



Agate Momentum Trust

English Policy

This English policy is a working document. It affects all key stages and was last reviewed in February 2018.

Philosophy

The Agate Momentum Trust strongly believes that English is a significant life skill that is essential to participating fully as a member of society. We aim to develop the abilities of all children in our schools to communicate their ideas effectively in speech and writing. We also believe that by developing the reading and listening skills in our pupils they will become effective communicators.

Aims

The Agate Momentum Trust aims to develop the following in all children, irrespective of background, race or gender:

- A love for reading where pupils choose to read frequently for enjoyment;
- The ability to read fluently and with good understanding;
- A strong command of written and spoken English in order to communicate effectively with others;
- A strong awareness of audience and the ability to adapt their language and style for different purposes;
- An interest in words and their meanings to acquire a wide vocabulary;
- A good understanding of grammar and punctuation;
- A legible fluent handwriting style;
- The confidence and competence to produce high quality writing and solve problems through the application of knowledge and skills;
- The powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.

Objectives

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- To develop in children a love of books by exposing them to a wide variety of quality literature;
- To teach the basic skills of writing – grammar, spelling, handwriting and punctuation – in order to liberate creativity;
- To foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in written form;
- To enable all children to reach their full potential in becoming primary literate pupils by the time they leave at the end of Y6 irrespective of race, gender, physical or intellectual difficulties or special needs;
- To identify pupils who require additional support and intervene at an early stage.

Writing

We use Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing approach to teach writing across the trust from the foundation stage up to Y6. We spend five hours a week (one a day) on the teaching of writing. Texts and toolkit foci are outlined on the curriculum overview and where possible the non-fiction units are linked to the fiction.



The Talk for Writing process

www.talk4writing.com

Planning

- Baseline assessment (cold task = 'have a go')
 - set targets
- Refine language & adapt model text
- Test Model:
 - box-it-up
 - analyse it
 - plan toolkit




Teachers set Cold Tasks prior to teaching and planning a fiction or non-fiction unit. The outcomes are then assessed by the teacher so that they can effectively plan a unit that meets the children's needs.

Targets are set one or two targets from each cold task and these are kept in the front of children's books. The children evidence where they have achieved their targets in their writing by underlining them in a coloured pencil.




Teachers produce a shortened version of the model text that is less than 400 words. The text should address the areas that the teacher has planned to teach based on their assessment of the children's cold task and may need adapting year on year as the needs of the children change.

The teacher should test that the model works by boxing it up, generating a toolkit and matching it to one of the generic plot types. Teachers planning is evident through the use of ActivInspire flipcharts and their mapping out of the unit using the Talk for Writing learning journey.

1. Imitation



- Creative hook & context
- Warm up words / phrases / sentences / short-burst writing
- Internalise model text - text map
- Deepen understanding e.g. drama
- Reading as a reader:
 - vocab
 - comprehension
- Reading as a writer:
 - box-up text
 - analyse features
 - co-construct toolkit



Make learning visible

Children in all year groups are 'hooked' into the text through the use of immersive experiences.

Jumpstart activities are used to warm children up to the tune of the text. These activities are also used to teach word and sentence level grammar and they are used throughout the unit at the start of lessons and in grammar sessions.

Teachers create text maps to help the children learn the story. It is expected that all children can retell the story using the map and they are sent home for consolidation.

The children's understanding of the text is deepened through drama experiences and reading as a reader. This is done by using the same approach that we use in our reading lessons and can be found in the reading section of this policy.

Shortburst writing is often used at the reading stage so that the teacher can assess the children's understanding of the text. This might include, for example, writing a diary entry in role as a character from the text.

Once the children have understood and learned the text, the children generate a toolkit from the model. Sometimes an additional model is used and the teacher will elaborate on a part of the story to model the effective use of a particular toolkit (openings, endings, settings, description, characterization and suspense).

Teachers use the line by line approach in order to co-construct a toolkit that will help them in their innovation. Shortburst writing is used to practise the toolkit.

2. Innovation



- Box-up version & talk the text
- Shared writing - innovate on model
- Pupils write own version: peer assess
- Teacher assesses work - plans next steps
- Feedback and improvement



Children box up the text and identify the generic plot type (e.g. wishing tale, rags to riches, journey tale, meeting tale etc.). The children then use the generic plot type to plan their own story. Stories are generally boxed up into five parts and we will typically spend one day writing each part.

