

# English Policy

St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy



**Our school offers a supportive, inclusive, nurturing and inspiring learning environment where each member is known by God, loved and empowered to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged through an aspirational and engaging curriculum to develop their knowledge, skills and character so that they can truly flourish, both now and into the future.**

This set of values is reflected in all our policies.

**Joy**   **Hope**   Forgiveness   **Love**   Resilience

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on: April 2023

Next review due by: April 2025

## **The intentions of the policy**

This policy is intended to be read by teachers, staff, parents and trustees of the school, and also by LEA advisers, inspectors, support staff and any staff from other schools with whom we have links.

## **Aims and objectives**

Our school's philosophy is that the teaching of English has a crucial role to play in equipping learners with the language skills they need to become effective members of their own communities, the world of work, and of society in general. The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, 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, 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 and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used in a range of activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic, reflective and critical readers through contact with increasingly challenging texts which will develop their comprehension skills;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to know the features of and produce pieces of writing in a variety of styles; (genres)
- to write with increasing accuracy and meaning according to word choice, use of grammar and punctuation;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to develop the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

The aims of our Phonics program are:

- to provide high-quality, systematic phonics teaching, using the RWI scheme.
- to ensure that students have opportunities to apply their reading skills in a range of contexts.
- to assess students regularly and identifying gaps in their knowledge.  
to support and intervene when students require extra help in reading.
- to ensure that all members of staff are trained to deliver effective Phonics teaching.

## **Teaching and learning style**

At St Laurence, in order to enable access to the whole curriculum for every pupil, to cater for the variety of learning styles within each class, and to ensure progression and reinforcement of skills and concepts throughout the year groups, we employ a variety of teaching styles. Literacy is a basic skill and is key to creativity, imagination and critical thinking. We want our pupils to find learning exciting, compelling and intrinsically worthwhile. Therefore, we use a variety of interactive teaching and learning techniques so that pupils can respond successfully to their learning.

We plan activities where pupils:

- integrate prior and new knowledge

- acquire and use a range of learning skills
- solve problems individually and in groups
- think carefully about their successes and failures
- evaluate conflicting evidence and think critically
- accept that learning involves uncertainty and difficulty
- have access to high-quality, systematic phonics teaching, based on the RWI scheme.
- have opportunities to apply their reading skills in a range of contexts.
- are taught to apply their phonics knowledge to reading and writing activities.
- lesson follows a set pattern to ensure consistency in teaching and learning.

We use a wide variety of materials to enable every pupil to access the planned learning experience and to achieve the planned teaching and learning objectives.

We give pupils the opportunity to work in a variety of ways – whole class, groups (of differing sizes and composition), as pairs and individuals, according to their needs, the nature of the activity and the learning objectives. We build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, and enable them to become effective language users by:

- sharing teaching and learning objectives and clarifying expected outcomes in a language that pupils can understand
- teaching children to self-monitor
- effective use of the plenary enabling children to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and process of learning orally as well as by writing
- encouraging children to learn from and support one another, and to realise that they do not all have to be at the same level or arrive at the same point at the same time. There are many routes to the same destination.
- positive and constructive oral and/or written feed-back

We create an environment where **all** children can make progress. We teach **all** children and ensure that **all** children know this.

We enable pupils to develop written and spoken Standard English through the model we set as teachers, and through sharing and providing good quality reading and writing materials and texts.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at St Laurence. We recognise this fact and 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, recognising the different learning styles of the pupils. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

## **Key experiences**

We guarantee to provide the pupils of our school with the following key experiences:

- access to a book fair each year
- access to a range of fiction, non-fiction and multi-media based materials from the school's library and online subscription
- free access to choose, browse and read from a range of texts housed in the school library
- access to a wide range of writing materials and implements
- access to a variety of television and ICT programmes including iPad, to extend their language experiences
- the opportunity to present writing in a variety of formats each year e.g. plays, posters, information leaflets, menus, comic strips etc.

- the opportunity to engage in whole class, guided, paired and individual reading activities
- the opportunity to engage in various forms of drama and role play as a tool for learning and for presentation to a wider audience

## **English Curriculum**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum 2014 as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

The medium-term plans identify the main teaching targets for each term, which will deliver the key objectives. These plans are informed by assessment from the previous term and ensure an appropriate balance, emphasis and distribution of work across each term. The English Subject Leader, alongside the Head teacher, is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.

Class teachers complete a termly plan for the teaching of English. These list the specific learning objectives for each week and give 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 may discuss them on an informal basis.

## **Phonics**

St Laurence recognises that a high-quality phonics education is essential for children's reading development. Phonics is the understanding that letters and sounds have a relationship, and is used to help children decode new words in reading and writing.

### **Approach to Phonics**

St Laurence uses the RWI scheme to teach Phonics in accordance with the National Curriculum. We follow a systematic synthetic phonics approach whereby children learn individual sounds and blend them together to read and write words. The sessions occur for a minimum of 20 minutes daily, and reinforce and extend learning for those children who require it.

### **Phonic Reading Books**

We use reading books that are fully decodable and linked to each child's phonetic knowledge. These books are designed to match the phonic knowledge a child has been taught in the scheme followed in school. We use books from Oxford Reading Tree, Collins Big Cat Phonics and other high-quality books that match the phonics phases.

