



St Thomas' Church of England Primary School English policy



Aims of the policy

The general aims of this policy are:

- To develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing;
- To give pupils opportunities to interrelate the requirements of English within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught Literacy skills;
- To deliver the statutory National Literacy Curriculum 2014 in a fun and engaging way which enables all children from whatever background and of whatever ability;
- To provide children with the necessary skills to become competent, creative and efficient users of the English Language to prepare them for secondary school and to enable them to become successful in their later lives;
- To provide children with successful Literacy role models to increase aspiration;
- To provide children with meaningful, engaging contexts for reading and writing.

Monitoring and review

The English Leaders regularly perform book monitoring, drop ins, formal observations and planning scrutiny both within English and across other curriculum subjects to ensure consistency of teaching and learning throughout school in accordance with our Monitoring Timetable. The SLT meet weekly to discuss the progress of the subject within school. Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision. A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of English. Governors meet with the English Leaders to review progress termly and receive a commentary which reports on:

- recent development work
- performance analysis in relation to the School Development Plan
- pupil outcomes in relation to development priorities and their impact upon teaching and learning
- future developments in accordance with the School Development Plan

Governors are also invited to monitor the effectiveness of the school through a variety of other activities including learning walks, participation during work scrutiny and classroom observation.

Subject Organisation

The English Curriculum is delivered according to our long term plan which was created in response to the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and which details coverage through English units across the academic year for each class and throughout school. This ensures appropriate coverage and the development of skills throughout school, building upon work from class to class, year on year. The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum. Pupil provision is related to attainment, not age. More detailed short term planning, based upon our coverage map, uses the school planning format as agreed by staff and is planned in response to the needs of children within each class on a weekly basis.

At St Thomas' we teach English in daily lessons across the school, with discrete phonics lessons being taught in Foundation and Key Stage 1, and discrete spellings lessons across Key Stage 2. Grammar is integral to the English lesson and is taught in line with the 'Talk 4 Writing' units.

Work is differentiated in all year groups and targeted support offered to all children. Some Year 3 children receive extra 'Top Up' sessions to support them with the transition between Phonics and Spellings.

Children work in flexible target groups according to need and identified by each class teacher. Phonics lessons in KS1 are also taught in fluid target groups. Within the target groups children work in a variety of ways, either in ability groups, mixed groups or pairs depending on the task given and the skill being taught. Work is differentiated according to the target group and children's needs within each class. Three-way differentiation is shown on the weekly planning sheet and any support given is included. The teaching sequence is interactive and uses ICT resources where possible as part of our ICT Curriculum.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

Our approach to Speaking and Listening has been revised in light of the new National Curriculum 2014. We base our curriculum upon the programme 'Universally Speaking' from The Communication Trust to ensure skills coverage and progression throughout school, and to assess whether children meet national expectations at each developmental stage. This programme covers several strands to help children to become confident verbal communicators: Listening and Understanding, Vocabulary, Speech Sounds, Sentence Building and Grammar, Storytelling, and Social Interaction. These skills are reinforced by our 'No Pens Day Wednesday' which involves the whole school in a fun week of Speaking and Listening activities pitched at a level appropriate to each year group and culminates in a whole school performance event. We also invest in time from a professional actor who works with our children from Reception to year 6 developing public speaking and confidence skills. He also runs a debate team which competes locally and is very successful. In addition to this, he runs a film club for gifted and talented children in year 5, learning to edit, plan and direct films.

Approaches to Reading

At St Thomas', we strive to create a text-rich environment for all of our children which appeals to their interests. All children will be given the opportunity to read to an adult in school at least once a week. Children will also hear a class book read to them daily by the class teacher. Our pupils are encouraged to read books from home as well as different text types; fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics and magazines. All children are encouraged to regularly borrow two Library books/magazines - one which is their colour banded level, and one which is a book of their choice to be shared with an adult - and each class has at least one Library slot per week in which they can change these. Our children can browse our Library's book shelves at other times too with the permission of their class teacher. The library contains sets reading books as well as a selection of reference books which can be independently accessed by the children. As a school we also promote the use of 'On Screen' texts to support reading, too, in whole class sessions as well as independent tasks, across the whole curriculum. We devote a significant proportion of our school budget to replenishing our bookshelves so that reading material is current, new and exciting, and geared towards the interests of our children. Before purchasing new books, children are consulted and able to request titles or themes that pique their interest.

Children are taught to read using Oxford Reading Tree, Oxford Reading Phonics, Collins Big Cats, Floppy Phonics, Rigby Star and Project X schemes and books are colour banded according to difficulty throughout school so that children are familiar with the level at which they are working and can independently choose an appropriate book for them. When they become fluent readers they choose books themselves by browsing independently.

From Nursery, all children have a designated library slot which they attend in groups and are supported in choosing a book independently. Parents are invited into the library with their children before and after school to help choose books too. Our school librarian runs activities throughout the day and arranges opportunities for parents to come into school to work with their children in the library.

From Foundation all children follow the Letters and Sounds Programme to support reading through phoneme/grapheme correspondence, and this continues throughout Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 reading education takes place throughout the curriculum and during specific Guided Reading lessons.

