



Pensans ARB

English Curriculum Statement

"Learning for Life"

In our ARB at Pensans, we believe that every child is entitled to a rich, ambitious and inclusive English curriculum that develops communication, reading and writing skills while recognising and responding to individual strengths and barriers to learning.

We provide a highly personalised approach that enables pupils to access the wider mainstream curriculum whilst developing the key literacy skills needed for independence, confidence and lifelong learning.

Our English curriculum is closely aligned with the whole-school approach, ensuring that pupils in the ARB access the same high aspirations, high-quality texts and learning opportunities as their peers. Adaptations are made through carefully tailored support, specialist strategies, communication approaches and personalised pathways to ensure success for every learner.

Reading and Phonics

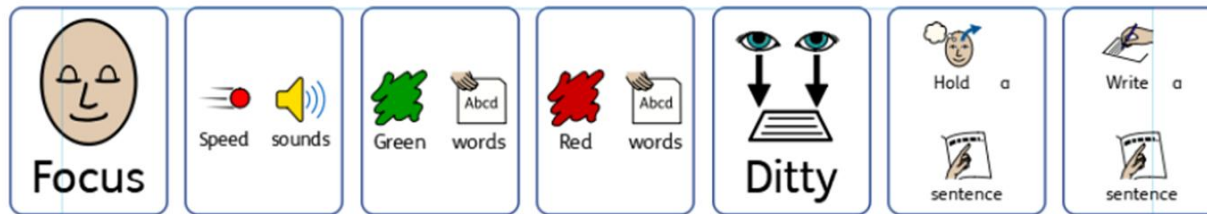
We recognise that reading is fundamental to learning, communication and independence. Our aim is to develop confident readers who enjoy books, stories and language in all its forms.

In line with the whole-school curriculum, pupils access systematic synthetic phonics through Read Write Inc. where appropriate. It is a "structured and systematic approach to teaching literacy" and is taught to the large majority of pupils throughout the school every day. This scheme allows children to build their phonics knowledge to develop their sight reading, comprehension and writing skills.

Teachers set clear next step targets which we share with the children and home each half term. These targets also help us to ensure all children's learning is individualised for their needs. Teaching is carefully adapted to meet individual needs, with opportunities for repetition, overlearning, multi-sensory practice and targeted intervention. For some pupils, additional communication and language development forms the foundation upon which reading skills are built.

In the ARB pupils who are ready to access formal reading will take part in an adapted version of the Read, Write Inc. scheme. Each learner access phonics either in a 1:1 capacity or a small group. Each session follows a visual timetable and is bespoke for each child and their ability.

An example visual timetable for a Read, Write Inc. session, is below.



Our Pathway 1 learners will take part in a sensory exploration of sounds using Attention Autism. Through these group sessions they will hear and interact with the sounds in a practical and sensory way. We understand that not all children learn to read in the same way and for those children for which phonics is not appropriate, they will access reading through Core Vocabulary. Games and practical activities will enable learners to recognise symbols and apply them consistently and appropriately.

Within the ARB we:

- Prioritise language and communication development as the basis for reading success.
- Use high-quality texts from the school's reading spine where appropriate to develop vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading.
- Match reading materials carefully to each pupil's level of understanding and phonological development.
- Provide structured opportunities for repeated reading to build confidence and fluency.
- Use visual supports, symbols, technology and alternative communication systems where needed.
- Develop comprehension through discussion, modelling and scaffolded questioning.
- Foster reading for pleasure through regular story sharing, library access and exposure to engaging texts.

Reading materials may be adapted through:

- Symbol-supported books.
- Simplified texts whilst maintaining age-appropriate themes.
- Audio books and digital reading platforms.
- Visual comprehension prompts.
- Sequencing cards and story retelling resources.
- Repeated reading materials to build fluency and confidence.

We aim for all pupils to see themselves as readers and to develop positive attitudes towards books and storytelling.

Writing

Our writing curriculum builds upon speaking, listening and reading experiences to help pupils communicate effectively for a range of purposes.

We understand that many pupils in the ARB require additional support with language processing, working memory, executive functioning and fine motor skills. Therefore, writing is carefully scaffolded and broken down into manageable steps, while maintaining ambitious expectations.

Write Dance

Write Dance combines gross and fine motor skills with rhythmic and then melodic pieces of music chosen so the children can follow and learn specific movements to develop their physical skills including, balance, coordination, flexibility and stamina. The music and the dance is used to guide and aid children's imagination and language development, so the pieces of music, with the corresponding movements, are structured into 'narrative' themes that can be developed as stories or these can be enjoyed as separate and 'stand-alone' sessions.

Rhythm is closely linked to rhyme and children are encouraged to use their voices to describe the actions as they move and dance.

Mark-making and 'movement drawings' ensure that the children progress from whole body dance moves to fine- motor movements with fluency and speed.

This provides the crucial learning environment, the most appropriate resources and the most motivating and stimulating programme to support and develop mature physical skills more quickly.

Following the school's writing principles, we:

- Use high-quality texts to inspire and model opportunities for writing.
- Teach vocabulary explicitly and revisit new language regularly.
- Use visual prompts, sentence stems, vocabulary banks and graphic organisers to support composition.
- Provide opportunities for shared, guided and independent writing.
- Celebrate all forms of written communication, including mark making, drawing, symbols, captions, sentences and extended writing.

In the Early Years and for pupils working at earlier developmental stages, imaginative approaches such as Drawing Club support storytelling, vocabulary development and early mark making while linking closely to phonics learning.

