



English Policy

Our Mission Statement:

We aim to provide a positive learning experience in a safe and respectful environment. We strive to teach an inspiring and inclusive curriculum that promotes a love of learning. As a Christian school, we endeavour to develop the spiritual and moral values of all members of the St. Matthew's family, and a meaningful, loving relationship with God. We want our children to be cheerful and independent individuals who reach their potential and are proud of their achievements. We hope to develop confident, caring citizens who are well prepared to enjoy happy and rewarding lives.

Our motto: Live, Love, Learn

Last updated: May 2020

Policy Statement and Rationale

This policy reflects St Matthew's Primary School's aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of English. It sets out a broad framework within which teaching staff can operate and outlines principles of planning, teaching and assessment.

This policy is reflection of our commitment to deliver excellence in teaching and to act in accordance with, or to exceed, statutory requirements. It should be read in conjunction with the 2014 National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which set out the rationale for teaching each area of the English curriculum and specify the skills to be developed by the majority of pupils in each year group. The teaching of phonics is coordinated separately in school by Daniella Thompson. The Government's Letters and Sounds programme and separate phonics policy should therefore be read in conjunction with references to the teaching of phonics. The document "English Teaching at St Matthew's" also outlines in further detail how English teaching is delivered across school.

At St Matthew's we are concerned with the development of the whole child; the ability to communicate effectively leads to self-confidence and a healthy self-esteem and it is in this context that this policy is set. **Our aim is that all pupils leave us with an ability to express themselves correctly and appropriately, in spoken and written language, and to read accurately, with understanding and with enjoyment.** In order to develop in these areas, pupils are taught to:

- Learn to use spoken and written language confidently, allowing a variety of interpretations and outcomes without fear of destructive criticism
- Use a range of activities and contexts for spoken and written language to entertain, reason, persuade, argue, explain, instruct and describe, including opportunities for interactive learning and for the use of language in relevant, real life contexts
- Develop language skills in and through ALL curriculum subjects
- Become keen readers across a wide range of texts
- Make articulate, perceptive and informed comments about a variety of texts, including media and moving image texts
- Recognise that writers manipulate language and form according to purpose and audience
- Use materials which reflect cultural and social diversity and which provide positive images of race, gender and disability, free from discrimination and stereotyping.

A variety of teaching and learning styles are adopted to ensure that all children are included and valued and in accordance with requirements of the 2014 curriculum.

Teaching and Learning Overview

English is at the heart of the curriculum, so that subject matter from other areas is available as content or stimulus for speaking, listening, reading and writing. All curriculum areas involve some aspects of English.

Early Years Foundation Stage

By the end of Foundation Stage, most children should be able to:

- Listen attentively in a range of situations
- Listen to stories, anticipate events and respond with relevant questions, comments or actions
- Give attention to what others say and respond appropriately
- Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions
- Answer how or why questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events
- Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of the listener's needs
- Use past, present and future forms when talking about events
- Develop their own narrative and explanations by connecting ideas or events

In reading and writing (up to Phase 2 and, for some, within Phase 3 criteria of Letters and Sounds), most should be able to:

- Read and understand simple sentences
- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately
- Read some common irregular words
- Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read
- Use phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds
- Write some irregular common words
- Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others
- Spell some words correctly and others in a phonetically plausible way
- Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Key Stages 1 and 2

The English programme of study, as detailed in the National Curriculum 2014, is based on the following 4 areas of teaching and learning:

- Spoken language
- Reading
 - Word reading/decoding
 - Comprehension
- Writing
 - Transcription
 - Handwriting and presentation
 - Composition
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

By the end of each phase of learning, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in each area.

Spoken Language

Pupils should:

- Be taught to speak confidently, clearly and audibly in a range of contexts
- Learn to adapt spoken language, varying use and register according to purpose and audience
- Learn to listen with concentration in real contexts
- Learn to take part in discussions, negotiations, debates and presentations, justifying opinions and evaluating and building on others' ideas
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Asking questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Selecting the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structures descriptions and explanations
- Participate in performance, in both drama and poetry.

Outside English lessons, the school provides a variety of forums in which to practice these skills. These include School Council meetings, class assemblies, public performances (for example: KS1 Nativity and Y6 end of year production) and opportunities to participate in local or national initiatives and competitions as they arise.

