

# St Laurence Church Infant School

## English Policy



Approved by: Curriculum, Safeguarding and  
Pupil Welfare Committee

Last revised on: March 2020

Next review due by: March 2023

## **St Laurence Church Infant School**

### **English Policy**

#### **Intent**

##### **Why do we teach English?**

At St. Laurence Church Infant School we believe that each child has a voice which is to be highly valued. We work hard to provide an inspiring and relevant English curriculum where children can communicate their voice in a variety of contexts, allowing them to confidently express their thoughts, ideas, emotions and opinions whether in spoken or written form. We encourage children to recognise the importance of listening to, understanding and discussing the ideas of others. We aim for all children to have an appreciation of different forms of literature; and a love and enjoyment of reading. Our English curriculum equips our children with the fundamental skills and behaviours needed to thrive in the modern world.

#### **Implementation**

##### **How we teach English**

We ensure that all staff members have a secure subject knowledge of modern approaches to the teaching and learning of English. Many cross curricular links are made as English is the fundamental skill that underpins learning across other curriculum subjects. English is valued, promoted and enjoyed as a subject throughout the school year by celebrating World Book Day, local library visits, studies of work by the same author, parent reading workshops, bedtime stories at school as well as the summer holiday reading challenge.

- 1. Spoken Language**
- 2. Reading**
- 3. Synthetic Phonics**
- 4. Writing**
- 5. Handwriting**

## **1. Spoken Language**

### **How we plan Spoken Language**

The ability to speak and listen effectively are fundamental communication skills which are necessary for children to become competent readers and writers. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum is used to plan a wide range of activities to develop each child's 'Communication and Language' skills. These are separated into the subsections of Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. In Key Stage One the National Curriculum is used to plan activities to develop Spoken Language skills.

### **How we teach Spoken Language**

Throughout the EYFS and Key Stage One children are constantly provided with opportunities to understand the importance of being effective listeners and communicators. Activities such as imaginative role play, small world play, oral memory games, sound discrimination, listening to and responding to new or familiar stories, collaborative work which promotes discussion, talking about experiences as well as everyday occasions, such as following instructions, enable children to practise these skills and acquire correct grammatical structures.

### **How we assess Spoken Language**

In the EYFS children are assessed on entry and throughout the school year and this evidence is kept in their individual Learning Journeys. At the end of Reception children are assessed using the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals for 'Communication and Language'. Children are assessed throughout Key Stage One against the National Curriculum Spoken Language strands and this evidence is collected on a tracking system.

## **2. Reading**

### **How we plan Reading**

The ability to read fluently and with good understanding is a necessary skill to access the full school curriculum and become an independent learner. The teaching of reading is planned in order to deliver the requirements outlined in the EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum for Key Stage One. As well as teaching reading skills, we strive to instil a love of reading in our children so that they read for pleasure and enjoyment.

## **How we teach Reading**

The Letters and Sounds programme enables children to acquire phonic knowledge and word reading skills (see below). Our curriculum in the EYFS and Key Stage One is based on half termly or termly themes. High quality texts are chosen in relation to these themes based on their richness of vocabulary, text types and features and the opportunities that these texts offer for children to practise a variety of reading cues. These texts are used to model and practise essential comprehension skills such as understanding, recall, sequencing, inference and prediction.

## **Guided Reading**

Each child in school reads a reading scheme book once a week in a small group with a teacher or TA. The children read books from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme which are banded by ability level. This book is taken home to read and changed the following week. In Key Stage One each child also has an individual reading time with a teacher or TA every other week. Books are chosen to link to the phonemes which have been taught so children read books that they can use their phonic knowledge to decode. During Guided Reading sessions, the children who are not reading with an adult take part in a variety of reading activities. These include written comprehension activities based on their reading scheme book, using the book corner, phonic games and activities and free choice of a range of books.

The children have access to a school library where many books are kept as a central resource. Children can access fiction and non-fiction books as well as a range of curriculum based books to support their learning across all subjects.