Teachers are expected to model writing each day during the writing phase and share the thought process as they write. Children are invited to contribute to the teacher's model write where appropriate and teachers should highlight opportunities for collaboration in their pre-prepared paragraph.

Pupils write their own version of the story by writing one part from their plan each day and children orally rehearse their sentences before they are written down.

Teachers provide immediate feedback in lessons using highlighter pens and provide feedback on what has been effective as well as potential areas for improvement. Visualisers are used throughout for feedback and editing.

If there are aspects that need re-teaching, this is done before the children move onto their independent application/hot task.

Final assessment

- Compare Cold/hot
- Assess progress



Finally, the children plan a new version of the text using the generic structure and write this over two/three days. Opportunities for editing are provided, sometimes in separate lessons in which the skill is taught, and the children produce published versions to share. These pieces are used for assessment purposes.

Creative Writing

Invention days take place three times a year in the autumn, spring and summer term. Children are provided with a stimulus and are given the freedom to choose what they would like to write in response to it.

During invention days, the writing process is made explicit:

- Generating ideas
- Planning
- Drafting
- Editing
- Publishing

Phonics

Reading is taught discretely on a daily basis. We use a systematic phonics approach to teach reading using the Ruth Miskin RWI model. Pupils are grouped according to their reading attainment across phases. The class teacher has overall responsibility for the teaching of reading within their class however, many teaching assistants are trained to teach RWI and have their own small groups.

In reception, the focus is on the children sounding and blending unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately. Children are taught the following skills:

- To discriminate between separate sounds in words
- Grapheme-phoneme correspondence
- To apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read individual words
- To recognise sight vocabulary, also known as 'tricky words' or red words

It is the aim that by the end of KS1, all children should be able to decode quickly in order for them to be able to develop the breadth and depth of their reading and become enthusiastic readers. As soon as pupils can decode and read fluently, they are taken off the RWI programme and learn through Literacy and Language.

Any children not making the expected progress in each year group will be identified immediately and receive 1:1 RWI support in the afternoons.

Formal assessments of reading are carried out termly and reading groups are continuously monitored to ensure that children are in the correct groups and making good progress.

Reading

Part One - Engage

Prior Knowledge – children are presented with a big question which will activate the children’s prior knowledge about the text. Children engage in dialogue to answer the big question.

Decoding – children read the text for the first time.

Clarifying – children identify any unfamiliar words and phrases in the text. The teacher will have already identified these at the planning stage and will have separated them into tier two and tier three words. The teacher uses visuals to tell the children the meaning of these low frequency, subject specific, tier three words.

The time teaching vocabulary is spent exploring the tier two words, many of which will have multiple meanings and the children will be required to understand them in context. Teachers will model the strategies they use to work out the meaning of new words (looking for root words, reading around the word and to the end of the page, substituting with another word which still makes sense and using pictures as clues if there are any available).

Vocabulary questions can be asked at this stage, for example, find a word which means the same as _____.

Vocabulary grids like the following one can be used for one or two carefully chosen tier two words and children can add any of the new words to their magpie books.

Target word	How is it used in the text	What clues to the words meaning can you see?	Examples of where you have heard or seen the word	Dictionary definitions (more than one dictionary)	New examples/quotations
Declaration	“Mr Oakley, with the declaration of war imminent.....”	declare (to say something) -ation (the action or process of doing something)	I think I have heard it at a wedding "I now declare you man and wife. "	a positive, explicit, or formal statement; proclamation: a declaration of war.	

Semantic maps can also be used to deepen children’s understanding of words with multiple meanings.

Questioning - During part one, the children will have the opportunity to ask questions of the text. The teacher will choose an interesting question from the ones the children have come up with to discuss in partners and then as a class.

Dialogue – This is the most important aspect of part one and can be done in a number of ways, The teacher should act as the facilitator and the purpose of the dialogue should be for the children to reach their own shared understanding of the text, rather than trying to guess what is in the teacher’s head.

