- Developing analytical skills: identifying language devices, structure, and writer's purpose.
- Emphasis on creativity through imaginative writing and performance.
- Spiral revisiting of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary to strengthen foundations.

- Autism-aware practice: clear structure, visual scaffolds, overlearning, and opportunities for sensory breaks.

## **Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)**

- Pupils follow a pathway suited to their needs and aspirations:
  - Edexcel IGCSE English Language (4EA1) – coursework and exam route.
  - Edexcel IGCSE English Literature (4ET1) – set texts such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and poetry anthology.
  - Edexcel Functional Skills English (Entry Level to Level 2) – practical literacy for everyday life.
- Key focus areas:
  - Analytical reading of extracts and whole texts.
  - Writing for different audiences and purposes (creative, persuasive, transactional).
  - Spoken language tasks that build communication confidence.
  - Exam preparation supported by scaffolds, modelling, and frequent retrieval practice.
- Trauma-informed strategies: low-stakes practice, safe space for mistakes, explicit praise and reinforcement.

Further details can be found in our curriculum overview document.

## **Implementation**

### **3. Teaching and learning**

At North Hill House, English is taught in small groups, allowing teachers to personalise learning, build strong relationships, and adapt to the individual needs of pupils. Lessons are carefully structured to provide a balance of support, challenge, and creativity.

#### **How we teach English:**

- Small-group teaching – enables targeted support, close monitoring, and consistent routines.

- Discussion-based learning – pupils develop ideas through structured conversations, learning to listen, respond, and build on each other’s views.
- Key texts and textbooks – anchor lessons in rich, ambitious literature and provide models for language and structure.
- Technology to support learning – including assistive technology, online texts, audiobooks, and word processors to reduce barriers for pupils with reading or writing difficulties.
- Watching and exploring drama – pupils watch adaptations of set texts and, where comfortable, take part in drama activities such as role-play and performance to deepen understanding.
- Scaffolding for reading and writing – differentiated resources, word banks, sentence starters, visual supports, and one-to-one help where needed.
- Therapy dog reading support – pupils who find reading and writing challenging or stressful are given opportunities to read aloud to or work alongside the school’s reading therapy dog, reducing anxiety, increasing motivation, and building fluency in a calm, non-judgemental environment.
- Creative approaches – opportunities for imaginative writing, discussing real-world issues, and linking literature to pupils’ own experiences.
- Trauma-informed practice – predictable routines, low-stakes rehearsal, and safe spaces for pupils to make mistakes without fear.

#### **4. Assessment and monitoring progress**

North Hill House School uses assessment to enable staff to understand what students have learnt before, what they need to learn now and what they will learn next.

As per school policy, students are assessed at two assessment points in a half term topic. This may be in the form of a test, independent question or piece of work, or may be more discrete, depending on the needs of the student.

Students learn of their progress in each subject through ‘subject overview sheets’ and are given the opportunity to improve a piece of work after assessment. Students can see if they have ‘not quite, nearly, achieved or exceeded’ a learning outcome.

Teachers use assessment to make decisions on whether a student is working above at or below each curriculum level. For example, a student following a Year 7

curriculum may be working at 7- (just below a Y7 level), 7= (at Year 7 level) or 7+ (working above a Y7 level)

Assessment in English at North Hill House is designed to be inclusive, meaningful, and responsive. It ensures that every pupil makes progress from their individual starting points while avoiding unnecessary pressure or anxiety.

### **Baseline Assessment**

- On entry, all pupils complete a baseline assessment in reading and writing.
- We use standardised tests, teacher observation, teacher set tasks and work samples to identify strengths, gaps, and support needs.
- Reading ages are measured so that interventions (e.g. phonics, Accelerated Reader, therapy dog reading and writing support) can begin early in the school year.
- For pupils with disrupted education, baselines are flexible and may be broken into smaller, low-stakes tasks to build trust and confidence.

### **Formative assessment**

- Teachers use regular low-stakes assessment (e.g. quizzes, retrieval practice, short writing tasks, guided discussions) to check understanding.
- Feedback is verbal, visual, and written, depending on what best supports the pupil.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-assess where possible using simple checklists and success criteria.
- This allows teachers to adapt lessons in real time and revisit skills when needed.

### **Summative assessment**

- At the end of a unit, pupils complete assessment tasks that reflect the intended Assessment Outcomes. This could involve essay writing, reading comprehension, creative/transactional writing.
- Assessments are adapted where necessary (scaffolds, visuals, orals) to ensure accessibility while maintaining ambition.
- KS4 pupils sit mock exams in Year 10 and Year 11 to prepare for formal assessments.
- Summative results are used to track progress and inform future teaching as well as whole-school data analysis.

### **Marking & Feedback**

- Marking follows a strengths-based approach, highlighting what pupils have achieved and one specific target for improvement.

- Extended pieces are marked against IGCSE Assessment Objectives or Functional Skills criteria, simplified into pupil-friendly language.
- Pupils are given time to respond to feedback (“purple pen time” or supported editing sessions).
- Feedback is designed to be manageable, meaningful, and motivating, especially for autistic pupils who may feel anxious about correction.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

Catherine Townsend- English Curriculum Lead

Laura Van Dyke- Primary Curriculum Lead

Heather Chapple- Semi-Formal Curriculum in English and Phonics Lead

David Graham- Secondary English Teacher

Pam Kerslake-Secondary English Teacher

Tina Jones- Year 7 Teacher

Kerry Tarrant- English Teacher

Katrin Faulkes- Semi-Formal Primary Teacher

Josef Gosden- Teacher in The Hub