English Policy 2024

Aim:

The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. At St John's, our goal is to inspire a love of English language and literature. We aspire to be a school where all pupils become enthusiastic and critical readers and are able to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings with confidence- both orally and in writing. Proficiency in English empowers the individual, and is a pre-requisite for educational and social progress. We strive to create an environment where all pupils become successful masters of the English language.

Intent:

English is a core subject within the National Curriculum and is the cornerstone of all learning, both in school and in the wider society. Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are set out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy' sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017). At St John's, we follow these programmes of study. Children are supported to gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins, for example through grammar and spelling. Children are taught to 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 with confidence and to take account of their listeners;
to encourage children to listen with concentration, to engage with and respond to what they have heard;
to show children how to adapt their speech in different circumstances for different audiences;
to help children to become confident, independent and life-long readers;
to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers who are able to engage with challenging and substantial texts;
to support children to read easily, fluently and with good understanding
to promote the enjoyment of reading and writing;
to encourage a sense of audience and purpose in writing;
to develop a secure understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation;
to enable children to plan, draft and edit their written work;
to support children to produce effective, accurate and well-presented written work.

Implementation:

Oracy

The importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum is paramount. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Oracy skills are closely allied to heightened self-confidence, self-awareness and interpersonal skills. Oracy is also proven to have a beneficial impact on academic and cognitive outcomes. At St John's, pupils are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. Opportunities to develop these skills are woven in across all subjects and throughout the school day. Activities might include: group and class discussions and

debates; presentations; oral rehearsal; use of talk partners; class assemblies; drama and performances.

Reading

We aim to develop the children's ability to read fluently, confidently and independently so that they value and enjoy reading. The school teaches reading using high quality texts, through a combination of approaches such as:

listening to books together;
adults reading aloud to children from vocabulary-rich texts;
whole class modelled and shared reading;
Guided Reading (GR) either whole class or in groups with the teacher;
supported reading in groups with TAs;
paired reading by pupils;
independent reading at school and at home;
reading aloud to voluntary helpers, e.g. parents, grandparents and governors;
author visits as role models;
use of class libraries and visits to the local library;
drama workshops, e.g. to support visualisation, personal response etc.

A combination of approaches to developing reading and fostering a love of literature will be employed and include modelled, shared, guided and independent sessions.

i. Whole class teaching

This includes both the read-aloud / 'reading to' part of the diet, and the modelled and shared reading (as part of English modules / 'Teaching Sequence for Writing' units), and:

identifies key reading objectives as learning intentions linked to the prior attainment of the children;
models reading objectives, taken from NATIONAL CURRICULUM or directly from *HfL Guided Reading Booklets for YR-Y2 or KS2* and is often used as a model for shared writing;
provides an approximate balance of shared reading and writing sessions across a week, or a fortnight;
extends reading skills, i.e. the text provides some degree of stretch and challenge for the majority of the class *[e.g. would be less than 85% readable/comprehensible by the majority of the class when pitched at middle attainers, or unpicks deeper/broader issues and themes than the children would normally do on their own];*
ensures text, sentence and word-level challenges, vocabulary, etc are encountered through modelling and sharing before being introduced through GR;
exposes all to age-related expectations in terms of comprehension, but also makes provision for varying degrees of decoding skills through differentiated support such as: using alternative texts, peer support, echo reading, pre-teaching of vocabulary/extended book introductions;
links reading, writing and spoken language objectives;
identifies assessment opportunities as success criteria;
uses ICT opportunities to enhance learning impact, if appropriate;
makes links with other curriculum areas;
identifies opportunities to apply word and sentence knowledge to a variety of texts;
creates opportunities for accessing complete texts;
celebrates diversity and maximises opportunities for inclusion.

ii. Guided reading

matches texts to readers that are both 90%+ decodable and vocabulary-comprehensible
applies the principles above when planning for each attainment group
follows the school's agreed teaching sequence for GR
is delivered by highly skilled and sufficiently prepared teachers and TAs

allows ample practice of skills and strategies that are age-related and have been previously modelled to the children
provides the opportunity for adult and child to enjoy the book and appreciate it on a deeper level through the guided interrogation of the text
clearly models to the children the inter-relatedness of decoding and comprehension, and of spelling and reading when building vocabulary

iii. Independent reading

allows sufficient focus on fluency, stamina and enjoyment for children to make effective progress
teaches children how to choose accessible texts (95%+ accuracy and understanding) and develop preferences
supports pupils to read from a broad range of authors and high quality texts
encourages pupils to make use of reading journals to record, reflect and evaluate their reading
is regularly assessed using PM Benchmarking to ensure that books are matched to phonic ability and reading proficiency

