

Guidance for Observation and Target Setting in Primary ENGLISH

National Curriculum Purpose of study

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

6 Key Questions to ask when observing PRIMARY ENGLISH lessons:

	Question	Additional Information
1	Is a wide and diverse range of children's literature/other appropriate texts used effectively and appropriately to contextualise learning and promote the idea that reading can be pleasurable?	<i>Diverse range refers to texts used over time; which reflects a range of authors and genres and different realities.</i> <i>'used effectively and appropriately' – eg. how does knowledge of the text enable planning around, for example, key points in the plot. Are 'hooks' used to make connections and make the children interested in the text?</i> <i>Does reading aloud well engage the children?</i> <i>Are texts used – when appropriate – to contextualise the teaching and learning of skills and knowledge so that links are made to purpose and audience?</i>
2.	Are purposeful opportunities for oracy planned for explicitly or implicitly, as appropriate?	<i>Aspects of oracy may be used implicitly, as a pedagogy e.g. talk partners discussing a plot prediction.</i> <i>Aspects of oracy may also be taught explicitly. For example, a lesson focussed on teaching children how to consider the needs of an audience by using eye contact, gestures and the like. This would be modelled and explored.</i>
3	If teaching transcription (spelling and handwriting), have appropriate strategies been taught and have children been given time to practice before applying to independent writing?	<i>Spelling – appropriate strategies may include phonics, syllabification, morphology, etymology, analogy, mnemonics and 'rules' – depending on what is being taught.</i> <i>How is the school's adopted handwriting style demonstrated and practised in explicit handwriting-lessons and in all other instances where writing is modelled, including comments in children's books.</i>

4	If teaching explicit grammar or punctuation, has the teaching been contextualised and linked to composition - audience, purpose and writer's choices? Is metalanguage use appropriately?	<i>Grammar teaching that is contextualised allows children to see links between writing (both their own and the current focus author) and grammar. Are Links made between explicit grammar lessons and the 'bigger picture' of writing. Metalanguage refers to specific grammar and punctuation vocabulary e.g. comma, adverb. Is this used regularly, and reinforced without overdoing it?</i>
5.	If teaching writing composition or reading, has the process been scaffolded through modelled, shared and/or guided pedagogy towards independence? Is effective communication emphasised?	<i>Scaffolded refers to texts being read, discussed and enjoyed before children are asked to write. It also refers to the process of writing – planning, drafting etc and to demonstrating aspects of this through showing children how to write, thinking aloud as they do. Similarly, when teaching reading, for example inferring, are explicit connections made between prior knowledge and text clues to arrive at a plausible answer</i>
6.	If appropriate, has children's phonic knowledge been taken into account to support independent reading and writing?	<i>If teaching children who are taught discrete phonics lessons, have children's current phonics knowledge and skill set been considered? Are children reminded to use phonics to help them to spell and/or work out unfamiliar words when reading. If appropriate, have texts (including worksheets) been adapted so they are able to be read independently.</i>

Potential **ENGLISH** Specific Targets on Lesson Analysis Forms.

Lesson design and delivery, including sequencing and choice of teaching methods (CCF curriculum & pedagogy) Next Steps:
Consider having the target vocabulary separate from the PPT and on display so you can refer to it throughout to scaffold less secure readers and or challenge all <i>(this could apply to English lessons and other lessons e.g. geography where reading is used as a vehicle)</i>
Use the class text you are reading as a context and a 'way in' to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling rather than a decontextualised PPT <i>(example – you were teaching how to punctuate speech and used randomly generated examples on a PPT. Your class text has countless examples!)</i>
Make links between lessons so that children see links between reading and writing. <i>For example: in this lesson you taught how to punctuate speech – how could you have linked this to the work you have been doing around the characters in your class novel?</i>
Plan so that talk is more visible and purposeful. <i>Examples – before asking children to write, how could they orally rehearse ideas? If teaching younger children, teach them to say sentences before writing them.</i>

Ensure that sufficient scaffolding is in place through choices around modelling, sharing and guiding reading and writing (*so, think at the point of planning, what support learners need eg you modelling/thinking aloud/ providing sentence stems etc*)

When planning think more about profiling to children what it means to be a 'good' reader/writer and/or speaker

Pupil progress in this lesson and use of assessment (including questioning) (CCF assessment) Next Steps:

Identify key vocabulary you want children to know and understand and plan opportunities for this to be clarified and used.

Ensure questions asked are worth asking and link to the specific English-focussed lesson objective.

Consider using peer assessment when editing writing as transcriptional errors are often tricky to spot in one's own writing.

Consider possible misconceptions and challenges for and from pupils to ensure that your subject knowledge is robust enough to respond (**Examples:** *would you be able to challenge a child who states that the word lovely is an adverb in this sentence: **It is a lovely day.***
You may be teaching plural possession in year 4 – what have children learned previously in year 2 that you need to revisit and build upon?)

