

# St Andrew's CE (VA) Junior School

## English Policy



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## ST. ANDREW'S CE (VA) JUNIOR SCHOOL



*"Promoting Excellence Within a Caring Christian Community"*

### English Policy

#### 1 Introduction

At St. Andrew's, we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. English is a fundamental part of learning and is taught both discreetly and across the curriculum. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' that is needed in society (National Curriculum, p. 6):

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (National Curriculum, p. 10)

As key life skills, literacy and communication need to be taught and developed throughout a child's life. We aim to create a shared love and understanding of literacy, enable pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and give children the skills to be effective written and oral communicators.

To enable us to address these aims and ensure full coverage of the 2014 National Curriculum, we use a 'whole book' approach to teaching. Pupils study a class book, which is usually more challenging than one they might be able to read independently. They will use this book as the basis for reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks. Those pupils who struggle to gain age related skills will also participate in supportive sessions outside class English lessons, which could be Read Write Inc., extra guided reading or writing, or Better Reading.

#### 2 Rationale

We aim to develop in the children we teach an enthusiasm for literacy in all its forms and the confidence to express themselves both orally and through the written word. By developing a comprehensive range of reading skills, we strive to foster in the children a love and appreciation of a variety of literature. These skills will enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum, in Primary education and beyond. We agree with the authors of the National Curriculum that those children who fail to achieve in these areas are effectively 'disenfranchised'.

### **3 Aims – The aims of English are:**

#### **Reading:**

- To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- To develop and foster a life-long love of reading;
- To increase reading fluency;
- To use reading as a means to gather information;
- To develop a range of reading skills, including inference, deduction, prediction and evaluation;
- To respond to a range of texts, including fiction and non-fiction.

#### **Writing:**

- To help children enjoy writing through developing imagination and inventiveness;
- To enable children to write with technical accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction, both on paper and using ICT;
- To write for a variety of audiences and purposes;
- To write across a range of genres, identifying and maintaining the features of a specific genre;
- To increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- To foster an interest in words and their meanings and how specific vocabulary can be used for effect;
- To use correct letter formation in order to develop and maintain a legible and fluent handwriting style;
- To use accurate punctuation to demarcate sentences correctly;
- To use grammatical knowledge to structure sentences correctly, maintaining sense and purpose;
- To become increasingly aware of spelling rules and conventions in order to spell most words correctly.

#### **Speaking and listening:**

- To be effective and articulate communicators and good listeners;
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances, audiences and purposes;
- To justify arguments and reasoning by expressing articulate opinions and feelings.

### **4 Teaching and Learning Style**

Below are detailed the provisions for each aspect of the curriculum. Within each element, however, there is a standard approach to differentiation. There are children of differing ability in all classes at **St. Andrew's CE (A) Junior** School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by:

- Providing an appropriate scaffold, such as information, writing frame or equipment, to enable children to work independently to meet age-related expectations for that lesson,
- Matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child based on their assessment data and targets
- Differentiated group work
- Adult support
- Additional teaching for those who are making slower progress, such as guided writing sessions or intervention groups outside the Literacy lesson.

#### 4.1 Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10) Pupils should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

Our aims and connected provision:

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Creating a supportive environment for those children who are shy or struggle to speak out, for example Pyramid Club
- Identifying children with specific speech and language and auditory problems and seeking out specialist help, where appropriate
- Activities in lessons which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Lesson activities which promote lively debate; include drama; use talk partners and/or small group discussion
- Setting homework which involves speaking, e.g. reciting a poem; reading aloud; and talking about books or learning with parents
- Poetry recital in classes
- Class debates
- School Plays and Class assemblies

- Media Club and Christian Crackers
- Whole school assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Book talk sessions
- PSHCE and circle time

## 4.2 Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually... acquire knowledge [and] build on what they already know' (p13).

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

Although we are a Junior School, we recognise that both these elements are essential to success and so support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. The majority of our pupils will be able to decode, so our focus is on 'reading to learn' rather than learning to read. This means we focus on developing comprehension and evaluation skills. However, for pupils below the expected level, we provide decoding lessons such as Read Write Inc and 1:1 reading time. We further understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning: we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

Our aims and connected provision

- All children have their reading age assessed at the start of each year using the Accelerated Reader Star Test. This gives a reading age, level and ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development)
- The majority of our pupils are on the Accelerated Reader scheme unless there are exceptional circumstances. This ensures the books they are reading are at a level which is challenging enough to ensure rapid progress, yet accessible enough to allow children to enjoy reading.
- Children take regular Accelerated Reader quizzes every time they finish their book. This allows us to monitor their level of comprehension, time spent reading, reading age and developmental progress.
- Class teachers and teaching assistants use data from Accelerated Reader on a weekly basis to monitor a child's reading progress and create targeted interventions when necessary.
- Awards are given to individuals and classes for performing well on their Accelerated Reader books to encourage active participation from all pupils.

