

# St. Gregory's R.C. Primary

SOUTH SHIELDS

NE34 6DZ



## ENGLISH POLICY

December 2019

## 1. Aims

**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 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 media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, reading and writing across a range of different situations and across the curriculum.**

### **The aims of teaching English are:**

- to enable children to speak clearly, fluently and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- 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 including through drama activities;
- 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 foster and instil the enjoyment of reading, and a recognition of its value;
- to foster and instil the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate, meaningful and purposeful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to develop a secure understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work;
- to produce effective, well presented written work.

### **Teaching and learning style**

The English curriculum at St. Gregory's school has taken many of the content and principles of 'Mastery' in mathematics. We have developed a curriculum which ensures children spend longer being taught the common features and skills in reading and writing in order to have a more coherent English curriculum and therefore be able to develop mastery in English. The curriculum has been adapted using various methods such as: talk for writing, having a strong grammar focus, using high quality novels and books as well as using a range of drama conventions.

### **The Principles and Features Characterised in Our Curriculum:**

Teachers reinforce an expectation that all pupils are capable of achieving high standards in English.

The large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace. Differentiation is achieved through additional support and encouraging children's individual flair and fluency.

Interventions focus on gaps in knowledge and developing a growth mind-set in order to ensure all children achieve.

Teaching is underpinned by using high quality texts and high quality examples from the teacher which focus on skills to be taught. These texts are then analysed in depth with the children in order for them to learn and apply those skills.

Grammar and punctuation skills are practiced and consolidated until all children have a firm understanding of how to apply them in to their own work.

Reading begins in Foundation Stage where we teach literacy in the Foundation Stage as an integral part of the school's work. The children have experience of aspects of the literacy programme of study every day, e.g.

phonics, shared text work etc. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the literacy aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for the children. We give all the 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 practise and exchange their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and text in a range of situations. Key Stage One teaching follows the Letters and Sounds structure. Children progress through the reading bands accordingly with each book level introducing new reading and comprehension skills. There is an emphasis on children learning to decode through daily phonics teaching and developing their sight vocabulary for common exception words. Parents are encouraged to support their child to develop a love of reading through an induction meeting, training sessions and one to one meetings with teachers.

Reading strategies are established through Guided Reading sessions in groups with their class teacher and Guided reading provides an opportunity for the teacher to teach reading in relation to the differentiated needs of the pupil groups and their level of achievement. Children who fail to progress at the expected rate are supported with reading intervention.

Teachers use precise questioning in class to develop the children's thinking and explanations, helping children to make literary choices in their writing.

Children are articulate in explaining and justifying their thinking when answering comprehension questions.

Children have opportunities and are taught to work both collaboratively and independently.

Structured high quality opportunities for speaking and listening are used to develop children's language skills as well as to support writing and reading.

### **Our Curriculum Objectives**

In English, our main objective as a school is for all children to develop a love of reading as well as the necessary skills needed in writing for life and also be able to have access to future learning.

English is taught in mixed ability groups for the majority of the time as we believe all children can achieve. In this approach, all children are exposed to some higher-level thinking questions and problem-solving as well as having the opportunity to collaborate and develop a growth mind-set through working with their peers.

Additional intervention is provided for children working below age expectations in reading, along with extension activities and questions for children working at greater depth.

### **The Key features of our mastery approach in English:**

#### **Curriculum Design**

A carefully considered teaching cycle is followed throughout the school. The cycle consists of using high quality texts which are interrogated and deconstructed in order for the children to understand the structure and mechanics of writing. This is followed by shared and modelled writing with the teacher, which helps to nurture the children's fluency and creativity. The children then apply their skills in independent pieces of writing which are finally edited and improved by the individual child as well as receiving some input from their peers. Throughout the process, the children are taught to read as writers and write as readers.

#### **Inspirational learning**

As a school we believe in providing the children with as many enrichment opportunities as we can in order to inspire their learning e.g. regular opportunities to watch and take part in shows and assemblies, book fairs, trips and visits etc.

### **Lesson design**

Lessons are carefully planned using input from the class teacher and teaching assistants in daily feed forward / feedback meetings, drawing on evidence from observations of pupils in class. Lesson designs are carefully considered to ensure that the children are taught the concepts and structures needed to become competent writers. Children are often given a real purpose to write and the units often have hooks in order to engage and inspire the children's thinking and learning.

