



# Agate Momentum Trust

## English Policy



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This English policy is a working document. It affects all key stages and was last reviewed in April 2020

## 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](http://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.

One or two targets are set 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 TFW grammar progression document should also be used when writing the shortened text.

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 whole class teaching. We use Just Imagine's *Take One Book* programme (see pages 7-10).

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.

## Take One Book

Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, we use Just Imagine's *Take One Book* programme. This is a four-stage framework for reading based on up-to-date research. Skills for reading, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary are taught through exciting book-based units which offer engaging reading experiences. High-quality dialogic teaching underpins and is key to the process.

### Hook

Children are hooked into the book to begin the unit of work. A hook can:

- provide an immersive multisensory experience with artefacts, images, sounds...and even smells
- start with a dramatic scenario to provoke questioning
- kick off with a visit to a place of interest
- present a problem for the children to solve
- be an attractive book display which encourages browsing and roaming around a topic for a period before the book is introduced
- begin with a visit from a writer or an illustrator

### Orientation

The orientation gives consideration to what needs to be put in place for children to access the text. This could be achieved through:

#### **Activation of prior knowledge**

Helping children make connections between their own experiences and a text is a useful way into a new book, particularly if the context is unfamiliar and the connections are not immediately apparent.

#### **Building background knowledge**

In some instances, it is beneficial to develop background knowledge prior to reading. A judgement has to be made about what to teach in advance, and what is best left to emerge through the course of reading.

#### **Key vocabulary**

Take One Book uses a blended approach to vocabulary teaching which is woven into the teaching sequences.

Some key vocabulary may be pre-taught to help children access the text. However, judgements need to be made about what is essential. Too much pre-teaching of vocabulary can disrupt the child's construction of the text schema. Generally, when readers encounter

new words in texts, they can approximate an understanding from the context. This is usually sufficient for understanding the gist. Unless the vocabulary is likely to be a barrier to accessing the text, it may be preferable to leave the focus on word investigation and definition until after a first reading; more precise understandings can be clarified later.

## DURING READING

### **First Encounters**

A principle of the Take One Book approach is that the first encounter with a book should be a wholly pleasurable experience. One of the best reading lessons, that reading is rewarding and pleasurable, is taught implicitly through sharing a book. In our view, at the heart of the reading lesson is the reader, and this is what fundamentally drives the teaching and learning. The first encounters are therefore crucial for eliciting children's responses and provide an opportunity to make formative assessment.

It is also important to take time to find out whether the children understand the text at a literal level. Without a surface understanding, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for them to appreciate deeper layers of meaning in a text.

Some of the approaches used in Take One Book for introducing the text include:

### **Reading aloud**

Reading aloud to your class is important throughout the primary years, well beyond the stage at which children can read the words for themselves. As children encounter increasingly challenging texts, with language that does not replicate the patterns of spoken language, it continues to be important to read aloud, developing their ear for reading an increasingly wide range of texts. When listening to an experienced reader read with expression, pace and sensitivity to rhythm and cadence, children will internalise the writer's voice. Reading aloud develops 'the ear for reading', which is essential for the acquisition of reading fluency. Furthermore, uninterrupted reading gives children time to build a mental image of the text. Mental processing will be inhibited if there is too much interrogative questioning mid-flow. For this reason, children should be allowed to simply listen to a first reading (stopping occasionally at a natural break to check understanding is appropriate for long chapters or passages).

### **Exploring ideas**

First encounters with a new text will include an element of exploration. The children might discuss initial ideas and share their thinking with you. Alternatively, they might explore their ideas in independent reading circles.

### **Checking literal understanding, clarifying and explaining**

After the first reading, children's understanding is monitored by having them explain the text. This might be in response to a simple question, 'What has happened so far?'. A character led piece might be explained with a question such as, 'What do we know about Jack?'. These questions require recall but are sufficiently open to allow readers to tell what they know.

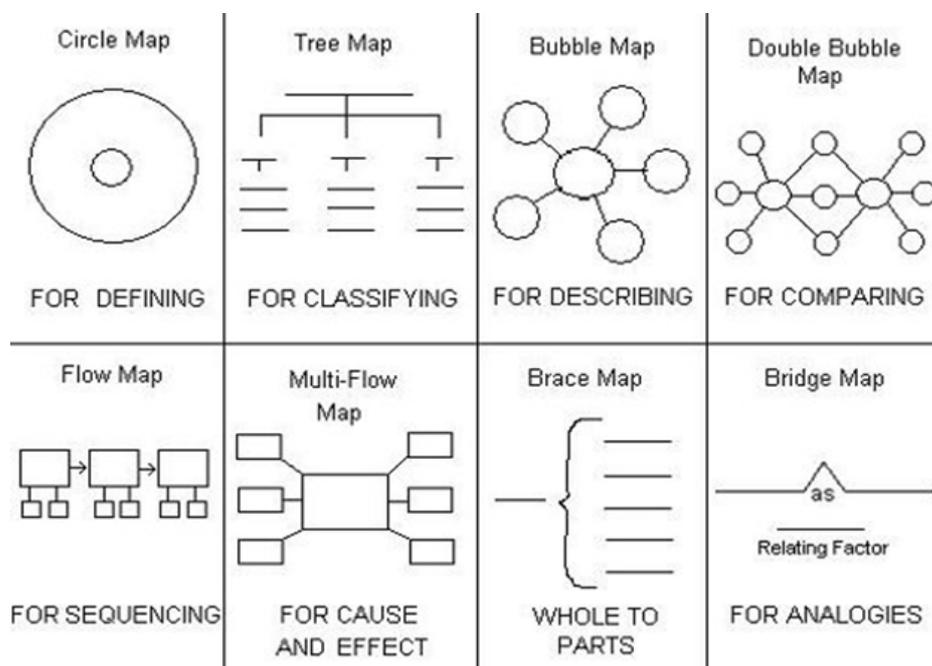
Another strategy for explaining a text is to ask the learners to annotate the text and to use the annotated examples to identify priorities for teaching.

