

St John's Upper Holloway CE Primary School



English policy

November 2020

English Policy

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Our Vision

Jesus said: 'Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15:12

As we are loved, so we shall love.

As we are taught, so we shall teach.

As we are nurtured, so we shall flourish.

Our Mission

St John's is a small, caring Church of England Primary School. It is committed to supporting our pupils to be happy, successful and fulfilled throughout their lives. We believe that everyone is unique and valued by God. We aspire to be a high achieving school that provides an outstanding education:

- ❖ promoting the highest standards of teaching and learning, with excellent leadership
- ❖ being inclusive, celebrating diversity and valuing all religions, faiths, cultures and backgrounds
- ❖ providing a rich and stimulating curriculum that will inspire and challenge
- ❖ being a happy, healthy and safe place
- ❖ providing excellent care, guidance and support with a strong partnership between school, parents and the community.

We seek to promote six Christian values of creativity, thankfulness, truthfulness, friendship, perseverance and courage, each linked by our core value of love. We believe these help to prepare our children for a successful and fulfilling life, so being:

- ❖ considerate and respectful with excellent manners
- ❖ confident, happy, independent and self-motivated
- ❖ co-operative and collaborative
- ❖ honest and trustworthy
- ❖ resilient, hardworking and determined
- ❖ highly principled with moral, spiritual, cultural and social awareness, including shared British Values.

Literacy Vision.

As a school we believe that staff should display a passion for all areas of the English curriculum so that children will also be enthusiastic about the subject. Children will be taught that literacy skills are for lifelong learning. They should be given the opportunity to apply their skills to real life situations as much as possible. All children should be taught to age related expectations and above. Staff should plan using the texts from the Literacy curriculum maps which have been planned with the children's engagement and interests in mind. Literacy lessons should be vibrant, interactive and include practical aspects of the subject including speaking and listening, spelling and grammar activities and starters and drama opportunities. Presentation of work should be to a high standard and display work should 'show off' good examples for the individual pupil. Equal coverage should be given to all genres and children should be given

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plenty of choice on what to read and write throughout the school year. Personal preferences should be acknowledged and engagement should be at the forefront of all teaching in this subject. Celebrations in this subject should be shared with the whole school.

1 Aims and objectives of English policy

1.1 The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

1.2 The aims of English are:

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- To develop in pupils, a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also 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 give 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.

2 Teaching and learning style

Planning – Teaching and Learning Strategies

2.1 At St. John's we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum. Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National Curriculum for literacy and we have developed a three-week writing unit plan which is followed by all staff. Teachers plan in three-week units towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading and other shorter writing tasks. As much as possible, writing is linked to the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting (shared/modelled/guided reading and writing) and within some ability-led guided reading and writing groups of approximately six children. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on individualised targets particular to that group of children. Teachers are also expected to plan time within some writing lessons for children to reflect on their marked work, and independently respond to teacher prompts to

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improve their writing. The new curriculum maps provide specific detail regarding texts and weekly outcomes for grammar and writing.

2.2 To ensure the inclusion of all children in English lessons, teaching and learning is matched closely to the abilities of each child, while continuing to provide suitable challenge. This is achieved through a range of strategies including group work, targeted adult support and use of resources. After in-depth assessment some children are selected to work in groups or individually on intervention programmes. These programmes, such as IDL and Literacy Catch Up provide support and enable children to catch up and move on quickly.

3 English curriculum planning

3.1 New curriculum overviews for each year group have been developed by the Literacy and Curriculum leads. The overviews include of quality and diverse texts across a range of genres. Where possible they are linked to wider curriculum topics in order to provide a rich and stimulating learning experience. They provide weekly grammar and writing outcomes as well as ideas on audience and purpose. At the end of each three-week unit children are provided with the opportunity for a piece of extended writing. These overviews, together with the unit plan are used for weekly planning.

3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The new curriculum maps show the yearly teaching programme and identifies key weekly outcomes.

3.3 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. The English subject leader is responsible for reviewing these plans.

3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly plan for the teaching of English. This covers both daily guided reading and/or Destination Reader sessions and English lessons. It lists the specific learning objectives 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. The class teacher evaluates the progress of individuals and groups. This assessment informs all future planning.