## **How we assess Reading**

Children are given immediate feedback as they read with an adult and are made aware of the next steps in their reading. Reading records are kept for each child from entry in Reception to the end of Key Stage One and are used to inform the ongoing reading assessments which are recorded on a tracking system. At the end of Reception children's reading skills are assessed using the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goal 'Reading'. At the end of Key Stage One a teacher assessed judgement is made using the Reading statements from the Teacher Assessment Framework and a child's SATs scores.

### **3. Synthetic Phonics**

#### **How we plan Synthetic Phonics**

Letters and Sounds is a high quality systematic, synthetic phonics programme used as the prime approach to teach children to decode print. Children start on entrance to Reception and work through the six phases of the programme with the expectation that they will acquire secure word recognition skills by the end of Key Stage One.

#### **How we teach Synthetic Phonics**

Synthetic Phonics is taught as short, discrete daily sessions. Each session follows the Letters and Sounds sequence of 'revisit, teach, practise and apply'. This ensures consistency and a fast-paced approach to teaching grapheme/phoneme correspondence, blending and segmenting skills and sight recognition of words that do not follow the phonic code (tricky words). Children are given a wealth of opportunities to apply their phonic skills outside of these daily teaching sessions.

#### **How we assess Synthetic Phonics**

On entry to Reception children's phonic knowledge is assessed as well as their ability to blend and to read tricky words. These assessments are ongoing throughout the EYFS and Key Stage One and are recorded on a tracking system. Children are given immediate feedback in lessons and are made aware of the next steps in their learning. At the end of the EYFS the children's phonic knowledge is assessed as part of the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goal for Reading. Towards the end of Year One children take part in the statutory Phonics Screen in the summer term. At the end of Year Two children's phonic knowledge is teacher assessed as part of the Reading statements from the Teacher Assessment Framework.

### **4. Writing**

#### **How we plan Writing**

The teaching of writing is planned in order to deliver the requirements outlined in the EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum for Key Stage One. The EYFS Curriculum emphasises the importance of mastering gross and fine motor

skills to prepare children for the physical endurance of writing. In Key Stage One writing opportunities are planned to incorporate the requirements of transcription, composition, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

### **How we teach Writing**

The Letters and Sounds synthetic phonics programme supports children's understanding of the link between reading and writing. The programme sets out how to segment spoken sounds into graphemes (written units of sound). In the EYFS this understanding enables children to spell using their phonic knowledge. As children move through Key Stage One they are taught alternative ways to write graphemes and how to spell Common Exception Words. A range of spelling strategies are taught so children can find a strategy which works well for them.

English lessons take the form of two long morning sessions in Reception and Key Stage One. This is so children can use an extended period of time to practise their skills as well as have an uninterrupted writing session in a mixed ability group with focus from an adult. Children are introduced to a high quality text at the start of a lesson followed by explore activities to support children's development of word, sentence and text reading, role play and drama, character exploration, setting exploration as well as exploration of the author's writing style.

In the EYFS the first of the two Literacy sessions of the week children follow a guided writing format. Children may be given words and sentences to practise writing so that the emphasis is on developing the children's skill of segmenting the phonemes in a word in order to write them down, as well correct formation and orientation of letters, correct use of tricky words and use of finger spaces. The second morning session encourages children to discuss their own ideas for writing and practising saying and writing a sentence of their own. Each child has at least one piece of writing evidence put in their Learning Journey each week. Children who are working on the focus written task work with a teacher or TA. The other children engage in writing activities independently. There are always opportunities for children to practise their writing skills throughout the week as part of the continuous provision.

In Key Stage One children work in a mixed ability focus group with a teacher or TA. On some occasions, children in Year Two will write in a whole class format later in the school year when the context lends itself to this. Children have a writing focus for each week in which the children can practise their writing skills to work towards achieving the requirements of transcription, composition,

vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Children are reminded to think about the reader of their writing and how to keep them engaged through their use of vocabulary and choice of phrases. Children are introduced to the use of a purple pen to make edits and improvements to their written work.

