

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Policy on English

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

1.2 Our objectives in the teaching of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing and reading and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work;
- to provide opportunities to meet learning styles of all children (visual/audio/kinaesthetic);
- to link English to other areas of the curriculum to make it more meaningful and relevant.

2 Teaching and learning styles

2.1 At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a whole-class reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity, and a whole-class session to review progress and learning. Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries and thesauruses. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

2.2 In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons, we do it through differentiated group work, while in others, we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

- 2.3 In the focus of each English lesson WALT (We Are Learning To) and WILF (What I'm Looking For) provide a clear understanding of what the teacher is looking for.
- 2.4 Teachers use Assessment for Learning strategies including self-assessment and peer review to develop children as individual thinkers and learners.

3 English curriculum planning

- 3.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Literacy Strategy as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.
- 3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching details what we teach in the long-term.
- 3.3 Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.
- 3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes 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. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.
- 3.5 We plan the activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan progression into the scheme of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

4 The Foundation Stage

- 4.1 We teach English in reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

The early year's curriculum is founded on the principles and practice laid out in the Early Learning Goals document.

Speaking and listening skills are vitally important as they underpin all learning at this stage. The English programme builds on the language skills that children bring from home. Development of these skills is encouraged through activities such as listening to stories and poems, joining in with rhymes and songs, participating in drama and imaginative play, responding to simple instructions, talking to accompany play etc.

Knowledge about books is developed through activities such as, retelling a story in their own words, reading a big book with the teachers, re-reading favourite stories as a group or class, listening to taped stories etc.

When a child is ready to begin more formal reading activities (usually during the reception year) he/she will embark on the school's reading programme or scheme. Phonics are introduced through the Letters and Sounds National Strategy, games and practical activities.

Emergent writing is encouraged through role-play e.g. in the shop, office, café' etc., where children are provided with a range of writing materials. Children are encouraged to write in role, such as lists, forms, menus, and prices. When children become more aware of phonics and letter formation, they are encouraged to attempt a more focused form of writing, using the initial, end and medial sounds in words.

5 Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are covered by many subjects in the curriculum. It is important to provide planned opportunities for a range of speaking and listening tasks. This encourages children to develop as fluent, confident and competent speakers who are also able to listen with interest and understanding for sustained periods. It also encourages pupils to work cooperatively with others and to listen to the views of others.

Working collaboratively and sharing ideas is a valuable and supportive exercise which needs to be planned and developed within the classroom.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- use speech appropriately for different purposes.
- adopt appropriate vocabulary, tone, pace and style for a variety of audiences and in a variety of situations.
- understand the effect of speech on the listener.
- use talk to develop and express ideas.
- communicate meaning effectively.
- listen attentively and derive meaning from what others say.
- follow verbal instructions accurately.
- understand the importance of good listening and how to respond during discussions, conversations and when information is given or asked for.
- develop the skills of turn-taking, negotiation and reaching consensus.
- appreciate the role of a “talk buddy” and the way in which others can help in the learning process by sharing ideas and being supportive.

Speaking and Listening is developed through a variety of activities and experiences. Opportunities are provided for children to talk and listen on both formal and informal settings. Strategies include:

- the use of drama and role play.
- regular story times when the teacher or other adult reads aloud to the class, and discusses the text with them.
- class small group or paired discussions or debates.
- showing times or news sharing when children are encouraged to speak to classmates.
- interviewing carried out as part of a topic or project.
- children participating in class assemblies, school productions etc.
- individual use of audio tapes.

The school recognises that talk is central to much learning.

6 Reading

Pupils are encouraged to become confident, enthusiastic, critical and independent readers. They should be able to cope with print produced in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes and read for information, interest and enjoyment.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- understand the features of a book and how it works.
- have an interest in words and their meanings.
- use a range of strategies which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression.
- use appropriate reading strategies to find and interpret information.
- reflect on their reading and offer a personal response to a wide range of texts.
- understand how the format and language changes with different genre.
- use influential skills to find meaning beyond the literal.
- appreciate the tools of the writer and the techniques used to involve the reader in the text. To build these strategies into their own writing.
- appreciate the work of individual authors, illustrators and publishers.
- read for and with other children and adults in a variety of situations.
- read silently with a specific focus for the reading.
- use a range of resources, including classroom materials the school and public libraries for a range of reading materials.
- use ICT based reference materials for information.

The school believes that children become successful readers by learning to use a range of strategies to get at the meaning of a text and that these strategies can be taught at three different levels; word, sentence and text.

We also acknowledge the need for a wide range of books and so provide a variety of fiction, poetry and non-fiction.

The school provides different types of books including Big Books, Guided Group Reading texts and Individual Readers.

In Key Stage 1 books are levelled using Book Bands.

In Key Stage 2 books are levelled according to the National Curriculum.

Every child in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 must be heard to read regularly by the class teacher who must also sign the Reading Diary, at least twice per week. Children in the Foundation Stage read to their teacher regularly on a one to one basis.

In KS2 children continue to be monitored, regularly, Priority of Individual reading time is given to children on the special needs register. Again helper support is valued and the class teacher is responsible for monitoring progress, at least once per week.

Children are encouraged to use the library for a variety of texts and for research homework.

Guided Group Reading:

Guided Group Reading usually takes place during the Literacy lesson and children are set in groups. The appropriate levelled texts are selected, noting the teaching focus, and progress is recorded on the group sheet.

Individual Reading:

Children from the Foundation Stage to Year 2 also read regularly on a one to one basis.

All children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are to take home their own reading book every day. These books are recorded in a child's individual diary and parents must ensure that their children read regularly at home.