At St John's the main areas of literacy should look like this:

3.6 Reading

- Structured early learning program – The teaching of early reading skills begins in the nursery. Children are taught during shared and guided group sessions using structured and repetitive 'big books' and guided reading texts.
- As they progress into Key Stage 1, children use a banded reading scheme to develop decoding and comprehension skills. Structured guided reading in ability groups takes place every day and children have the opportunity to read with an adult at least twice per week (more if possible). Some children continue to require a highly structured

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approach to ensure progress. For these children, daily one to one sessions with teaching assistants focus on reinforcing basic skills.

- By KS2, the children are developing specific reading skills and strategies as well as reading for pleasure, studying authors and selecting their own books. All children, in KS2 will follow the Destination Reader approach. Children will have a daily shared reading session, in which, the teacher explicitly models the skills and strategies of a good reader with an emphasis on enthusiasm and excitement about books.

The approach involves daily sessions incorporating whole class modelling, prior to the children applying these skills through partner work and independent reading. Children deepen their understanding of the texts they read through the systematic use of a series of strategies and language stems. Children use the DR resources to support their language and comprehension skills.

During one DR 'Big Picture' session per week children are explicitly taught comprehension skills which they then apply to seen or unseen texts.

The aim of using the DR approach, is that children will develop the skills and enthusiasm of a good reader. This in turn will support them in all areas of the curriculum. They will be exposed to a wide variety of high-quality texts and in turn, develop their own preferences and be able to talk with confidence about them.

Reading for Enjoyment

- All children are exposed to high quality stories and texts through being read to daily by class teachers or teaching assistants.
- Reading for pleasure is encouraged through the use of the Islington Reading Road Map (KS1 and 2), high quality reading areas in each classroom and regular visits to the school or Archway libraries. Teachers are enthusiastic and discuss and model reading for enjoyment. They ensure their classrooms are a language-rich environment and that informal and formal discussions take place around reading. Various activities promoting reading take place throughout the year e.g. buddy reading, World Book Day, reading picnics, and assemblies where children can choose to hear a story read by a particular adult.
- In addition to phonics and banded home-reading book, children select a reading book to take home and comments are recorded in their Reading Records.

3.7 Writing

At St John's we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers we encourage children to fulfil their creativity whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically.

- Writing takes place within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum;
- We select stimulating and engaging texts for children to respond to in writing;
- Extended writing is encouraged and developed across a three-week unit;
- We establish a real purpose for writing from the outset;
- As far as possible we provide stimulating first hand experiences beyond the reading model;
- We teach writing as a sequenced activity;
- We provide regular supportive feedback which helps children to move on;
- We provide opportunities for the children to re-draft and publish their work for an audience.

There are guidelines for writing which all teachers are expected/encouraged to follow. They are as follows:

In order to raise standards, it is vital that we have a consistent approach to writing at St John's Upper Holloway. Therefore we...

- Use exciting stimuli to hook children in from EYFS to Year 6 ('hook activities', games, engaging texts, story maps, story bags etc).
- Challenge children through short burst writing games.
- Model and incorporate new vocabulary into all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Display boards show examples of children's writing.
- At the start of each writing topic and where needed, teachers will model writing, shared writing, group writing and paired writing.
- All children will write something every day with a longer piece weekly and a piece of extended writing every three weeks.
- Steps to success will be developed by the whole class in KS2. In KS1 they will be given and discussed.
- Children self assess against steps to success after a piece of extended / independent writing.
- A piece of extended writing will be assessed and levelled every half term in KS1 and 2 using writing assessment grids.
- Have a consistent approach to the language we use e.g. conjunctions.
- Use appropriate oral differentiation when explaining words such as adverbs of manner. (Use 'ly' words or 'words like quickly or happily').

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AFL

- Each child will respond to marking and improve something in their writing at least once a week (using blue pen).
- Children's steps to success will include grammar foci.
- Children will peer and self-assess using agreed proformas in KS2. In KS1 children are guided through self-assessments using an agreed proforma.

Presentation

- In KS2 children will write the long date.
- Children miss a line between L/O and work.
- Children should not use rubbers but put a line through mistakes.
- Children should use handwriting pens when teachers feel that they are ready to do so.
- In KS2 children should start speech on a new line and a new paragraph on a new line. It does not need to be indented.
- EYFS and KS1 use green pencils to edit work and add punctuation.