The teacher will use the following techniques will be used to ensure quality dialogue takes place:

- **Wait** before offering statements, prompts, or even thoughts, to give pupils an opportunity to voice their ideas first
- **Support** and encourage pupils to ask their own questions and lead the discussion
- **Use paired talk** as a strategy to give pupils time to think and formulate better answers before contributing to the group discussion
- **Encourage** children to respond directly to what others in the group say

Dialogue may be structured in one of the following ways:

- **Silent discussion** – children write a written response to the text and pass it on to their partner. The children are encouraged to add to what their partner has said and challenge them if they disagree with anything. Once their partner has replied to them, it is passed to the next person for them to respond too. It is then returned to the person who wrote the original response for them to read. Children share whether or not their partner has changed their mind about anything they originally thought.
- **Speed dating** – Inner circle talks, outer circle listens – children move around circle after one minute and get a new partner. This time outer circle talks while inner circle listens.
- **Popcorn** – children stand up randomly to share their thoughts on what they have read. Children are encouraged to respond directly to each other by agreeing, disagreeing and building on what has been said previously. The children should ideally reach a shared understanding of what they have read.
- **Literature circle** – the first person talks while the rest listen. The other children can’t interrupt or question the speaker at this stage. Once they have finished, we move around the circle and then the next person has their chance to speak.

Part Two - Elaborate

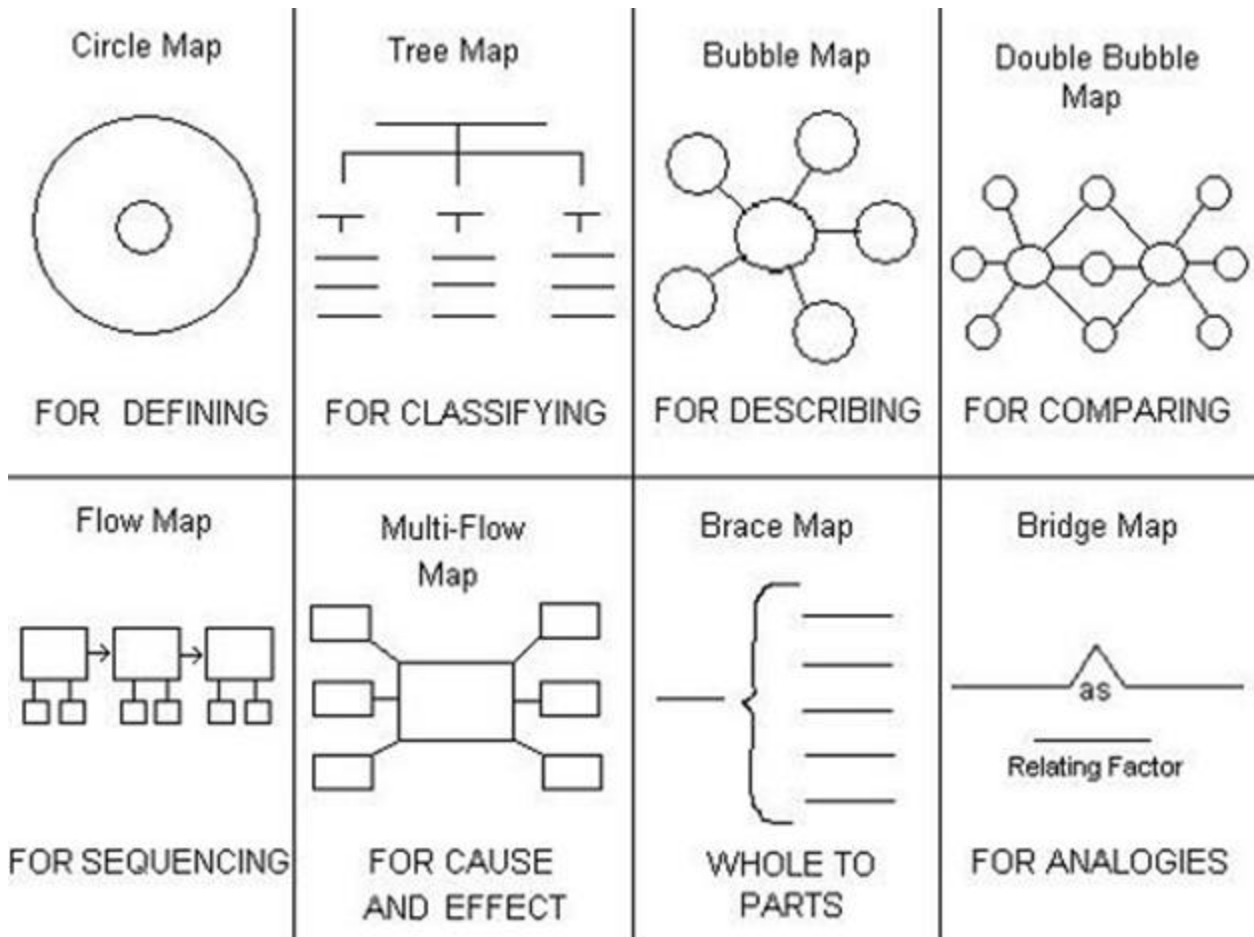
Vocabulary – The meanings of tier two and three words are revised.