Early Years at St John's

The school uses Early Years Outcomes and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) to inform planning and structure learning objectives. This provides guidance for practitioners in understanding how their children typically progress in the Early Years.
Teachers assess pupils against the EY outcomes and use Reception Baseline Assessment and phonic assessments to determine starting points for each child in their class.
Teachers regularly assess progress against EY outcomes, and summatively at the end of EYFS using the EYFSP to assess whether children have reached Early Learning Goals. In the short-term, teachers use *HfL guided reading* planning, assessing and capturing specific text-reading skills.
The school uses assessment to identify, monitor and review the progress of children who are at risk of underachievement so that relevant interventions can be planned.
Timetabled adult-led GR sessions start in Reception. These build to 20 minute sessions once pupils are ready. This session does not substitute Child Initiated Learning (ChIL) time, but is separate and fully adult-directed. The GR lesson is either delivered by the teacher or a fully-trained TA under the full direction of the teacher.
Children receive one GR session with the teacher per week. However, children who are underachieving (or at risk of this) are given more frequent teacher-led reading support, whether in the form of guided book-reading, further adult support during ChIL or via some other means, according to need.
Decodable books start to be taken home once children are able to use and apply a number of taught graphemes.
Independent adult initiated activities may include phonic games, book-browsing, caption-reading, sharing a 'big book' with an adult in a group, role-play reading, sound puzzles, listening to stories on CD, and other developmentally appropriate reading-related activities. Reading opportunities are provided outdoors as well as indoors and across a range of contexts.

KS1

The school uses *HfL planning* for identifying the learning foci of lessons. This provides guidance in understanding how children typically progress through the National Curriculum.
Teachers assess pupils regularly. Ongoing, formative, use is made of this and is discussed during Pupil Progress Meetings. It is used for passing on summative assessment information about children's attainment and informs triangulation of

assessment judgements against observed real-time reading skills, behaviours and fluency.
The GR lesson is either delivered by the teacher or a fully-trained TA who works under the full direction of the teacher. Teachers timetable for at least one GR session with an adult per child per week, and with the teacher themselves at least once per fortnight. Some children who are underachieving - or are at risk of this - are given more than one teacher-delivered GR session per week, based on needs identified such as decoding, fluency or comprehension, in order to close their gaps.
Where children show signs of being at risk of underachievement, class teachers will discuss and plan appropriate interventions with the SENCO or English Lead.

KS2

The school uses *HfL planning* for identifying the learning foci of lessons. This provides guidance in understanding how children typically progress through National Curriculum.
Teachers assess pupils regularly. Ongoing, formative, use is made of this and is discussed during Pupil Progress Meetings. It is used for passing on summative assessment information about children's attainment and informs triangulation of assessment judgements against observed real-time reading skills, behaviours and fluency.
The Reading Enrichment lesson is either delivered by the teacher or a fully-trained TA who works under the full direction of the teacher. Teachers timetable for at least one GR session with an adult per child per week, and with the teacher themselves at least once per fortnight. Some children who are underachieving - or are at risk of this - are given more than one teacher-delivered GR session per week, based on needs identified such as fluency, vocabulary or comprehension, in order to close their gaps.

Where children show signs of being at risk of underachievement, class teachers will discuss and plan appropriate interventions with the SENCO or English Lead.

Texts used include a range of novels, excerpts, passages and genre, to develop both stamina and enjoyment. Selection of texts for the different age-groups is informed by *HfL planning and the school reading spine.*

Writing

A combination of approaches to developing writing will be employed and include modelled, shared, guided and independent sessions.

i. **Whole class teaching**

Teachers model the use of composition and transcription strategies in whole class sessions to demonstrate appropriate skills and techniques.
At times, teachers might scribe for children as part of a shared composition where they take children's ideas, and model how to shape them further.

ii. **Guided writing**

Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. Children needing extra support in certain aspects of writing may receive additional intervention sessions in small groups or as individuals. These will be delivered by experienced practitioners who will understand how to target gaps in learning and who will liaise closely with the class teacher. Where possible, children will be supported in class to access the same learning as their peers. Children at risk of under-achieving will receive appropriate additional support and scaffolding.

iii **Independent writing**

Independent writing opportunities are planned to enable children to use and apply skills that have been modelled and guided by the adult. Children have opportunities to write in extended independent writing sessions throughout each unit and across the

curriculum. They are given time to edit their work and opportunities to create final, 'published' pieces.

Early Years

In Foundation Stage children have a daily discrete phonics lesson. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult-led and child initiated activities.

The school uses Early Years Outcomes and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) to inform planning and structure learning objectives. This provides guidance for practitioners in understanding how their children typically progress in the Early Years.