### Expose thinking

One of the outcomes of the first encounter phase is to provide an opportunity for children to demonstrate their thinking. A learning environment where risks are encouraged will allow children to show what they think without fear that their ideas will be dismissed.

Tools like graphic organisers and thinking maps can be usefully employed to:

- help children to shape their thinking
- help teachers plan the next steps in the learning journey
- provide a record of the learning.



### Digging Deeper

Securing a surface understanding, exploring the children's initial responses and questions, leads on to uncovering the multiple layers in text. The form this takes is dependent on the type of text.

### Refining a response

There are many aspects of textual analysis that can be developed more deeply. For example, you may want to reflect on character and to consider decisions taken at pivotal moments. Drama conventions are particularly useful for working through these ideas. Visualising helps learners to elaborate their understanding, which can support more complex interrogative inferencing.

### Expanding thinking

Teacher and pupil questions initiate dialogue which promotes deeper thinking. Statements are used to develop argumentation and encourage the justification of ideas. Children are encouraged to look beyond what they already know and to consider alternative viewpoints. More experienced readers are challenged to consider how characters are represented and to decentre and consider how different readers might respond. Different types of thinking, such as 'compare and contrast', 'cause and effect' 'identifying the writer's intention' can be modelled and supported with graphic organisers.

## AFTER READING

### **Review and Reflect**

#### **Review**

After reading, the focus is on reviewing the text as a whole. In fiction this might include looking at changes that have occurred during the course of the story. Have any characters grown and developed? Have problems been solved? Themes are identified and discussed.

With fiction and nonfiction, children might summarise a text by distilling key information. Making evaluative responses requires thinking beyond the book to consider how it measures up against other texts. Is it a good example? What criteria can we use to judge?

Opportunities are provided for children to discuss the relevance of the book to the wider concerns of the world. These text-to-world discussions are usually engaging and lively. Returning to the text after reading allows the children to make further connections and deepen their knowledge.

#### **Reflect**

Reflection is an ongoing process. Each lesson in the framework includes a reflective element. At the end of the reading sequence children reflect on what has been learnt. Children are encouraged to evaluate their learning and identify the strategies that were particularly useful so that they can use them in their independent work.

### **Writing Opportunities**

The first stages of the Take One Book process focus on developing greater depth in reading. Many of the lessons lead seamlessly into writing opportunities. Some of these will be short recording tasks, which are indicated within the lesson outlines.

Wherever possible, we encourage writing with authentic purpose and for audiences beyond the classroom.

## Reading Domains

Children are also explicitly taught the following reading content domains. Pupils are encouraged when answering questions to consider what domain the question comes from.

**KS1 Reading Content domain reference**

- 1a** draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
- 1b** identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information
- 1c** identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
- 1d** make inferences from the text
- 1e** predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

**KS2 Reading Content domain reference**

- 2a** give / explain the meaning of words in context
- 2b** retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
- 2c** summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
- 2d** make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
- 2e** predict what might happen from details stated and implied

<b>Define</b> 	<b>Retrieve</b> 	<b>Summarise</b> 	<b>Infer</b> 	<b>Predict</b> 	<b>Relate</b> 	<b>Explore</b> 	<b>Compare</b> 
2a: Give/explain the meaning of words in context	2b: Retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.	2c: Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph	2d: Make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text	2e: Predict what might happen from details stated and implied	2f: Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole.	2g: Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases.	2h: Make comparisons within the text
Multiple choice	Ranking / ordering	Matching	Labelling	Find and copy	Short response	Open-ended response	
		10-30%			40-60%		20-40%

Children are taught the reading domains through a range of carefully selected high-quality texts across all genres. Each skill is represented by a coloured reading gem. Each unit follows a three-part structure of teacher modelling, Guided practice and independent practice. All units begin with a reading fluency focus and progress to focus on the teaching of one specific reading gem and daily review of previous gems taught.

We introduce the gems progressively and recognise the importance of learning and embedding certain skills before introducing others.

**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 Nelson's handwriting programme. Once a child has fluent, legible handwriting, they become a pen writer.