Reading

At St Matthew's, we believe that reading is central to all learning. We seek to foster in our children a genuine love of literature and a desire to read for pleasure, educating them to be discriminating and critical readers.

Our aim is that children:

- Gain enthusiasm and enjoyment from the written word and enrich their language and understanding
- Have opportunities to hear a wide variety of texts read aloud
- Have access to a wide range of reading materials in various formats
- Appreciate that books from all genres are produced by authors, illustrators and publishers, and develop opinions about the work of these people
- Are encouraged to use a range of reading strategies in an appropriate way
- Offer personal and critical response to what they read
- Demonstrate that they have understood their reading through a range of comprehension responses.
- Are able to use their reading skills to improve their learning across the curriculum
- Perceive research as an enjoyable and purposeful activity
- Have opportunities to use the extensive school and class libraries
- Develop reading as a lifelong habit.

Teachers at St Matthew's teach the skills and strategies needed to enable pupils to read accurately for meaning and pleasure, using methods and strategies such as shared and guided reading, inference teaching and systematic, synthetic phonics teaching.

Pupils should:

- Read for leisure as well as study
- Read a wide range, including media and ICT texts and texts from a variety of cultures and traditions
- Learn to be discriminating readers, with ability to understand layers of meaning
- Learn to make critical responses to what they read
- Explore meanings of text using drama.

Reading for information and other purposes is reinforced in all subjects.

Reading is taught through a combination of many of the following:

- Reading to and with the child
- The development of phonological awareness (see separate policy)
- Whole-word recognition
- Re-telling and prediction
- Using context, picture, syntactic and semantic clues
- Discussing character, plot, themes and style
- Using inference and deduction
- Recognition of grapheme combinations
- Development of presentation skills when reading aloud.

The timetable enables a variety of reading experiences within English lessons, in guided and shared reading sessions, discretely and in a variety of cross-curricular contexts. Children also read individually to teachers and/or teaching assistants, who invite them to share and discuss their responses.

Parents, friends, authors, illustrators and other visitors are warmly welcomed into school to listen to children read, discuss their choices, share their own reading experiences, perform and run workshops.

As a school we celebrate the annual World Book Day to stimulate the children's interest in reading, often inviting a children's author to visit. Reading Award badges (bronze, silver and gold embroidered badges, followed by a range of coloured stars) are provided to those children who show a commitment to individual reading and are attached and worn onto their uniform sleeves.

Assessment of Reading

We assess the following aspects of each child's development as a reader:

- The acquisition of a growing range of strategies for decoding words and making sense of the text
- The ability to use these strategies appropriately and flexibly
- The enjoyment of books and reading, and confidence and motivation in approaching new texts
- The range of reading experiences, both at school and at home
- The ability to reflect on reading and respond personally and critically to written text
- The ability to understand what they have read using a range of comprehension strategies
- The ability to access, assess and present information from non-fiction texts
- The ability to use ICT to access information.

Writing

Teaching writing is a major focus at St Matthew's School. Pupils are encouraged to:

- Become independent writers
- Become familiar with a range of writing to suit audience and purpose
- Reflect on their own individuality and creativity

Teachers understand the skills and strategies involved in teaching writing and understand that writing is essential to thinking and learning and to investigating and organising ideas. Writing is taught creatively through links to our creative curriculum and is promoted as an enjoyable activity in itself.

Pupils will:

- Write creatively and for meaning
- Be taught to write fluently and accurately, understanding related rules and conventions

- Learn to write for communication by creating images, describing experiences, ideas and feelings, and organising information in order to engage, inform and persuade
- Learn a variety of forms of writing; both non-fictional and fictional based, such as letters ,reports, notes, narrative and poetry
- Be able to choose the structure and content/language to suit purpose and audience
- Be able to compose on paper and on screen, using different fonts and layouts
- Learn to respond critically to their own and to others' writing
- Learn to redraft their work to develop and improve content, style and accuracy.
- Understand and recognise the value of their writing by publishing their finished pieces to presentation standard.

In order to maintain a positive climate for writing, teachers:

- Ensure that extended writing time is frequently and regularly available
- Provide access to a wide range of quality reading resources including non-fiction, stories, and poetry and play scripts in various formats
- Create frequent opportunities to share and publish writing
- Share their own favourite writing and texts with the children
- Allow opportunities for reading whole texts as well as extracts
- Expose children to a wide range of authors, poets and storytellers, planning opportunities for children to encounter good examples of writing and investigate an author's craft
- Use modelled writing as well as shared and supported writing on a regular basis.

