

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

*'To Love and To Serve'*



## English Policy

**Review Date: October 2016**

## English policy

### Philosophy:

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 become empowered to interpret the world around them and to make sense of their experiences; in this sense literacy is a tool for both our thinking and learning.

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 a range of multi-media. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins; ensuring that they are at the heart of the learning experience.

### 1. The aims of teaching English are:

- To enable children to speak with clarity, confidence and expression, and to take account of their audience, purpose and differing situations.
- To encourage children to listen with concentration to others, to respond and build on their ideas and views and to identify features of language used for specific purposes.
- 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 use phonological awareness to decode and encode words.
- To help children to be able to read with fluently, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment.
- To help them 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 help the children to develop an understanding that writing is both essential to thinking and learning and enjoyable in its own right.
- To enable children to learn to communicate meaning in narrative and non-fiction texts, spelling and punctuating accurately and for a range of purposes.
- To enable the children to improve their planning, drafting and editing of their work.

## **2. Teaching and learning style**

2.1 At St Thomas of Canterbury School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons to ensure all children are included and valued, as recommended by the New Primary Curriculum 2013. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding. We do this through daily lessons in which children experience a range of activities suited to their unique personal learning style; including whole-class reading or writing, 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 activities give children 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, thesauruses, phonic cards, puppets and a range of interactive tools using ICT. ICT is also used in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work, to record, review and analyse dramatic performances 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 to ensure children can make clear links to their lives and the world around them.

2.2 In all classes children have a wide range of abilities and learning styles and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and learning style 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 closely to the needs of individuals.

## **3. English curriculum planning**

3.1 English is a core subject in the national Curriculum. We use this, the Primary framework and letters and sounds as a basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme for 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 Curriculum details what we teach in the long term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year; these are then adapted to suit the needs of individual classes.

3.3 Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Curriculum, 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 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 gives details of what each child or group of children will be learning ensuring that all needs are addressed. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and often discusses them on an informal basis with the subject leader.

#### **4. Early years and the foundation stage**

4.1 We teach English in Nursery and reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. As the Nursery and reception classes are 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 practice and extend their vocabulary and communication skills; using the Every child a talker (ECAT) and Every child a reader (ECAR) programmes. The letters and sounds programme of synthetic phonics is used to support children's reading and gives children the opportunity to explore sounds, words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

#### **5. Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas**

5.1 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.

##### **5.2 Mathematics**

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Early years and 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.

##### **5.3 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.

##### **5.4 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 brings 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.

## **6. English and ICT**

- 6.1 The use of ICT, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence, text and a visual level. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive and non-linear stories.
- 6.2 ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The projection onto an interactive white board of text enables it to be read, shared and analysed. The interactive tools permit 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. Children can be given the opportunity to record their oral work through digital cameras and edit this to create and enhance their work for viewing by themselves and others. Groups and individuals can work at a computer and input text via standard or overlay keyboard. Word banks or word grid software 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).

## **7. English and Inclusion**

- 7.1 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 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.
- 7.2 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, and differentiation – so that we can take 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.
- 7.3 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.

7.4 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.

7.5 Teachers provide help by using:

- Texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- Visual, kinaesthetic and written materials in different formats;
- ICT, other technological aids including cameras and CD recordings;
- Alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;
- Translators and amanuenses.

## **8. Assessment for Learning**

8.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short term assessment 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.

8.2 Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and help them plan for the next unit of work. Children's work is assessed according to levels of attainment found in the Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) documentation.

8.3 Teachers make formal 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.

8.4 These long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and continuous teacher assessments (APP). Children in year 1 now take a national phonics test at the end of the year. Children undertake the national SATS tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress based on the level descriptions of the National Curriculum.

8.5 The subject leader keeps samples of children's work. These demonstrate 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 national exemplification material produced by the QDCA and the DFE.

8.6 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.

## **9. Resources**

9.1 There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate resources. All classes have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts.

## **10. Monitoring and review**

10.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school. The subject leader gives the head teacher an annual summary report evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicating areas for further improvement. The named governor responsible for literacy meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.

**Signed:**

**Date: October 2015**

**Review date: October 2016**