### **How we assess Writing**

Children's writing skills are assessed on entry to Reception and throughout the EYFS and Key Stage One and recorded on a tracking system. Children's writing is marked with the child present and the next steps in their learning are discussed. At the end of the EYFS children's writing is assessed using the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goal 'Writing'. In Key Stage One children's writing skills are assessed using the National Curriculum standards. At the end of Key Stage One a teacher assessed judgement is made using the Writing statements from the Teacher Assessment Framework. Teachers moderate judgements about children's writing in school and across schools. Each term one piece of writing is collected in a child's Writing Profile to produce a profile of progress.

## **5. Handwriting**

### **How we plan Handwriting**

The teaching of writing is planned in order to deliver the requirements outlined in the EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum for Key Stage One. The 'Penpals for Handwriting' scheme is followed from Reception to the end of Year Two. Letters are split into four groups: long-legged giraffe letters, one-armed robot letters, curly caterpillar letters and zig-zag monster letters. See scheme handbook for correct lower case and capital letter formation.

### **How we teach Handwriting**

In the EYFS gross motor skills are taught to enable children to gain control and co-ordination over their whole body. Fine motor skills are taught through pre-writing activities where children develop dexterity through manipulating objects such as placing pegs on boards, wrapping elastic bands on poles, building with lego, using tweezers and threading. Correct posture, pencil grip and letter formation of single lower case letters is taught through daily discrete sessions.

In Year One children continue to have one morning of fine motor skills practise to build strength in their writing hand. Handwriting is taught in a weekly discrete session and practised throughout the week in writing activities.



Children are taught single lower case letters, capital letters, letter combinations and the four new joins (diagonal join to ascender, diagonal join, no ascender, horizontal join to ascender, horizontal join, no ascender).

In Year Two children continue to have one morning of fine motor skills practise to build strength in their writing hand. Handwriting is taught in a weekly discrete session and practised throughout the week in writing activities. Children practise lower case and capital letters and are taught the strokes needed for horizontal, diagonal and mixed joins for two and three letters.

Accurate handwriting is practised, discussed and reinforced throughout the week during Letters and Sounds and English lessons. Correct letter formation is always modelled by teachers when writing in front of the children and in books. Incorrect posture, pencil grip and letter formation is corrected when seen. Children must master the correct techniques needed to form single letters before they are taught to join.

### **How we assess Handwriting**

The skills necessary for handwriting are assessed on entry to Reception and throughout Key Stage One and recorded on a tracking system. Children are given immediate feedback on their handwriting skills in lessons. At the end of the EYFS the children are assessed under the Moving and Handling area of Physical Development in the EYFS Profile. At the end of Key Stage One handwriting is teacher assessed as part of the Writing statements from the Teacher Assessment Framework.

### **How we ensure all children access the English curriculum**

At St Laurence Church Infant School all children access the English curriculum regardless of ability. Through carefully planned lessons and a range of different learning opportunities all children have access to the full English curriculum. The National Curriculum states that children who did not meet an expected standard in Literacy at the end of the EYFS continue to follow the EYFS Curriculum in Key Stage One to develop their word reading, spelling and language skills. Children in need of support to develop their skills in any area of the English curriculum will be quickly identified and suitable interventions will be implemented and measured for their impact.



## **How is the teaching and learning of English monitored?**

The Subject Lead works in partnership with the EYFS and Key Stage One leaders to plan an engaging and relevant English curriculum each year. Lesson walks are planned to monitor teaching, children are heard read and children's work is looked at and discussed. Data is analysed in order to monitor the teaching and learning impact and necessary adjustments to improve progress are made. The Subject Lead stays up to date with new developments in the English Curriculum and plans CPD sessions to share these with other staff.

## **Impact**

Our well-planned curriculum allows the children of St. Laurence Church Infant School to become enthusiastic young speakers, readers and writers. They will be able to apply their English skills in a range of contexts and be confident to take creative risks. We have high expectations of each child and we strive to enable all children to achieve these standards. Our children will be ready for junior school as well as life beyond this.

## **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed within the next three years, or prior to that if there are changes to the English curriculum.

Date of Policy: May 2020

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English Co-ordinator: Rebecca Lawler