Handwriting

We aim for children:

- To develop a legible, fluent and comfortable style
- To appreciate the aesthetic qualities of handwriting
- To gain pleasure from presentation
- To ensure that a good standard of handwriting is used and maintained in all areas of the curriculum.

Children are taught handwriting from Reception, using the Letter Join programme. Discrete handwriting sessions enable children to progress through three stages:

- Stage 1 – developing correct printed / simple cursive letter formation, posture and pencil grip
- Stage 2 – learning to join letters and developing a joined cursive style
- Stage 3 – to be increasingly able to make their first draft their best copy, developing a stamina for writing.

Teachers are expected to set a good example by writing neatly and in the style agreed when marking children's work or writing on the board.

Spelling

Children are taught strategies in both discrete spelling lessons (following the Rising Stars scheme of work) and within English lessons, enabling them to:

- Spell accurately and identify reasons for mis-spellings
- Proof-read their spelling
- Recognise and use word origins, families and roots to build their skills
- Use dictionaries, thesauruses and spell-checks
- Spell words specified in the appendices of the National Curriculum 2014 at the end of each school year and/or key stage.

Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary

Teachers should understand, teach and demonstrate in their everyday practice the formal conventions of Standard English language.

They should emphasise their importance to meaning and effect. Teaching in all areas forms part of everyday English lessons, whether discrete, in grammar starters or in active context, and should be developed across all areas of the wider curriculum.

Assessment of Writing

Teachers use assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and link it clearly to learning objectives.

They record and track each child's progress, showing analysis of achievement in relation to learning objectives and using this to set future targets.

They use a variety of formative assessment methods and constructive marking strategies, involving children in their own assessment through explicit understanding of learning objectives and target-setting for personal improvement through 1:1 feedback.

Planning and Assessment

Planning

- Long and Medium term plans provide overviews of content and objectives across each term / topic, whilst short term planning reflects the teacher's teaching approach and learning review in each session
- Planning is in accordance with National Curriculum framework for the coverage of reading, writing, poetry, speaking and listening, including drama across a variety of genres
- English is planned separately to other subjects (mostly with links made to the termly overall class topic) and follows established schemes of work for phonics, grammar and spelling to ensure developmental learning based on prior knowledge
- Pupils may be grouped by ability, with those entitled to Pupil Premium funding (PPG), appearing on the Register of Special Needs (SEND) or requiring additional support, given additional or discrete support, which is tracked and monitored.

Assessment

- Pupils are assessed on an on-going basis and practice is adapted accordingly
- In EYFS, children are observed in the different areas of learning. Target Tracker is used to record these observations. (For more information, please view the EYFS policy)
- Two formal summative assessments of reading comprehension and writing including spelling, grammar, punctuation and composition are carried out. Reading tests (PIRA) in Y1 to Y5 are completed and past SATs papers in Y6. The children's individual results are input, tracked and monitored within target tracker. Spelling, punctuation and grammar tests (GAPS) in Y1 to Y5 are completed and used to support formative assessment and inform *Target Tracker*, our chosen system for assessing and tracking pupil progress.
- Fiction and non-fiction writing is completed twice yearly into individual assessment books using a school wide theme. This is also used to support formative assessment and input into *Target Tracker*.

- Spelling tests are completed in class throughout the year.
- Spoken language is assessed throughout school and the progress included in *Target Tracker*.
- Phonics is tracked half-termly from Reception to Y2, showing progress from their previous phase and highlighting their current phonics phase. The results are then collated and tracked. (For more information, please see the separate phonics policy, written by the Phonics subject leader)
- Staff attend moderation sessions at school. End of key stage writing is also moderated by the LA in line with their policy.
- End of key stage assessments are carried out in accordance with legislation and results inform the school's self-evaluation, development plan and performance management. For more detailed assessment information see the school's Assessment Policy.

Specific Groups:

- Analysis of achievement is carried out twice yearly. Pupil progress meetings allow for discussion of pupils who are making slow progress and plans are made for their continued support and progression
- SEND, PPG and both highest and lower achieving children are given additional, monitored English support.

Sue Matthew
English Subject Leader
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