



# *St Stephens Community Academy*

## **English Policy 2023**

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Advisory Committee	Local Governing Advisory Body
Linked Documents and Policies	National Curriculum 14

# English Policy 2023

## 1. Aims

**1.1** English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

**1.2** The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum 14 is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- ✓ read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- ✓ develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- ✓ acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- ✓ appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- ✓ write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- ✓ use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- ✓ are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

### **Speaking and Listening**

Speaking and listening provide the foundation for further language development. A pupil's spoken language reflects the local culture and heritage of the individual and is therefore crucial to his or her identity and should be valued and built upon. However, pupils are also entitled to gain knowledge, competence and confidence in the use Standard English, thus empowering them to use whichever is most appropriate to purpose, audience and situation. To reflect this, we aim to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- ✓ speak in a variety of forms for different audiences, purposes and situations (both formal and informal)
- ✓ reflect upon their speech and make appropriate choices
- ✓ talk in group situations, valuing the contributions of others and responding appropriately

## Reading

Reading is one of the most powerful tools of learning both in and out of school. It facilitates Reading provides opportunities for pupils to gain both understanding and pleasure from a range of texts. To support them in this, we aim to help pupils to:

- ✓ master the basic mechanical skills of reading
- ✓ read with accuracy, fluency and expression
- ✓ develop and use higher order reading skills which will contribute to their overall comprehension of texts
- ✓ understand the value of information texts as an aid to learning
- ✓ develop a love of literature and an understanding of the pleasure reading can bring

## Writing

Confidence and competence in the use of the written word is essential to the communication of meaning. A pupil's ability to write effectively affects performance in all areas of learning and living and is very much a developmental process. All staff encourage writing from its emergent start, through developmental attempts to its final, independent stage. Throughout these stages, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- ✓ explore and develop knowledge of the variety of functions and formats of writing
- ✓ communicate meaning effectively through appropriate language choices according to intended purpose and audience
- ✓ understand, value and use the process approach to writing in order to improve the content and presentation of their writing through planning, drafting and re-drafting
- ✓ write individually and collaboratively, experiencing praise and receiving constructive criticism and support
- ✓ experience the pleasure of publishing their writing and sharing it with a wider audience
- ✓ experiment with language play for enjoyment

## Spelling

We value and encourage children as they move through the developmental stages of learning to spell, but we also recognise the importance of mastering and using accurately conventional spelling in order to convey meaning clearly in writing. To support this goal, we aim to develop pupils' knowledge of:

- ✓ sound-symbol relationships
- ✓ regular patterns in words and non-standard forms
- ✓ the structure of words; compound/complex words, prefixes, suffixes, roots and origins
- ✓ high interest words associated with topics and specific curricular areas
- ✓ a variety of strategies to enable independence in spelling, such as word banks, dictionaries, displays, mnemonics etc
- ✓ spelling rules

## Handwriting

Presentation of written work reflects the awareness of the writer to the needs of his or her audience. Our ultimate goal is for pupils to achieve a fast, flowing, legible style of writing. In order to achieve this, we are aware of the need for a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the key stages. We teach children to write using the cursive handwriting script which:

- ✓ ensures correct formation and orientation of letters
- ✓ develops consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing
- ✓ encourages a pride in presentation

- ✓ eases the transition from printing to joining

### **Drama**

As a school we appreciate the role of educational drama strategies as: ✓

a learning tool across the curriculum

- ✓ an effective factor in the development of oral and aural skills
- ✓ a means of developing empathy with others and an understanding of self
- ✓ a way of encouraging interaction with texts

## **2. Teaching and Learning Style**

**2.1** At St Stephens Community Academy 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 teach Literacy through a daily experience as well as daily guided reading and RWI phonics or RWI spelling sessions. 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.

**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 learning support assistants to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

## **3. English Curriculum Planning**

**3.1** English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum 14 as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

**3.2** As a school we have a clear long-term progression maps for English which identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.

**3.3** Class teachers (from Year 1-6) use Literacy Tree Teaching sequences to plan for the teaching of English (writing and reading). This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. The subject leader and SLT team will review these plans as part of the planning review process. RWI Spelling is used from Year 2-6. Direct teaching underpins the programme. Spelling is taught cumulatively and systematically, with deliberate, focused practice. Constant revision and practice are key to children's success. RWI phonics is taught from Foundation through to when children finish the programme (approx. Year 2). The teaching groups range from teaching initial sounds, learning to blend words and reading with fluency and expression. Children are assessed every half term and streamed according to their phonics knowledge.