Teachers assess pupils against the EY outcomes to determine starting points for each child in their class. (For further detail see the section on reading.)

Independent adult initiated activities may include: phonic games; practising letter formation and developing fine motor skills ready for writing; creating labels, lists and captions for the environment; book-making with an adult in a group; role-play writing; free writing in the graphics area; writing simple sentences in response to creative stimuli and other developmentally appropriate writing-related activities. Writing opportunities are provided outdoors as well as indoors and across a range of contexts.

Adults in Reception guide writing through adult-led learning opportunities at least once per week, which are planned for more frequently for those at risk of under-achievement.

KS1 and KS2

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school approach to teaching writing covers the 'transcription' and 'composition' requirements of the National Curriculum. The school follows a long term plan adapted from HfL which is broken down into a series of themed units and genres. These are a vehicle for delivering the skills laid out in the curriculum, and ensuring that children receive a balanced writing diet that builds upon each previous year. Teachers deliver the main English lesson to the whole class, ensuring support and challenge so that all children access the learning and make progress.

Assessment is regular and helps to inform planning.

Phonics, Spelling, Grammar and Handwriting

Phonics is taught every day in Reception and Key Stage 1 using *Read Write Inc.* This will involve a 15-20 min session of planned systematic phonics delivery, with a wide opportunity for application of skills through the environment and other lessons.

Adults are trained in technical skills of phonics, such as crisp enunciation, supporting with blending problems etc. This forms part of induction and ongoing CPD.

Children who are under-attaining in their ability to apply phonics are given additional teaching through intervention.

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In Key Stage 2, spelling is taught in discrete sessions using Herts Essential Spelling as well as embedded into English lessons and across the curriculum.

Children at risk of under-achieving will receive additional spelling support, both in the context of their writing and as discrete sessions. Any interventions should supplement age-related teaching not replace it.

From Year 2, children are taught to proofread their own work and identify spelling errors that they self-correct. Teachers are expected to *indicate spellings to be edited as discussed in the St John's marking policy* in order to encourage accuracy and help children to develop a strong grasp of spelling.

In general, grammar is taught in an embedded way so as to provide meaningful contexts for children to apply their learning in their writing although KS1 and KS2 may teach aspects discretely.

Handwriting is taught through correct letter formation from Reception using the Read Write Inc mnemonics. In Reception and KS1 children are given access to a wide range of tools and experiences to hone their fine motor skills. Children are expected to begin to show evidence

of joining in their handwriting from Year 2 onwards by Year 6 children are encouraged to join using a neat cursive script.

Inclusion:

Inclusion: We provide for all children so that they achieve their full potential in English. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment in liaison with the SENCO

Equal opportunities: Our school has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children. No child is excluded from a lesson on the basis of gender, ability, race or religion. (Also see school's Equal Opportunities Policy.)
British Values: Opportunities will be sought to promote British Values in English lessons as well as through spoken language, and reading and writing opportunities in other subjects.
Safeguarding: Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. See the school's Safeguarding Policy for further information

Enrichment Opportunities:

At St John's children are presented with a variety of enriching experiences for English. All children are given a book to keep from our special selection to celebrate their birthday. We timetable visits and workshops from authors to engage children and make texts come alive. We host a book fair which allows families to engage in reading and promotes the value of reading. Children are offered a variety of opportunities to perform – this could be within class, to another class, as part of a key stage performance or a performance to parents.

We also run a variety of engagement opportunities as part of the school calendar such as story telling evenings and Book Week.

English influences all other areas of the curriculum and enables children to access a variety of forms of reading and writing. Wherever possible, teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links and support children to develop the application of the skills they learn in English lessons, in different contexts and subjects through a variety of extended writing tasks. The same standard of writing seen in a child's English book is expected in their cross-curricular writing. The same expectations of reading seen in English lessons (especially during independent and group reading) are made of their reading in other subjects; children are given plenty of opportunity to develop their reading stamina and fluency through constant application.

Impact:

In English, assessments are carried out in line with the school's assessment programme. Teachers use developmental verbal feedback to help move learning on. Formative assessments are carried out on a daily basis by staff and assessment informs planning. Staff ensure that any learning gaps are closed and that pupils are challenged.

Regardless of background, ability or additional needs, by the time children leave St John's, they will be eloquent speakers who can express themselves fluently. They will be motivated and keen readers who are confident and enjoy reading a wide variety of genres and text types. Pupils will have the skills to decode words in order to be able to read fluently with a secure understanding of what they have read. They will have a love for writing and be able to express their thoughts accurately and fluently through written work in all areas of the curriculum to a high standard.