Shared Reading is carried out in English lessons. Guided and independent reading takes place outside the English lesson and may be cross curricular. Guided Reading may be carried out by the class teacher or TA and can be based on the reading targets for that group of children. Over the course of the year Guided Reading covers all the reading assessment foci so that children are prepared to answer a variety of question types - such as inference and deduction, and information retrieval- based upon their reading.

Children are encouraged to share books as well as to read quietly by themselves. All children have reading diaries which parents are encouraged to use at home. It is our policy at St Thomas' that children read aloud to an adult at least three times a week in order to improve their reading skills and understanding. Older pupils may record their own reading activities. Comprehension is taught weekly and may be across the curriculum, to support reading comprehension assessments and target setting. Parents are encouraged to support the development of reading comprehension by asking questions of the children when reading at home to see whether they've understood what they have read.

Where children are struggling to progress at the rate we would expect, extra support is given to children via ECaR, which incorporates; Better Reading Partnership, Fischer Family Trust Intervention, Inference work, Reading Recovery and The Reception Literacy Project. Where children work 1:1 with a member of staff, and they may receive additional support in the form of interventions recommended by our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) where appropriate. We have a selection of books that support struggling children beginning to read, they follow a phonics approach, and appropriate books are provided for low ability older readers.

Approaches to writing: Spelling, Handwriting, Grammar and Composition

Spelling is taught through phonics during Key Stage 1, and follows the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 2. Children have regular short lessons which encourage them to investigate patterns, follow morphological rules and familiarise themselves with common exceptions. Children develop the vocabulary necessary to talk about their writing and appreciate the authorial choices made within the writing they're reading, understand different ways that sentences can be structured to achieve a desired impact and are able to make intelligent choices when composing their own work based upon this learning.

Children are encouraged to write from Foundation Stage using an appropriate posture and pencil grip. From Year 1 there are daily handwriting sessions with children being taught correct letter formation and to join their handwriting as soon as they are able. We follow the Nelson handwriting scheme. Children are expected to use their handwriting skills across the curriculum and our class teachers ensure that our children try their best in their presentation. Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing takes place in English lessons, with skills learnt being practiced on a cross curricular level. Pens are used in the juniors from year 3 when the teachers feel the children are ready.

Opportunities are given for extended writing where possible and written comprehension skills are taught from Year 1. Timed, extended independent writing is practised from Year 1 and happens at least once per fortnight. Children create a special book of extended independent writing which moves with them to their next class as they transition between year groups to ensure that skills are built upon from year to year. This helps children to develop writing stamina, confidence and independence and helps them to apply their learning from their spelling and grammar lessons throughout the week. Each child receives specific individual feedback and precise targets as a result of this to help to move their writing forward. Oral story telling and story mapping is introduced in all year groups to promote understanding of text type and extend speaking and listening opportunities through the use of Pie Corbett's Talk 4 Writing

Class teachers plan a minimum of two 'Talk 4 Write' units per term in which the children are given time to explore a text genre whilst engaging in lots of related speaking and listening activities, before becoming authors themselves to produce a written text of their own.

Cross-Curricular Writing

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. The English Leaders perform regular work scrutinies throughout all

subjects to ensure that the volume of cross-curricular writing remains high and that standards are consistent throughout subjects and year groups.

The use of ICT

Opportunities to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning in Literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate.

Assessment and target setting

Reading and writing will be assessed in line with the Assessment and Marking Policies. Age related targets for reading and writing are set each term (this may vary depending on the length of each term), and progress towards these is assessed by teacher assessment of class work.

All pupils are given regular feedback and precise targets based upon their extended independent writes and these are specific to each individual. These may be done electronically via Goggle Classroom or Showbie. When marking, teachers assess whether these targets have been met before setting new ones.

Children are assessed against the National Curriculum six times a year in reading and GPS and three times a year in writing with the results recorded on their SIMs class tracker. Targets for each class are based on children progressing in accordance with age related expectations. In the Foundation stage children are assessed in phonics acquisition on a half termly basis. There are planned observations and assessments each term to check their progression the Foundation stage profile. Appropriate interventions are planned for those children who do not meet these expectations during termly pupil progress meetings with SLT.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

Under-achieving pupils are identified on the tracker and have IEPs where needed. Work is further differentiated, where possible, to reflect the targets given on the individual IEP. A record of children with IEPs and a register of gifted and talented children is kept by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

Role of the English Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating Literacy:
 - Pupil progress
 - Provision of English
 - The quality of the Learning Environment
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments

Parental Involvement

Parents support the teaching of Literacy in school by reading with their children at home at least three times a week and completing their reading diaries. They also support children with spelling and other English homework.

We are currently developing opportunities throughout our school year to involve parents' more in their child's learning and have timetabled coffee mornings, reading sessions, assemblies, classroom based activities, and more, to try and improve parental involvement throughout 2015. We look forward to opening our doors to parents this year!

** Signed on hard copy

English Subject Leaders

Head Teacher

Nominated Governor

Member of staff responsible: DSimpson/CDootson/LMorton