## **4. The Foundation Stage**

**4.1** Through the use of play and structured activities, we cover the Early Learning Goals as set out in the updated EYFS framework September 2021. In the foundation stage we:

- ✓ plan for and provide opportunities and encouragement for children to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes
- ✓ support and develop children's confidence

- ✓ enable children to build their communication skills which will help them to build social relationships
- ✓ plan activities and experiences that engage all the senses, including music, songs, rhymes and dance
- ✓ plan lots of opportunities for children to interact with others
- ✓ give children daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, rhymes, music, songs, poetry and stories
- ✓ allow children to see adults reading and writing and encourage children to experiment with writing themselves
- ✓ plan an environment that is stimulating for children from all backgrounds and cultures
- ✓ give children the opportunity to use ICT as an alternative form of communication
- ✓ provide time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between children and adults
- ✓ show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to the needs of children learning English as an additional language
- ✓ link language with physical movement through the use of action songs and rhymes
- ✓ actively involve parents in the development of their child's language skills

**4.2** In Class F, we use both Talk Through Stories (Ruth Miskin) and Drawing Club (Greg Botrill) to combine both skills in communication and language but also mark making/writing.

Talk Through Stories has developed a range of systematic planning to extend and deepen children's vocabulary step by step. In the first week, 'story week', children get to know the story really well. They explore the characters and their actions and motives. During the second week, 'vocabulary week', we explore 8 words from the story which have been specifically selected to develop children's understanding of each word in the context of their everyday lives.

After each Talk Through Stories carpet session, we then begin our 'Drawing Club' session. The picture we draw changes daily; it may be the character, setting, or a 'what if' adventure. After taking part in a modelled drawing lesson, the children then each draw a picture in their books and as the year goes on they progress from giving meanings to their marks, to recognisable drawings/letters, to simple CVC words all the way to full sentences. 'The one thing that the world of story has to have is magic and Drawing Club is the golden key to open the door to it for children to go on an adventure with them. The progress children can make through Drawing Club across all areas of the curriculum is exceptional with the added bonus of confidence and joy.' (Greg Botrill)

## **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 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 throughout the session 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 as well as 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 IT**

**6.1** The use of information and communication technology, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text level. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive and non-linear story.

### **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 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 Non-Discrimination; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

**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– 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 age-related standards. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

**7.3** Intervention through SEN Support and or Education, Health and Care Plans will lead to the creation of a Provision Map for children with special educational needs. The Provision Map 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 visit, 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 and written materials in different formats; IT, other technological aids and recorded materials; 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 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. 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 to help them plan for the next unit of work. This can be seen as end of unit writes or distance writes.

**8.3** Teachers use different writing assessment processes to inform judgements against national standards. Teachers use these assessments to inform children next steps in learning. This on-going process is used to support discussions with the child's parents.

**8.4** Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 as part of the assessment process for end of Key Stage judgements. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress based on the level descriptions of the National Curriculum at the end of each year.

**8.5** Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material in Standardisation activities. Moderation is a key part of our assessment process and this happens regularly in different year group teams.

**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 thesaurus. All classrooms have a selection of poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through our school computers or ipads. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research as well as promote reading for pleasure. Each class orders topic boxes each term to support reading across other areas of the curriculum.

## **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 subject/domain leader. The work of the subject/domain 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.

**10.2** The subject/domain leader gives the Head of School an annual summary report evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicating areas for further improvement. The subject/domain leader will work as part of the Senior Leadership team to review the progress and attainment of the children on a termly basis. This will provide the focus of observations and planning/book scrutinies for the next term.

**10.3** The leader has specially-allocated regular leadership time in which to review a selection of children's work and to undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The subject leader will also monitor display/ classroom provision and use pupil conferencing as part of the triangulation of methods to inform the monitoring of English.

**11. Review:**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the academy policy review programme. The Head of School is responsible for reporting to the Local Governing Advisory Board (LGAB) about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Date Revised: **September 2023**

Date for review: **September 2024**