**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

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| **Approved by:** |  | **Date:** 12.2.2025 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | February 2025 | |
| **Next review due by:** | February 2027 | |

#### 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. Teachers regularly read aloud to their classes, selecting books based on student interests, classroom themes, and contemporary works by diverse authors. This practice aims to inspire a love for reading and create a shared experience of engaging, high-quality literature.

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. In addition, we follow the Penny Bill Scheme of Work for our Grammar and Punctuation framework, VIPERS and our own reading spine for Reading, and Spelling Shed for our spelling framework.

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 Headteacher, 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

**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.

**Transition beyond Phonics**

When children graduate from Phonics, they will often begin a follow-up programme such as BRP (Better Reading Partnership) or Reading Plus to continue supporting their reading development. These programmes provide structured intervention to further enhance fluency, comprehension, and reading confidence. Additionally, we use programmes such as Phonics Play to allow children to continue developing their phonetic knowledge through engaging and interactive activities.

**Phonics in Spelling**

Phonics remains an integral part of our whole-class spelling lessons, ensuring that children continue to apply their phonic knowledge as they progress in their reading and writing skills. Each class has a Speed Sound Chart on display to support children in recognising and using phonics strategies effectively.

**School Culture**

Our Phonics policy is supported by embedding a whole school learning culture that 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.

**Oracy**

At **St Laurence Junior Academy**, oracy is embedded within every aspect of our teaching and learning. It is not an additional element but the golden thread that runs through all lessons, fostering purposeful talk to drive forward learning. High-quality classroom talk is planned, modelled, scaffolded, and structured to ensure that all children develop the skills needed to communicate effectively and with confidence. We believe that **every child at St Laurence should find their voice.** Oracy plays a fundamental role in developing confidence, fluency, and the ability to learn. Effective communication is a vital life skill that enhances opportunities for future education, employment, and social interaction.

There are two key elements of oracy:

* **Learning through talk** – ensuring high-quality discussions in the classroom.
* **Learning to talk** – explicitly teaching communication skills.

A **dialogic classroom** is at the heart of effective oracy, where structured discussions, planned questioning, and peer conversations support deeper thinking. Teachers use talk to develop students' reasoning and comprehension. Oracy fosters active participation, encouraging pupils to:

* Engage confidently in discussions.
* Develop reasoning and critical thinking skills.
* Express ideas clearly and justify opinions.
* Participate in high-quality collaborative dialogue.
* Shift from passive learning to active engagement.

**Oracy in the National Curriculum**

We ensure that all children develop their spoken language skills as outlined in the National Curriculum. From Year 1 to Year 6, pupils are taught to:

* Listen attentively and respond appropriately.
* Ask questions to extend their understanding.
* Build and apply new vocabulary in different contexts.
* Justify answers, arguments, and opinions with clarity.
* Engage in structured conversations and collaborative discussions.
* Express thoughts, feelings, and explanations effectively.

### **Inclusion**

### We are committed to making oracy an inclusive experience for all pupils, including those with speech, language, and communication needs. Support is provided through targeted interventions, differentiated tasks, and the guidance of our **SENCo**. Pupils with additional needs are encouraged to actively participate at their own pace, fostering confidence and communication skills appropriate to their level of development.

Our **speech and language support** includes:

* Individual and small group interventions.
* Collaboration with speech and language therapists.
* Personalised targets set in consultation with the **SENCo**.
* Use of assistive technology and alternative communication methods where needed.

### **Learning Environments**

### Classrooms are designed to promote oracy with the use of:

* **Talk Protocols** – helping children self-regulate discussions.
* **Find Your Voice Poster** – guiding pupils in developing speaking and listening skills.
* **Sentence Stems** – scaffolding structured responses and discussions.
* **Working Walls** – displaying key vocabulary and language prompts.

### **Celebrating Oracy**

### We place a strong emphasis on recognising and celebrating oracy achievements. Pupils demonstrating excellent communication skills are acknowledged at the end of discussions, ensuring a focus on meaningful talk without interrupting conversation flow. Rewards such as **Class Dojo points, certificates, and verbal praise** reinforce the importance of effective communication.

