



St Ethelbert's RCP **English Policy**

This policy describes our aims and our practice in the teaching of English: Speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is defined by current national guidance on best practice, in-service training, staff discussion and professional judgement.

Aims for our policy:

- ❖ To ensure that each child has the necessary language skill to communicate effectively using spoken English
- ❖ To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- ❖ To develop in pupils a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment and enrich their lives;
- ❖ To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts;
- ❖ To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences;
- ❖ To teach the basics – spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation – well so children have all the necessary tools;
- ❖ To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing;
- ❖ To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Planning – Learning and Teaching Strategies

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by Lancashire LAPs, which is modelled on the work of the 2014 National Curriculum. Teachers plan in modules towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. As much as possible, writing is linked to the termly class topic and therefore, the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and an emphasis on whole texts rather than extracts and worksheets.

Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting and, in the main, differentiation is by outcome and through setting different expectations. However, the teacher will lead smaller ability led guided reading and writing groups of approximately six children during the lesson. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on reading and writing objectives which are specific to that group of children.

Speaking and Listening

At St Ethelbert's, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk for learning. Effective, open-ended questioning is an important tool and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently and articulately in a supportive environment in which challenge is welcomed.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

- ❖ Questioning and taking risks with language;
- ❖ Presenting in-front of an audience;
- ❖ Re-telling, role-play and drama productions ;
- ❖ Listening to, reciting, reading aloud and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs;
- ❖ Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character;
- ❖ Talking about texts – opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing;
- ❖ Debate;
- ❖ Collaborative work and reporting back following group work;

Reading

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. We endeavour to instil in children a love of literature and to this end, read to all children daily as we believe that exposure to high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read independently.

Phonics forms the basis for much of our teaching of early reading and each child in reception and key stage one receives a daily phonics input. However, we recognise that other strategies e.g. whole word recognition; rhyme and use of context and syntax also need to be taught.

As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, visualisation, summarising, inference, deduction and prediction.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

The teaching of reading

- ❖ The teaching of early reading skills begins in the Nursery, where children learn to love books through regular whole class, small group and individual reading sessions. This continues throughout the school.
- ❖ Phonics is taught systematically from Nursery following the Letters and Sounds 'phased' programme. Children have daily short whole class sessions until the end of Year 2, learning sounds, actions and letters, games and activities to support sounding out, segmenting and blending for reading and writing;
- ❖ When children have completed phase 2 of Letters and Sounds, they are introduced to phonically decodable reading books, which they read individually to an adult at least twice per week. Children are also given the opportunity to read 'real' books to adults.
- ❖ When the teacher deems it appropriate and when fluency is developing, children move onto to objective-led group reading.
- ❖ In Key Stage 2, a daily, half hour reading session takes place. This involves a carousel of activities including: teacher led group reading; child-led reciprocal reading; individual reading and a variety of response to reading activities.

- ❖ Staff regularly assess children's progress in reading using LAPS and book bands, ensuring that children progress through the scheme at a suitable rate.
- ❖ Those children who are not making adequate progress receive additional support.

Developing a love of reading

- ❖ Reading is an integral part of the wider curriculum and reading skills are modelled and taught in subject areas other than English.
- ❖ In addition, to reading scheme books, children choose 'real' books to take home to read solely for enjoyment.
- ❖ We have a dedicated library area in each classroom and class and corridor displays celebrating favourite books and authors.
- ❖ Children enjoy visits from authors.
- ❖ All class teachers are expected to read a story or novel at the end of every day.
- ❖ We have an annual school Book Fair

Children are expected to read every night at home, writing in their reading diaries to share ideas about books and to keep a record of what they are reading. This is monitored systematically by staff, who liaise directly with parents if it is not happening.

Writing

At St Ethelbert's, we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. Teachers carefully plan writing using the talk4writing approach, ensuring that there is a purposeful outcome to every unit of writing. Using this approach, children learn to recite good models of writing which are usually written by the teacher and incorporate the sentence structures, grammar, punctuation and genre which the teacher wants to be learned. The children then move onto innovations in which small features are changed, and finally to invention which are completely original pieces of writing. In this way all pupils learn to be confident writers, whilst learning key writing skills explicitly and systematically.

Writing takes place daily within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all times.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

- ❖ A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset;
- ❖ Writing is displayed in all classes and in the wider school environment;
- ❖ We provide stimulating first hand experiences e.g. trips and visitors
- ❖ Writing is taught as a sequential activity – planning, drafting editing and publishing
- ❖ Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking and verbal feedback at the point of writing
- ❖ Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to literacy marking and feedback;
- ❖ We ensure progression in complexity of tasks year on year;
- ❖ We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write for extended periods;
- ❖ Peer marking is encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing.

Spelling

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spelling plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

- ❖ Key Stage One pupils work are encouraged to 'have a go' in their first drafts and refer to class word banks when writing;
- ❖ Phonically accurate spelling is accepted in KS1, although common exception words are expected to be spelt correctly.
- ❖ We use the 2014 National Curriculum as a guideline as to which spellings should be taught in which year group.
- ❖ There are school guidelines which state which patterns should be taught during each year group
- ❖ Children learn to spell explicitly in weekly spelling lessons;
- ❖ From Year One, children are actively encouraged and taught to proof read their writing for spelling errors;

In addition to in-class focus on a spelling, the focus spellings are also given to children as part of their homework and they are tested on these weekly.

Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

- ❖ We use the Penpals Handwriting scheme as the basis for our teaching, which links handwriting to common spelling patterns;
- ❖ We take the view that handwriting should be taught little and often – at least 4 X 10 minutes in Key Stage One and 2 X10 minutes every week in Key Stage Two;
- ❖ We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as from the beginning of year two
- ❖ We award dojo points for neatness so that children are constantly focussed on developing the habit of neat writing;
- ❖ Extra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school where the class team feel that additional handwriting support is needed.

Grammar

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and identifying word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work and through the reading of quality texts. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What does this look like at St Ethelbert's?

- ❖ We start with the basics of sentence construction including full stops and capital letters;
- ❖ Children begin to identify word classes early on (noun, verb, adjective, adverb);

- ❖ We follow the 2014 National Curriculum as guidance as to what is taught in each year group and from this, have devised a specific structure for our school detailing expectations year by year.

Inclusion

We aim for all children to participate in mainstream lessons. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place for children with SEND. Where it is felt necessary, a pupil is withdrawn from class to receive specialist help from school devised intervention programmes, or other agencies. We aim to provide a range of resources that reflect the diversity of culture and language within our school community and the wider local community.

Policy adopted by governors at the Curriculum, Pupil Welfare and Community Committee meeting on 15th March 2018

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