Consider progression in terms of both knowledge and skills and the application of these to reading and writing

Comments about student teacher's developing Subject Knowledge and Pedagogy (CCF curriculum & pedagogy) Next Steps

Make links between reading for pleasure and your teaching of English. *Example 1 - how can you 'hook' children into the book? Example 2 – do not just use the text as something to 'pull apart' and analyse.*

Explicitly teach children key skills and knowledge needed to be a good speaker and listener (*looking at Voice 21's resources may be useful here*).

Further develop your pedagogy by employing 'thinking aloud'. This demonstrates to children what goes on inside your head as a reader/writer/speaker/listener (deleted as appropriate) and demonstrates how to make connections and how you arrived at a decision. *Grammar example: Continue to develop your skills of modelling writing by developing your 'think-alouds' (verbal modelling) , giving reasons for punctuation choices and linking choices to the impact on the reader*

Further develop your pedagogy by using modelled writing in conjunction with 'thinking aloud'. This can be used at any stage of the writing process.

Ask questions that are worth asking and linked to the intended learning.

When teaching writing, profile audience and purpose *Example: When using writing success criteria, emphasise the why as well as the what – it's not enough for children to be given a list of things they 'must' include in their writing – teach them about the impact of using different grammatical choices on the reader and whether it fits the purpose of the writing.*

When modelling to children how to plan/compose/ edit writing (delete as appropriate), focus on audience and purpose. Explain why you are making changes as a writer and how that will impact on your reader.

Ensure reading activities are well-matched to the specific reading skill being taught.

Consider the design and use of engaging reading tasks (Directed Activities Related to Texts: DARTs) that facilitate discussion and prompt children to look 'deeper' into the text. *Example, you wanted children to infer how character x was feeling – acting out the scene would have facilitated children's connection making.*

Further develop your content knowledge of (for example) subordinate clauses and how sentence punctuation varies according to their position in the sentence.

Consider how learning could be less passive. <i>For example, children were learning about spelling using the suffix 'ing' – using human words could have brought this to life with children deciding when to double the final consonant and discussing a possible rule about this.</i>
Develop knowledge around children's literature so you can identify relevant learning opportunities offered in texts
Model handwriting in-line with the school's handwriting policy at all times.
Model standard English when teaching formally.
When teaching non-fiction, read for purpose and pleasure (reading as a reader) before analysing the 'text type' (reading as a writer).
When teaching grammar and punctuation, ensure that what you teach is coherently linked to the focus of the unit of learning e.g. <i>It makes 'sense' to teach modal verbs as part of a unit of learning looking at persuasive texts</i>
When teaching reading, make sure you are focussed explicitly on a key skill. Do not talk in terms of 'comprehension', be specific. <i>For example, are you teaching retrieval? Inference?</i>
Break learning into manageable steps to consider pupils' cognitive load. <i>For example, if teaching plurals in Year 1, do not teach all variations of how plurals are made in one lesson. This will be a series of lessons that will enable children to apply to their independent writing.</i>
If teaching systematic synthetic phonics, ensure that each phoneme is articulated correctly and the schwa is not used at the end of words. <i>Example: /h/ not huh</i>
If teaching systematic synthetic phonics to READ, ensure that each GPC is identified and then blended correctly to work out unknown words. <i>Example s/t/e/p and not st/ep</i>
If teaching systematic synthetic phonics to spell, ensure that words are correctly segmented into their component parts.
If teaching systematic synthetic phonics, ensure that the key skills of blending and segmenting are modelled. Focus needs to be on skills in addition to content.
If teaching systematic synthetic phonics to ensure that all target words used in the lesson are aligned to children's current phonics skills and knowledge.
Make links between discrete phonics lessons and lessons across the curriculum. <i>Examples: are your worksheets/PPT slides accessible and aligned with children's current reading development? Have you identified key vocabulary children need to learn by sight in other curriculum areas? Do you plan for children to practise reading frequently in small groups to develop fluency and accuracy?</i>
Link handwriting to spelling lessons.

Some useful key readings

[CLPE Survey of Ethnic Representation within UK Children's Literature 2017-2022 \(November 2022\)](#)

[DfE \(2012\) Research Evidence on Reading for Pleasure](#)

[DfE \(2021\) The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy London: DfE](#)

[EEF \(2021\) 2nd ed Improving Literacy in KS1: Guidance Report](#)

[EEF \(2021\) 2nd ed Improving Literacy in KS2: Guidance Report](#)

[THE EFFECTS OF SYNTHETIC PHONICS TEACHING ON READING AND SPELLING ATTAINMENT A SEVEN YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY](#)

[Ofsted Review of English 2022](#)

[Voice 21: Oracy Framework](#)