#### 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 whole class feedback, 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 whole class feedback 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 whole class feedback.

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, with misconceptions tackled as they arise through discussion of the text and targeted questioning. While children are encouraged to self-mark and peer-mark their work in reading lessons, teachers will also review and mark work to ensure understanding and provide further feedback where necessary.

**GPS (Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling)**

Wherever possible, children are encouraged to self-mark their GPS work to instantly recognise and learn from their mistakes. However, teachers will also review and mark work to support progress and identify areas for development. Verbal feedback is given throughout the lesson to provide additional guidance. Children work in books 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

At St Laurence, we are committed to providing a broad and balanced English education to all pupils, regardless of their abilities. In line with our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy, we assess and address the needs of pupils with difficulties in speaking and listening, reading, or writing, adhering to the guidelines set out in the "Code of Practice".

Our English curriculum is designed to be inclusive, offering learning opportunities tailored to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties as well as our more able pupils. Individual targets are considered in English lessons, and teachers support communication and literacy through various methods, including:

* Utilising texts in diverse formats that pupils can read and comprehend.
* Incorporating information and communication technology (ICT) and other technological aids.
* Employing audio materials to support learning.
* Adapting literacy support programmes to align with individual learning styles.
* Providing scribes when necessary to assist with writing tasks.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to create an inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of all our pupils.

#### 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 plays a vital role in developing pupils' ability to engage critically with moral questions they encounter in their learning. Through exposure to a diverse range of texts, children develop an understanding and appreciation of their own literary and spiritual heritage, as well as the heritage of other cultures.

English lessons are structured to encourage collaboration, discussion, and reflection. Group work and class discussions provide opportunities for pupils to express their ideas, consider different perspectives, and develop empathy and respect for others. By engaging with literature that explores moral and social themes, children are encouraged to think deeply, form opinions, and articulate their thoughts confidently and respectfully.

#### Monitoring and review

The monitoring of children’s standards in English and the quality of teaching is the joint responsibility of the English Lead and the Headteacher. This involves reviewing planning, conducting lesson observations as part of an annual monitoring programme, and assessing curricular targets through the analysis of children’s work samples.

The English Lead plays a key role in supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, staying informed about current developments in the subject, and providing strategic leadership to ensure continued progress. In collaboration with teachers and the Headteacher, the English Lead carries out an annual audit to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement within the subject.

An Action Plan is maintained to outline initiatives, staff training, resource allocation, and planned purchases. The English Lead is allocated time to review pupils’ work, support staff, and identify any further needs for development. Additionally, the named trustee responsible for literacy meets with the English Lead to review progress and discuss ongoing improvements.

#### Resources and Intervention programmes

#### At St Laurence, each classroom is equipped with a variety of reading, writing, and spelling resources, including dictionaries, thesauruses, and age-appropriate support materials such as word banks and punctuation tools. Pupils have access to the internet and a range of IT resources, including iPads, to enhance their learning experience. Our library offers a diverse selection of books to support individual research and foster a love for reading.

#### Teaching assistants play a crucial role in supporting English activities both during and outside the literacy hour. They receive specific guidance from teachers and the English Lead to effectively deliver intervention programmes and participate in training opportunities whenever possible. By providing these resources and support systems, we aim to create an enriching and inclusive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of all our pupils.

#### Links with parents

Parents are encouraged to share home reading books with their children as regularly as possible and to record relevant comments in the home reading diary. Teachers closely monitor these diaries to track progress and engagement.

To support parents in fostering a love of reading at home, we provide guidance on effective strategies to enhance their child’s reading development. This includes information on questioning techniques, reading comprehension support, and ways to make reading an enjoyable and meaningful experience.

In 2025, we were chosen to be part of a Reading Partnership, which will not only enhance reading provision within the school but also support us in engaging parents further in their children’s reading journey. As part of our commitment to promoting reading for all, we also have a Parent Book Swap on the school grounds, encouraging parents to access and enjoy books themselves, setting a positive example for their children.

By working in partnership with parents, we aim to develop confident, enthusiastic readers who engage with a wide variety of texts both at school and at home.