Inference tasks - Teachers set the following tasks so that children can develop the inference making skills:

- **Explain a page/Thinking out loud** – Teacher models reading part of the text and then verbalizes and annotates what they have understood after each few sentences. Children then complete the same activity at tables for the next page/part of the text.

- **Add the missing sentence** – children add a sentence between two preselected sentences in the text to show what they have read ‘between the lines’.

Semantic Maps – Children are given the opportunity to use semantic maps to make connections between aspects of the texts.



Predictions – Children make predictions about what might happen next based on the evidence in the text and their prior knowledge.

Questioning – Children write questions that fit into the following categories:

<p>The answer is in the text (one possible answer)</p>	<p>The answer is in the text (many possible answer)</p>
<p>The answer is not in the text (one possible answer)</p>	<p>The answer is not in the text (many possible answer)</p>

Part Three - Summarise

Visualising – children create a pictorial map to show the main four/six events of the story.

Summarising – children create a headline for the text to summarise it in as few words as possible.

Comprehending – children answer comprehension questions to demonstrate the understanding they have reached after going through each of the three parts.

Reading for Pleasure

Each year group has a high quality set of texts that make up the reading spine for the school. Teachers read to the children for 15 minutes at the end of every day purely for enjoyment and all children have access to their own copy of the book which they take home daily. This ensures that all children are exposed to quality texts that they may not be able to access independently.

Spoken Language

The Agate Momentum Trust recognises that, because of their home backgrounds, a substantial percentage of our pupils have difficulties expressing themselves orally. Modelling appropriate and expressive speech is an integral part of our teaching. All adults working in the school are expected to use Standard English throughout the day and to expect the same from the pupils. Teachers are expected to plan lessons which incorporate the objectives from the spoken language programme of study. Where possible, the objectives will be included across the curriculum thus providing a wide variety of opportunities to reinforce and develop these skills.

We believe that spoken language skills are an intrinsic part of the writing process. A child needs to be able to say a sentence before they can write it. To help develop this skill, teachers are expected to plan oral rehearsal into their weekly English planning so that children have the opportunity to think and say their sentences before they begin writing.

Children are provided with many opportunities to participate in debates throughout the curriculum. We have a formal debating club for year 5 and 6 children at which they are taught the skills of debating and have the opportunity to participate in formal competitions. We also have a speech-making club at which children practise delivering well-known speeches as well as writing their own. They are taught how to speak confidently with an increasing command of the English language. They are also taught how to maintain and monitor the interest of the listener.

Spelling

To be a successful writer, we believe that children need to be able to spell accurately, knowing the relationships between sounds and letters. As soon as children are reading grey RWI books in KS1, they begin the RWI spelling programme. Spelling is taught each morning for 15-30 minutes and one unit should be taught each week. The programme teaches children to use the following strategies:

- Spelling patterns and conventions
- Knowledge of homophones
- Phonological knowledge (phonemes, syllables, rhymes, analogy)
- Morphological knowledge (root words, compound words, suffixes prefixes, etymology)
- Mnemonics
- Saying a word as it looks
- Finding a word within a word
- Sticky letter (finding the trickiest part within a word and using a picture to make it stand out)

Handwriting

In Reception children are taught how to establish the tripod grip using a variety of mediums. This is reinforced through pre-writing skills involving pattern work and other exercises to help develop fine motor skills.

Children are then taught individual letters with exit strokes in order to make small words. Specific attention is given to pencil control, pencil grip and posture. Teachers use the RWI phrases to teach letters e.g. Maisie Maisie mountain.

When each individual child is able to form letters then they are introduced to joining up. In handwriting lessons, staff model handwriting using the Collins handwriting programme. Once a child has fluent, legible handwriting, they become a pen writer.