Writing may be scaffolded through:

- Colour-coded grammar prompts.
- Picture sequencing activities.
- Modelled and shared writing.
- Dictation and adult scribing where appropriate.
- Alternative methods of composition using technology.
- Structured writing frames linked to whole-class texts and curriculum themes.

Our goal is to develop pupils' confidence as communicators and writers, enabling them to express ideas, opinions and experiences successfully, in a way which makes sense to them and those around them.

Handwriting and Transcription

We recognise that handwriting can present significant challenges for many pupils within the ARB. We therefore adopt a flexible and inclusive approach that balances the development of fine motor skills with the need for pupils to communicate effectively.

For letter formation we use the RWI phonics scheme which links a story and visual to each letter, please refer to RWI for more information.

Once the basic letter formation has been developed our more able learning will move onto using 'letter join' which will help them to develop handwriting speed and fluency as well as supporting children to write using cursive handwriting.

Following the school's handwriting progression and Letter-join approach, pupils are supported to:

- Develop fine motor control and hand strength.
- Learn correct letter formation and orientation.
- Improve pencil grip, posture and pencil control.
- Develop fluency and automaticity in handwriting where appropriate.
- Build pride in presentation and recording.

Where handwriting is a barrier to learning, pupils may access:

- Additional fine motor programmes.
- Occupational therapy recommendations.
- Alternative recording methods.
- Adaptive equipment such as pencil grips, writing slopes or specialist seating.
- Assistive technology including keyboards, tablets or speech-to-text tools where appropriate.

Where handwriting is a barrier to learning, pupils may access:

- Additional fine motor intervention programmes.
- Occupational therapy recommendations and targeted exercises.
- Alternative recording methods, including drawing, symbol-supported recording and photographic evidence.
- Adaptive equipment such as:
 - pencil grips of varying sizes and shapes
 - triangular pencils and pens
 - weighted pencils and pens
 - short pencils to encourage appropriate grip

- writing slopes
- wobble cushions and supportive seating
- non-slip writing mats
- specialist scissors
- adapted rulers and line guides
- finger spacers for word spacing
- raised-line, coloured or enlarged handwriting paper
- visual handwriting prompts and alphabet strips
- wrist supports where recommended
- Sensory supports, including:
 - playdough and putty activities
 - hand strengthening tools
 - fidget resources used appropriately to support regulation
- Assistive technology, including:
 - laptops and keyboards
 - tablets and touch-screen devices
 - word processing software
 - Symbol-supported writing programmes
 - speech-to-text software
 - predictive text programmes
 - alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices
- Personalised recording approaches agreed through SEND support plans.

Our focus is on removing barriers to communication whilst continuing to develop handwriting skills where appropriate. We recognise that success may look different for each learner, and we value all methods of recording that enable pupils to express their ideas independently and confidently.

The focus remains on enabling pupils to record and communicate successfully while continuing to develop independence

Communication and Language

Communication lies at the heart of our English curriculum. We recognise that many pupils within the ARB require additional support to understand, process and use language effectively.

To support this, we:

- Create language-rich learning environments.
- Explicitly teach vocabulary across all curriculum areas.
- Use visual supports, symbols and communication aids.
- Develop speaking and listening skills through structured discussion and play-based learning.
- Work closely with speech and language therapists and families.
- Provide opportunities for communication throughout the school day.

Developing communication skills enables pupils to access learning, build relationships and participate fully in school life.

Inclusion and Personalisation

Our curriculum is underpinned by the belief that all pupils can make progress when teaching is responsive to their individual needs.

Learning is personalised through:

- Individual targets and personalised learning pathways.
- Adapted resources and scaffolded activities.
- Multi-sensory teaching approaches.
- Appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- Regular assessment that informs next steps.
- Collaborative working between teachers, teaching assistants, SEND professionals and families.

Where appropriate, pupils access learning alongside their mainstream peers, supporting inclusion, belonging and high aspirations.

Adapted Resources and Accessibility

To ensure all pupils can access, engage with and demonstrate their learning in English, a range of adaptations and specialist resources may be used.

These are selected according to individual needs and reviewed regularly.

Examples include:

- Visual timetables and now-and-next boards.
- Widgit symbols, communication boards and symbol-supported texts.
- Vocabulary mats with images and key words.
- Word banks, sentence stems and writing frames.
- Story maps
- Chunked and simplified instructions.
- Dual-coded resources combining visuals and text.
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary using objects, photographs and images.
- Social stories and comic strip conversations.
- Attention Autism and sensory-based communication activities.
- Task planners, checklists and self-regulation supports.
- Reading overlays, enlarged print and dyslexia-friendly fonts.
- Phonics sound mats and letter formation prompts.
- Adapted writing tools, including pencil grips, sloping boards, weighted pencils and specialist seating.
- Alternative recording methods such as keyboards, tablets, Clicker, speech-to-text software and AAC devices.
- Personalised literacy targets displayed through pupil-friendly visual formats.
- Multi-sensory resources including magnetic letters, tactile letter cards, sand trays and fine motor activities.

Impact

Through our English curriculum, pupils in the ARB will:

- Develop confidence in communication and self-expression.
- Acquire functional literacy skills that support independence.
- Engage with high-quality literature and develop a love of reading.
- Make meaningful progress from their individual starting points.
- Build resilience, confidence and pride in their achievements.
- Be equipped with the communication, reading and writing skills needed for their next stage of education and beyond.

By maintaining high expectations alongside personalised support, we ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to succeed and flourish as a reader, writer and communicator.