

# **St. James the Great School RC Primary and Nursery School**



## **English Policy**

**Date Created:** Summer 2015

**Date Reviewed:**

## **Rationale**

From St. James the Great Mission Statement:

“...the school will provide a framework within which all pupils are enabled to develop the highest possible level of achievement, fulfilling their academic, moral, physical and spiritual potential.”

At St James the Great we place great emphasis on good speaking and listening skills. We aim for all our children to become clear communicators and to achieve success as confident readers and writers. English and Literacy is at the forefront of our priorities as a means of impacting on a broad and balanced curriculum.

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication, Language and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) which we follow at St. James the Great Nursery and Primary School.

## **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.

## **Aims**

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The new national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils will have the opportunity to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language in order to articulate their responses
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

## **Objectives**

The children will:

- Be able to attach and communicate meanings to their own mark making.
- Read fluently with good comprehension, appropriate expression and intonation.
- Become familiar with a wide range of genres and texts.
- Use the school's cursive script to develop fluent and legible handwriting.
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry.
- Read, use and understand a wide range of non-fiction texts.
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their writing.
- Extend their understanding of Drama through role play and attending live performances.

## **Spoken language**

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate. All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the national curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

## **Reading**

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading

- comprehension/ inference (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

### **Guided Reading**

We aim to instil a passion for reading in all our children and therefore weekly guided reading is integral in our school curriculum.

Baseline Expectations: - 1:1 reading must take place in Reception and every child must read once a week with an adult.

Guided Reading must take place every day in Years 1-6. This lesson should last at least 20 minutes.

Priority 1 to 1 reading with an adult must take place every day for children that are below national expectations or target expectations (numbers of children will vary per class).

### **Writing**

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and

understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

All teachers are expected to teach writing through various pathways. Two of these methods, Shared writing and Guided Writing, should be covered in all weekly timetables in order to expose the children to the planning and editing process of writing.

**Shared writing:**

Shared writing takes place within the Literacy lesson or across the curriculum timetable; the teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific writing strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in individually or through partner work, with the writing, where appropriate.

**Guided writing:**

Guided writing takes place as part of a led session within a unit of work. During guided writing the responsibility for writing shifts to the learner. Guided writing takes place with a group of children with similar writing targets/needs. During a guided writing session the children will write with a teacher supporting. It is intended that guided writing provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about writing and to further develop and extend their writing skills.

**Extended writing:**

Extended writing occurs when children are given a set amount of time to produce a piece of writing without any help from an adult. Usually, the extended writing session will mark the end of a 'unit' of literacy teaching or after much initial input regarding set themes from the teacher.

**Suggested Timings:-**

- Children should always be given about 10 minutes to plan their piece of writing. Time to be less for the infants but some planning orientation should always be involved.
- In **EYFS** children should be exposed to independent writing opportunities after initial input at least three times each week
- In **Key Stage 1** they will be given about **30 minutes to complete their writing task**
- In **Key Stage 2** they are given about **45 minutes**.

Writing should be done independently and without the children talking. The idea is that children are given the space and time to really concentrate on their writing and apply all the skills they have been learning. These skills are to be focussed in on and highlighted within the given target of the day.

Pieces of writing produced in extended writing sessions are very important for teachers to use when assessing the children's writing skills. They will look to see if children are including the elements taught without any intervention and also where they could improve.

**Children should then be given back their marked piece of work and asked to improve it.** They will either do this individually, or they may swap books with a partner and help each other edit their work.

### **Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary**

The two statutory appendices – on spelling, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar– give an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. References to developing pupils' vocabulary are also included within the appendices.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

### **Attainment Targets**

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Foundation Stage**

Children will develop with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.) curriculum:

- Use language for communication and thinking.
- Link sounds and letters.
- Develop an interest in written print.
- Begin to represent sounds correctly in writing.
- Extend their understanding of roles in the community through role play.