### **School Culture**

Our Phonics policy is supported by embedding a whole school learning culture which focuses on the importance of reading, taking into account that children learn how to read in different ways. St Laurence is committed to providing high quality Phonics teaching that ensures all children achieve. We continually evaluate and drive forward our Phonics policy to ensure every child is leaving our school as a confident and competent reader.

## **Marking and Assessment**

### **Writing**

Teachers provide whole class feedback, both verbal and written, addressing common misconceptions and areas of difficulties from the previous lesson. Children are encouraged to edit and improve in green pen as they write and in response to WCF, but there is also a whole class editing lesson planned into every unit.

During this whole class editing lesson, children edit in guided steps in order to promote metacognition and awareness of their own writing process. In this whole class editing lesson, children focus on areas such as improving vocabulary and sentence openers, common spelling and punctuation errors and reading for meaning and sense. Teachers highlight areas to improve in yellow and children respond to individual and collective feedback.

Children then transcribe their edited and improved version into neat, incorporating all corrections and improvements and allowing them to focus on best presentation and publishing for purpose.

Pink highlighter is used by teachers during marking to celebrate examples of Challenge Words, Alan Peat sentences and the grammar focus for that unit.

Spelling and punctuation errors specific to individual children may be picked up, but the majority of these will be addressed in WCF and the final whole class editing session. Teachers write the correct spelling with x 3 for the pupil to write out the spelling correctly three times. There is a focus on flagging spellings from the National Curriculum's programme of spelling relevant to that pupil and year group.

Isolated punctuation errors will be signalled with a circled P in the margin on the relevant line, but common or recurring punctuation errors will be addressed in WCF.

With regards to spelling errors, children are encouraged to correct in pairs using a dictionary; thesauruses are used to improve vocabulary both during and after the writing process.

Where appropriate, motivational comments or feedback regarding presentation may be given in books, but there is no expectation for written comments to be left for every lesson. Dojo points are awarded in books for effort and achievement.

### **Reading**

Children's work during Whole Class Reading is assessed via instant verbal feedback and misconceptions are tackled as they arise during discussion of the text and targeted questioning. Children may also self-mark and peer-mark their work in reading lessons.

### **GPS**

GPS is self-marked wherever possible in order for children to instantly recognise where they have made mistakes. Verbal feedback is given throughout the lesson to provide support and areas of focus. Children work in folders or on whiteboards depending on the requirements of the lesson.

### **Phonics**

We assess children's Phonics knowledge termly and use RWI assessments as the basis for our evaluation. Teachers will also use informal assessments to aid their understanding of children's phonics knowledge. This allows for immediate interventions to be put in place where necessary.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Once identified, pupils with special educational needs in speaking and listening, reading or writing will have their needs assessed and appropriate action taken in line with the "Code of Practice" (see school's Special Needs Policy).

At St Laurence, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. 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 and our More Able Pupils.

Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children. Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts in a variety of formats that children can read and understand
- using ICT, (other technological aids) and taped materials
- carefully matching literacy support programmes adapting to individual children's learning styles using scribes.

## **Pupil Premium**

We believe that all pupils, including those entitled to free school meals should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential through support, experience and the tools necessary to support their learning, their independence and their achievements.

At St Laurence we direct pupil premium funding towards resource, activities, staffing etc. to support the above rationale. Possible examples, appropriate to pupil need, may be: -

- One to one tuition
- Booster classes
- Intervention programmes
- Specific Class based resources
- Enhancement activities and experiences.

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

Every learning experience is a literacy experience. We think through language. We speak and listen through language. We read through language and we write through language. Every aspect of our lives is governed by language. 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.

Each curriculum area has its own specialised language, e.g. investigations of a scientific or mathematical kind give opportunities for speaking and listening in discussion, for planning, for making suggestions, asking questions and reporting results. There are specific formats of reading and writing e.g. non-chronological reports, explanations and instructions. History gives the opportunity for developing research skills, chronological and story writing. Every subject within the curriculum contains opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing.

## **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

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. Resources such as Clicker are used to support specific language work.

## **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 and spiritual heritage and also the heritage of other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

## **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English Lead alongside the Head teacher, who monitor planning, have an annual programme of lesson observations and monitor curricular targets through monitoring samples of children's work. The work of the English Lead 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 English Lead works with teachers and the head teacher in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through an annual audit and works to target areas for further improvement. An Action Plan records initiatives, staff training, use of human and practical resources and purchases made. The English Lead has time allocated to review samples of the children's work, support teachers and identify further needs. The named trustee responsible for literacy meets with the subject leader in order to review progress.

## **Resources and Intervention programmes**

All classrooms have reading, writing and spelling resources with dictionaries, thesauruses, and a range of age-appropriate support materials to deliver word and sentence level work e.g. word banks, punctuation fans. Children have access to the Internet and a range of IT resources including iPad. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

Teaching assistants support activities during and outside the literacy hour. They receive specific support from teachers and the co-ordinator in delivering intervention programmes and receive training where possible.

## **Links with parents**

Parents are asked to share home reading books with children as regularly as possible and to write appropriate comments in the home reading diary. Teachers monitor these diaries closely. Parents are given information on how they can support their child's development and love of reading.