- Children continue to be assessed for reading every term using the Star Reader test. They are also assessed using other reading tests such as Rising Stars or SATs papers, to triangulate the data.
- In general, pupils who arrive at St. Andrew's at age-related expectations are able to decode and read out loud fluently, although teachers continue to revisit phonics teaching, as needed, to reinforce learning.
- Pupils who are struggling with reading or making slow progress are given accelerated reading support with Read Write Inc. or Better Reading.
- While all children are encouraged to read routinely at home, those in lower KS2 (Years 3 and 4) are expected to read nightly, with parents/carers recording progress in their child's Reading Record. We believe this creates a bond between school and parents, helping to promote parents' involvement with their children's learning.
- All children also read in school with an adult on a regular basis, often 1:1 or in a small group.
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding during whole class reading of the class text.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts and high quality books in classrooms and the school library.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and the various methods outlined above.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all subjects, an essential skill for accessing higher level curricula.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school career. The whole class texts are specifically chosen through recommendations from schemes such as 'The Power of Reading' and 'Pie Corbett's Reading Spine' to ensure a wide variety of text types, genres and authors.
- Meetings are arranged with parents, as appropriate, to help them support their child and assertive mentoring sheets are sent home each half term to keep parents informed of their child's progress.

### **4.3 Writing**

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)

- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. In addition, we believe that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary. As such, the development of writing must be embedded in all areas of the curriculum.

Our aims and connected provision

- We have a systematic approach to the basic elements of writing: we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas and year groups, from phonics through to grammar and spelling.
- To ensure that children can write fluently and without hesitation, children are taught a variety of spelling strategies.
- Spelling is taught regularly using the Read Write Inc spelling scheme which focuses on learning and embedding spelling rules.
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed. Children take pride in their written work, using a clear, fluent and legible handwriting style.
- Neat and presentable handwriting is positively promoted.
- Whenever possible, grammar and punctuation lessons are embedded within a unit of work. When discreet grammar lessons are necessary, pupils are given opportunities to apply it in their writing.
- Teachers use the skills progression chart on Grammarsaurus to teach grammar in the correct order to maximise understanding.
- Grammatical concepts, including punctuation, are assessed every half term.
- We believe that all staff should model grammatically correct speech and writing, to enable children to internalise rules they may not hear or see routinely at home.
- Children's speech should be sensitively corrected, when necessary.
- Children are encouraged to see writing as an expression of their thoughts, opinions and enthusiasms.
- Writing is assessed through profile marking every half term using the writing framework sheets.
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice. Although we do not usually focus whole units of work on text types, teachers ensure that children are introduced to a range of genres and the key features of these text types. The introduction of new text types is progressive through the school.
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing' through talking partners and drama activities.
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising.
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and give 'next steps'
  - We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.

- Through early recognition and intervention, we support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties.
- Meetings are arranged with parents, as appropriate, to help them support their child and assertive mentoring sheets are sent home each half term to keep parents informed of their child's progress.

#### **4.4 Vocabulary Development**

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p. 11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

Our aims and connected provision

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn
- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word based/spelling lessons looking at patterns, rules and conventions
- Using dictionaries, thesauruses and similar reference materials, such as websites
- Using whole class texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have

### **5 English curriculum planning**

**5.1** English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. As the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English, we use units of work we have developed focused around whole books, as well as retaining some units from the Renewed National Literacy Framework.

**5.2** Class teachers complete a yearly overview, medium term (termly overview) plan and weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. These plans are saved to Staffshare on the school server, where they are available for evaluation by the SLT and



the English Subject Leader. These are discussed both informally with individuals and in general with the whole teaching staff during staff meetings.

## **6 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas**

**6.1** The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

### **6.2 Mathematics**

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

### **6.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)**

The use of ICT enables children to implement their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children access the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children utilise the planning and proofreading tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. They are encouraged to use visual aids, such as still photographs and video, to develop understanding of narrative as well as the representation of information in nonfiction texts. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever it is appropriate.

In addition, children identified as having dyslexic tendencies are offered the opportunity to learn touch typing and to use this skill in lessons in order to enable them to write more efficiently and effectively.

### **6.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship**

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work, they talk about things that improve their health. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

### **6.5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

## **7 Teaching English to children with special needs**

### **7.1 Catering for children who are consistently below age-related expectations:**

At St. Andrew's CE (VA) Junior School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers aim to provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of all children, with regard to learning ability and to provide an inclusive education. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Personal Provision Plan (PPP). Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- using translators and amanuenses.

### **7.2 Catering for children who are consistently above age-related expectations:**

The most able children in English will be taught in their own class and stretched with differentiated group work and extra challenges to deepen their learning. When working with the whole class, teachers will direct questions toward these children (at their ability level) to maintain their involvement and extend their thinking.

## **8 Assessment**

### **8.1 We use Target Tracker to track and monitor pupil's progress.**

At St Andrew's Junior CE (VA) school, we strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils. Assessment is continuous and information for assessment is gathered in various ways: talking to children, observing their work, marking and half termly tests. These assessments will be used to plan future work, to ensure pupils are both challenged and supported. Teachers will indicate to children their next steps and learning targets on a regular basis in their books.

### **8.2 Assessment in Practice**

Assessment is continuous and takes a variety of forms which are outlined in the Assessment Policy.

Informal assessment includes classroom observations, discussions, marking and monitoring of reading, writing, grammar and spelling.

Formal assessments include half termly tests, Accelerated Reader test data and formal writing assessment using the framework sheets.

### **8.3 Consistency with National Standards**

Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work and moderate the assessment of written work against the age related expectations. They also meet with other teachers in the East Calderdale learning Cluster to moderate writing and ensure assessment is consistent with national requirements.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

The English Co-ordinator will monitor teaching and learning through:

- Book scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Classroom observations
- Monitoring writing assessments
- Tracking data of individuals and classes using Target Tracker
- Provide CPD training on areas identified for improvement

**Head Teacher signed:**

**Chair of Governors signed:**

**Date: September 2017**

**Renew: September 2020**