



# **St Mark's Elm Tree Primary School**

## **English Policy**

**Reviewed September 2016  
To be reviewed September 2017**

## **Mission Statement**

At St Mark's Elm Tree CE VA Primary we will:

- ◆ Welcome everyone
- ◆ Build Christian values and worship into our teaching
- ◆ Establish strong links between home, school and community
- ◆ Endeavour to reach our full potential and celebrate our achievements
- ◆ Care for, encourage and respect each other
- ◆ Support each other to stay safe, healthy and make a positive contribution to our World

*Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to belong and learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. We do not tolerate bullying.*

## **1 Aims and objectives**

1.1 The study of English develops children's ability to listen, communicate, read (including both word reading and comprehension) and write (including spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting/presentation) 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 listening, speaking, reading and writing across a range of different situations.

1.2 Our objectives in the teaching of English are:

- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work.
- to help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on daily phonics teaching as well as word, sentence and text level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to enable children to speak/communicate clearly 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 of drama activities;

## **2 Teaching and learning style**

2.1 At St Mark's Elm Tree (C of E) Primary School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We do this through a daily lesson in which children experience whole-class reading (for some children phonics based), communication or writing activity. Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, an independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning. Children are readily given the opportunity to review what they have learned or improve their work based on targets set. 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 and phonics posters/strategies and display that encourages independence. Children have the opportunity to use computing in English lessons where it enhances their learning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum. We set learning that has a real context/purpose, so the children can make the links between what they learn and why they need to learn this (why it's valuable to them).

- 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 some cases, we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We also, in some lessons, group the children in homogenous groups in order to meet their specific learning needs; mainly within the teaching of phonics. We use teaching 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 as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of 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 for literacy and mathematics detail the objectives that we teach in the long-term. Our long term plans for English identify the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year group on a two year rolling program.
- 3.3 Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the National Curriculum, give more details of the main teaching objectives/coverage for each term. These plans define what we specifically teach, building on from the initial objectives stated in the long term plans, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.
- 3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives, the context for learning and the success criteria for each lesson and group of learners; it gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis, as well as this SLT often scrutinise the plans as part of their monitoring schedule.
- 3.5 We plan the activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan progression into the scheme of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school. As well as this we ensure, where appropriate, that there is a real context/purpose in which the learning can take place.

### **4 The Foundation Stage**

- 4.1 We teach English in reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school and begins each day with dedicated teaching of phonics. As the reception classes are part of the Foundation Stage they follow the EYFS statutory framework, 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 practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They

have the opportunity to explore 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, communicating and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school; the expectation is that the quality of work in English lessons is the same in all other curriculum lessons.

### **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 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; again giving a real context/purpose for learning.

### **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 bring 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.

## **6 English and computing**

6.1 The use of computing, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text levels, where appropriate. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, e.g. interactive and non-linear stories, animation etc...

6.2 Computing is used at whole-class, group and independent levels. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of a word processor permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available through the Internet to motivate and encourage children to want to be involved in their own learning. Groups may be given the opportunity work at a computer and input text via standard or overlay keyboard. Software can be used to support independent reading and writing. A range of software may be used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills. Lessons can focus on what pupils have achieved using computing, or computing can provide the means of presenting their outcomes (via multimedia presentation, visual recordings, audio recordings etc...)

## **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; Single equality scheme; Gifted and Talented Children; 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, differentiation, the child’s social and emotional needs – 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 levels. This ensures that our teaching is always matched to the child’s needs.
- 7.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of a Support Plan for children with special educational needs. The Support Plan 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 and teaching assistants provide help by using:
- texts that children can more easily read and understand;
  - visual and written materials in different formats;
  - ICT;
  - 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 and targets set. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children’s progress. Able 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. They use individual records and class records of the key objectives as the recording format for this. These assessments are readily shared with the children, so they are involved in knowing how to improve.
- 8.3 Teachers’ short term and medium term assessments allow them to make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these on going assessments 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. Progress and targets are discussed half termly, progress is discussed with the class teacher with the child and with the child’s parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.
- 8.4 These long-term assessments are based on on-going assessments that the teachers make daily, weekly, half termly and termly. Only statutory tests are carried out and they are not the only marker used to make the final yearly judgement; teacher assessment is embedded throughout the whole school.

- 8.5 Each class teacher keeps samples of children's work in both their exercise books and orange AM files, as part of our assertive mentoring system. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers and SLT meet regularly to moderate individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced. Cross school moderation of writing is also carried out.
- 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 are a range of resources used in classrooms to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have consistent displays displaying what should be included in their work at each level or, where appropriate, each year group, displays to encourage independence, dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus easily accessible to each group of learners. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts that children can choose as their individual readers (organised into ability). Children also have access to phonics readers, where necessary. Children have access to the Internet and a wide range of programs through their classroom computer. Audio-visual aids are available from the central storage area. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research as well as allowing them to choose their own loaned book to extend their reading experiences.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The leading and planning of the English curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:
- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
  - evaluates the strengths and areas for development in English and indicates areas for further improvement;
  - uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe English lessons across the school.
- 10.2 A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of literacy. The governing body receive regular reports from with the subject leader to review progress and developments. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Signed:**

**Date Approved:**