### **Professional development and training of teachers**

We provide access to high quality professional development to ensure that we are always improving the quality of our teaching so that this impacts upon children's learning. All our teachers have deep subject knowledge a thorough knowledge of how to teach English. They are continually seeking to improve their effectiveness.

We have a highly motivated and skilled Senior Management team who are committed to their own CPD as well as that of the staff at St. Gregory's school. This is to ensure that all teaching and learning in English is of the highest quality.

### **Handwriting**

A secure development of handwriting is taught throughout the school i.e.

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS)
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS)
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

Children receive at least a weekly handwriting lesson. Children will have the opportunity to practise new letters and joins and all children and adults are encouraged to write neatly with fluent joins where appropriate.

### **Homework.**

Spelling Homework - In key stage 1 children are given weekly spellings to learn linked to their phonics. They are tested on these spellings weekly using the 'missing word' format.

In key stage 2 children are given spellings, from the curriculum spelling lists, to learn every 2 weeks. They are tested on these spellings fortnightly using the 'missing word' format.

All children are given their spellings to practise at home on a 'Look, say, cover, write, check' sheet.

Children are given regular dictation by their teacher to check understanding of spelling and to improve memory.

Children are expected to regularly read for homework and record this in their reading records.

## **English curriculum planning**

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning.

We currently carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum 2014, programme of study for English details what we teach in the long-term and identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.

Our medium-term plans, 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.

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 includes details of what each group of children will be learning.

*\* We are currently looking at ways of reducing teacher workload with regard to planning*

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

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.

## **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. They develop mathematical language associated with telling the time and describing shapes. 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.

## **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)**

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE 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.

## **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.

## **English and ICT**

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 stories. ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The use of IWB's to show text enables it to be read and shared. The use of a word processor permits 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. Software is used to support independent reading and writing. A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills.

## **English and inclusion**

At St. Gregory's we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. All children receive quality first literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. 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.

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 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 steps. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

If intervention is needed to support progress this 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.

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.

Teachers provide help by using: texts that children can more easily read and understand; visual and written materials in different formats; ICT, other technological aids and taped materials; alternative communication, such as signs and symbols.

### **Assessment for learning**

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy and through the use of the assessment documents for Reading and Writing.

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The formative assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress and so that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Children are also involved in setting their own steps to success and encouraged to review their progress towards these through self, peer and teacher assessment.

Teachers regularly measure progress against the year group expectations after every unit of work and to help them plan for the next unit of work. Teachers make long-term 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 before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

These long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and year group TESTBASE tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress based on tracking evidence collected throughout the year.

*\* We are currently looking at ways of reducing teacher workload with regard to marking*

### **Resources**

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 small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. The library contains a range of non-fiction and fiction books to support children's individual research and to enthuse and inspire a love of reading.

### **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of 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 discusses regularly with the headteacher, the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvements. The leader has specially-allocated management time in which to review samples of the children's work, to monitor planning, to moderate assessments and to undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. There is termly moderation of reading and writing in-house and in addition- cross-school moderation of writing termly.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Head Teacher and Governing Body:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil Attainment
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching.

### Literacy Subject Leader:

- To have an impact on raising standards of attainment for English across the whole school
- Ensure the effective implementation of the Statutory National Curriculum for English
- Adapt and use the Programme of Study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children
- To monitor the whole school and individual needs to be able to assess individual professional development opportunities and needs
- To maintain the availability of high quality resources
- To maintain an overview of current trends and developments within the subject
- To ensure, together with the Head Teacher and Deputy Teacher, a rigorous and effective programme of moderation of assessments
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of children's work sample monitoring is in place
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of short-term planning is in place
- To effectively manage any funding designated to Literacy.

### Class Teachers:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Curriculum for English
- Adapt and use the Programme of study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children
- Make effective use of Assessment for learning within Literacy
- To ensure work is differentiated to enable all children to reach their full potential

### Teaching Assistants:

- To support the class teacher in the effective implementation of Literacy

### Parents/Carers

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding termly parents' evenings to discuss children's progress
- sending an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can develop their learning
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework and literacy learning.

*\* This policy will be reviewed at least every two years*

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:-

Date:- 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Head Teacher)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be reviewed and updated in December 2020.