3.8 Grammar

- Throughout the school, there is a focus on the mastery of grammar for effective spoken and written expression.
- Grammar is taught explicitly at the appropriate level and referenced implicitly in English lessons from Key Stage One onwards.
- A range of teaching approaches is used to help children understand and apply grammatical terms.
- Teachers follow the national curriculum for grammar as set out in the English overview for their year group and this is set out in the *No Nonsense Grammar* programme we follow.

3.9 Spelling

- Key Stage One pupils work are encouraged to 'have a go' in their first drafts and refer to class word banks when writing;
- Children practise spelling corrections in their literacy books as part of their response to marked work. We link handwriting to common spelling patterns;
- Children learn to spell explicitly in weekly spelling lesson, using the *No Nonsense* spelling programme.
- They practice their spelling in their spelling journals
- From Year One, children are actively encouraged and taught to proof read their writing for spelling errors;
- Statutory word lists provided on tables in KS1 and 2

3.10 Handwriting

- 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.
- We use the Nelson 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 3 X 15 minutes in Key Stage One and 2 X15 minutes every week in Key Stage Two;

4 The Foundation Stage

4.1 Communication, Language and Literacy Development is an integral part of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children in Reception and Nursery follow the Development Matters and Early Learning goals using the Tower Hamlets Phonics Scheme (based on Letters and Sounds). Children have daily phonic sessions and experiences of a variety of texts. A love of books is fostered through a weekly book focus, story- telling and book handling. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, both with adults and to their peers, to listen carefully and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary.

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 in school.

5.2 Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on 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 Computing

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

Our next step is to include more 'digital literacy' in our English curriculum maps.

5.4 **Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship**

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

5.5 **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give 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 texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

6.1 **Inclusion**

At St. John's we teach English to all children, adapting our teaching and resources to suit their individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children and groups in their EHCPs and provision maps. Teachers provide help with communication and English through:

- effectively differentiating/making accessible all lessons to meet the needs and abilities of all children;
- using texts appropriate to the child's needs;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;

7 **Assessment and recording (See Assessment Policy)**

7.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in a variety of ways. The short-term formative assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans so that children can make progress. Assessment for learning (AFL) enhances children's learning. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. They use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key performance indicators and objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. The school has introduced clear assessment grids for reading and writing and plans regular moderation sessions to validate judgements. Teachers make long-term summative assessments at the end of each term and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. These are recorded on a termly tracking sheet. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to summarise the progress of

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each child before discussing it with the leadership team and the child's parents or carers. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-term tests and teacher assessments. If children are under-achieving various intervention programmes such as Literacy Catch Up or Five Minute Box are utilised. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, plus summative assessment tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5.

8 Resources

8.1 Each classroom has a range of resources to support the teaching of English according to national requirements and the children's needs. These include:

- Phonics word mats (as appropriate)
- Statutory word lists
- Dictionaries and Thesauruses
- Reading areas- containing a quality selection of fiction and non-fiction texts
- A range of banded reading books for independent reading
- Topic books (with additional books and resources from Islington Library Services)
- Internet access through the school laptops
- A range of phonics resources

8.2 There is a central storage area which contains guided reading books. Oxford Reading Tree and Rigby Star books for Key Stage 1 and Rigby Navigator books for Key Stage 2. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 have a range of phonics books for sending home. The phonics resources are resources created by Tower Hamlets.

8.3 The school library has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in different genres and appropriate for all ages. These are available to support children's individual reading and research.

9 Pupil targets

9.1 Teachers use objectives from the curriculum objective sheets (TAF) for writing. These are used to ensure curriculum coverage of all objectives. Long writing is marked in detail using the Islington grids and teachers use these to identify next steps for each child. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own next steps and are given regular opportunities to make progress towards them.

9.2 DR in KS2 will use weekly Big Picture lessons to assess children's comprehension skills and written responses to texts. They will be based on test style questions to prepare children for a range of question types.

9.3 Reading targets/next steps are to be shared with children based on 'gaps' in their reading skills as evidenced during guided reading sessions as well as reading tests.

10 Monitoring and review

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- 10.1** Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader meets with the head teacher to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicate areas for further improvement. The named governor responsible for English meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.

Approved by staff _____ (head) on _____

Approved by governors _____ (chair of C&S committee) on _____