7 Writing

It is important for pupils to develop as independent, enthusiastic and expressive writers, who are able to write in a meaningful way. They should be able to use a range of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences. They should be confident in their choice of genre and language style for a specific purpose. Pupils should also regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to a reader.
- write in a grammatically accurate way.
- develop an increasingly wide vocabulary suited to the purpose and genre.
- write in a particular genre with a good understanding of the features of that genre.
- understand the conventions of written language.
- use teacher modelling as means to understand the writing process.
- understand how writers can have an effect on the reader.
- incorporate ideas and skills of other authors into their own writing.
- collaborate with others during the writing process.
- draft and redraft making significant revisions where appropriate.
- work collaboratively with other children to discuss the editing of written work.
- use ICT as a tool for writing.
- use spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately and with confidence.

Writing is developed through the provision of a wide range of contexts for writing. A process of drafting and redrafting for a purpose, incorporating the use of ICT where appropriate is encouraged, especially in Key Stage 2, and opportunities for collaborative writing are provided.

Writing is developed through a process of drafting and rewriting for a wide range of purposes and varied audiences.

The range of writing includes at each Key Stage:

- Stories
- Poetry
- Personal (diaries, messages, invitations)
- Instructions
- Information (lists, captions, notices, notes)
- Learning – Writing to think, to speculate, to reflect, to make connections

In addition, at Key Stage 2, children are encouraged to explore writing in the form of:

- Letters
- Explanations
- Dialogue and drama scripts
- Argument and persuasion
- Information – reports, commentary
- Recounts

8 Spelling

To develop as independent accurate spellers who are confident to use an evolving and adventurous vocabulary in their own writing. They should have a range of spelling strategies which they can use to attempt unknown words and a sound knowledge of irregular high frequency words for use in their daily work.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies.
- Write an increasingly wide range of words from memory. Focus words are to be identified in (PIPS) (KS1) and Spelling Bank/Support for Spelling (KS2).
- Use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment and computer.
- Develop an understanding of spelling patterns and rules through investigations and identifying the exceptions to those rules as interesting or exciting.
- Understand that some prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning of the words.
- Use a range of strategies to learn spellings, especially those mis-spelt in their own work. These might include spelling logs, (How I spelt it... How it should be spelt), the use of mnemonics and word pictures.

At School we feel it is important to pay increasing attention to punctuation, grammar and spelling as children become more fluent and confident. It is vitally important that children are able to express their ideas and information coherently and fluently. The use of correct spelling is developed and taught through specific marking of work, regular learning of spelling lists according to ability and the encouragement of dictionary use.

The recognition and spelling of High Frequency words is encouraged in KS1 and KS2.

9 Handwriting

It is important for pupils to be able to write clearly and develop a fluent and legible handwriting style. Presentation should be neat in published work.

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Form letters correctly.
- Use upper and lower case letters appropriately
- Begin to use a joined style as early as possible.
- Use a correct and comfortable pencil/pen grip.
- Use a handwriting pen from Year 4. (Biro pens are not to be used).

Handwriting lessons are taught both inside and outside the literacy lesson throughout Years 1 – 6. Younger children and those less confident are encouraged to refine their fine motor skills using a variety of media as well as daily practise of pattern flow and letter formation.

They are taught to hold a pencil correctly, to consider writing from left to right, starting and finishing letters correctly and letter size, shape and spacing. Older pupils are given the opportunity to develop legible handwriting in both joined up and printed styles. The Nelson Handwriting Programme is used throughout the school.

10 Drama

Pupils should be encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express feelings and Ideas both verbally and non-verbally. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate drama, both as participants and observers.

11 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

11.1 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 at school.

11.2 Mathematics

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. 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.

11.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also 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 also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

11.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

12 English and ICT

12.1 The use of ICT, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text levels. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, e.g. interactive and non-linear stories.

12.2 ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent levels. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of a word processor permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available through the Internet or CD-ROMs to encourage the framing of explicit questions. Groups can work at a

computer and input text via standard or overlay keyboard. Word banks speed up recording. Software is used to support independent reading (text to speech) and writing (predictive word processors, word banks and spell checkers). A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills. Lessons can focus on what pupils have achieved using ICT, or ICT can provide the means of presenting their outcomes (via multimedia presentation or the school website).

13 English and inclusion

- 13.1 At our school, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- 13.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.
- 13.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English.
- 13.4 We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a theatre trip, for example) we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.
- 13.5 Teaching assistants provide help by using:
- texts that children can more easily read and understand;
 - visual and written materials in different formats;
 - ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
 - alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;
 - translators and amanuenses.
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14 Assessment for learning

- 14.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work and the work of their peers.
- 14.2 Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work.
- 14.3 Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, they are able to set targets for the next school year and to summarise

the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

- 14.4 These long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress based on the level descriptions of the National Curriculum.
- 14.5 The subject leader keeps samples of children's work each year. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the QCA and the DfES.
- 14.6 Staff are keen to improve their subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development.

14.7 **Record Keeping**

Records of achievement are kept as:-

- school/year/individual literacy targets.
- Progress tracking grids.
- teacher assessments.
- Year 6 and Year 2 test results and Year 3, 4 and 5 end of year assessments.
- Termly assessments from all classes from Reception to Y6.
- samples of children's work.

15 **Resources**

- 15.1 There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through the computers. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

16 **Monitoring and review**

- 16.1 The English co-ordinator:
- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in English;
 - gives the Headteacher an annual action plan in which s/he identifies areas for action that will bring about school improvement;
- 16.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Signed: *J. Mulcahey* (Chair) *C. Newstead* (Head teacher)

Date: 19/05/10