## **Phonics**

We begin the process of learning to read in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where we believe that the systematic teaching of phonics is the fastest and most effective way of getting young children to start reading. In Nursery, the children have daily 10 minute phonics sessions to introduce them to initial letter sounds. By the end of Reception, it is our expectation that all children can blend sounds and that the vast majority will be reading simple books. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the focus of writing is using phonics to write simple sentences with basic punctuation. We follow the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme to teach phonics. The teaching of synthetic phonics continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Our programme is structured in such a way as to ensure the teaching of phonics is systematic and that progress is built on from year to year. By the end of Year 2, it is our expectation that the vast majority of children will be fluent readers and will no longer need explicit phonics teaching for reading. For those children who are not at the expected level by the end of Year 2, they are entered into an RML phonics programme to ensure accelerated progress in Key Stage 2.

### **Key Stage 1**

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Speak confidently and listen to what others have to say.
- Begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm.
- Use language to explore own experiences and imaginary worlds.
- Use improvisation and work in role to explore characters and situations.
- Present dramatisations to others in class, based on work they have done.

### **Key Stage 2**

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences.
- Read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning.
- Explore the use of language in literacy and non-literacy texts and learn how the structure of language works.
- Perform plays to engage the interest of the school.

- Improvise dialogue and events to interpret key ideas and issues.

## **Planning**

Long Term planning follows the new planning format with each year group deciding where to place the units over the year.

Medium term planning is also detailed in the Primary Framework, with individual units of work detailing objectives that are covered. Each unit has a suggested time frame for completion and gives details of 'Phases' that should be covered across the time given.

There are 3 phases to each unit:

Phase 1 is generally centered on reading texts, discussing, comparing and re-enacting.

Phase 2 is generally centered on rereading and analysing texts, discovering features of writing and developing sentence work.

Phase 3 is centered around modelling writing and extended writing.

Short term planning is completed weekly and includes teaching and learning activities (Guided Reading and Writing), differentiation, focus support and vocabulary. Teachers choose appropriate texts to ensure children have the chance to achieve these objectives. Most objectives are revisited throughout other units for the year group, so children have the time to achieve and consolidate objectives, before moving to the next year group. The Renewed Framework also links objectives from neighbouring year groups as an aid for extending or supporting pupils.

Drama is embedded in all subjects with explicit links made on the medium term plans.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class. Children are actively encouraged to participate in self-assessment of their progress in English. Children are made aware of their targets which are shared on a regular basis in order to ensure the child knows what is needed in order to reach the next steps.

Informal assessment takes place during lessons, to include the broader curriculum, and in the evaluation of children's work on a weekly basis. These assessments are used to drive planning in order to ensure a challenging curriculum is delivered for every child's needs, to ensure they reach their desired steps.

Assessment is carried out using the Target Tracker grids and agreed year group standards. These are filled in at set termly intervals in line with the whole school assessment policy.

In Foundation Stage, assessment is ongoing in line with the E.Y.F.S. curriculum. Foundation One completes Aspects on entry and exit. Foundation Two pupils complete PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) on entry and at the end of Reception. Years 2 and 6 undertake National tests. Tests are used in Years 3, 4 and 5 to give a description of what the child needs to cover using the Rising Stars test.

### **Role of the Subject Leader**

The English Subject Leader will work closely with staff and the English Governor to plan for and sustain improvement in the teaching and learning of English.

The English Subject Leader will:

- Lead staff development, increasing confidence and expertise with INSET, staff meetings, support and advice.
- Take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in English throughout the school.
- Support colleagues in the development of detailed work plans and implementation of the chosen scheme of work. Also in assessment and record keeping activities.
- Monitor progress in English and advise the Head teacher and SLT of action needed.
- Monitor teaching and learning and disseminate good practice.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of English resources.
- Keep up to date with developments in English education and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

### **Inclusion**

The teaching of English is in accordance with the school's policy for Inclusion and equal opportunities. We aim to provide equal access to the English Curriculum.

### **Parent and Governor Links**

Parents are the recognised primary educators of their children and we encourage them to realise that language is the main tool of learning and communication. At St. James the Great we initiate and encourage a strong home school partnership which offers opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with the teacher for example by the use of Reading Records that are completed by the parents and children from Foundation Stage Two to Year 6.

Parents are fully aware of their importance in developing English skills and are supported in this. The governing body of St. James the Great have appointed a curriculum Governor with a special interest in English; it is her responsibility to maintain an overview of English throughout the whole school, monitor and review the policy and to liaise with the Subject Leader.

**Next Policy Review Date:** Autumn 2015