

# St. Anne's (Stanley) CE Primary School

## English Policy and Subject Guidance



### Introduction

*This policy should be read alongside our:*

- *Reading and Phonics policy*
- *Assessment policy*
- *SEND policy*
- *EAL policy*
- *Early Years Foundation Stage policy*
- *Marking policy*
- *Homework policy*
- *Curriculum and Planning policy*
- *Gifted and talented policy*

*This policy also should be read alongside the new National Curriculum in England (published September 2013) and other documents from the Standards and testing Agency.*

*Our Curriculum overview, medium and short term planning can help support this policy, as will a look at the schemes of work for English, reading and phonics, including the Wordsmith and latest Liverpool LA schemes of work for English.*

### Rationale

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At St. Anne's we recognise that English is the main contributor to developing children's language and communication skills, their understanding of the world and the development of their imagination. Also, it enriches their lives through a variety of essential experiences that literature brings.

As English provides the key to learning, it follows that whatever subject is being taught there is an opportunity for developing children's language. For this reason, English must always be considered across the whole curriculum when planning and teaching. We know that without effective communication,

we achieve little. Consequently we know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this must be cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

*'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.'* (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school and we set high expectations. We recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support all individuals, at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We include the use of one-to-one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities, as outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the National Curriculum statement that *'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised'* (p13) and aim to deliver our English teaching accordingly.

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## 1 Speaking and Listening

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be *'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'* (p10). Therefore they should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Understand the importance of and use Standard English
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

### **Our aims and provision:**

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach children to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. We develop their skills in listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions, as well as the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Encouraging talk-time at home through 'talk homework' which is shared in class and assemblies and by encouraging reading and talk about books
- Opportunities for speaking to larger audiences
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Weekly assembly

- Events within the community
- School Council
- Talk partners
- Book talk sessions
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time

## 2. Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it *'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually'* (p13) Reading allows pupils to *'acquire knowledge'* and to *'build on what they already know'* (p13). Schools are expected to have library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

### **Our aims and provision:**

- Pupils learn to read fluently through daily phonics in Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, reading partners and home reading
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using our school reading scheme. This scheme is book banded and uses *Oxford Reading Tree* materials, as well as other graded schematic texts wherever we consider them to complement our main scheme. We have adapted this to meet the needs of our pupils. Within English lessons, pupils study a book, related to their half termly topic, wherever possible. They often study books which are more challenging than those which they might be able to read independently. They will use this book as the basis for reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks.

- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, scheme home readers, class library home texts, school library texts, local library visits and other high quality attractive books available in classrooms. These reading experiences are recorded in home and school reading records.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and the various methods outlined above.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school career.
- Pupils from all key stages often look at books in guided reading sessions.
- Key Stage Two pupils who are struggling with reading or making slow progress are given other reading development opportunities through group or one-to-one reading interventions.

### 3. Policy for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

#### Our Aims and Provision

- To ensure all pupils have the knowledge to spell words efficiently and accurately whilst drawing on knowledge of phonics and spelling patterns.
- To ensure that all pupils are able to react to punctuation when reading, be aware of all parts of punctuation and where / where not to apply them and to be able to write using accurate punctuation.
- To ensure that all children are aware of correct English grammar in terms of subjects, tenses and plurals whilst having a secure grasp of these linguistic skills both orally and in any form of written work, including the use of Standard English.
- To develop accurate oracy for all children in the form of being effective and confident public speakers and story tellers who use precise grammar and diction.

#### Spelling

Pupils in **Foundation Stage** will be prepared for Key Stage 1 by being taught phonics daily in both Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2.

*(See EYFS Phonics / Reading policy for detailed provision information)*

Spelling, punctuation and grammar in Years 1-6 will be taught both in daily English sessions, as well as discreetly during 'Basic Skills' sessions, where skills will be reinforced and practiced.

In **Key Stage 1** the main emphasis will be on phonics, spelling and vocabulary. In addition to this, daily Basic Skills sessions will also provide an opportunity to reinforce knowledge of basic sentence structure and punctuation, whilst helping to develop an understanding of the correct use of basic grammar. Pupils from Year 1 upwards will take home weekly spellings to learn with a focus on a specific sound / word pattern.

In **Key Stage 2** the Support for Spelling guidance (PNS) is used with additional guidance in Years 3-5 (September 2014) in the form of the new

National Curriculum for spelling. Spelling in Years 3 - 6 will be taught in English lessons and followed up with activities during Basic Skills sessions to reinforce and extend the spelling patterns. Pupils will be taught the words from the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 National Curriculum word lists and assessed to ensure they are progressing. Weekly spelling revision and testing will ensure that areas of weakness are identified and appropriate follow up sessions can be planned. A variety of schematic resources are used to support the teaching of spelling in KS2.

### Punctuation

Punctuation will be taught as part of literacy lessons in all classes, as well as being revised discreetly in Basic Skills sessions. This will cover correct and incorrect usage, as well as offering pupils the opportunity to use this learning at text level during writing sessions. Pupils will also link this knowledge to reading aloud and will adapt their pace or intonation accordingly when they encounter punctuation devices in a text. A variety of schematic resources are used to support the discreet teaching of punctuation, as well as learning activities included in the text based Wordsmith scheme used in English lessons. All staff will ensure that marking, board writing, display writing and other writing in school models the correct use of punctuation, in order to constantly reinforce children's understanding.

### Grammar

**The progression of grammar** will be taught at teachers' discretion in accordance with the Key Stage 1/2 SPaG long term plan and in accordance with the new National Curriculum guidance appropriate to each year group. It will be supported through a range of school resources including the Nelson Grammar schematic materials,

Grammar is a key focus in **conversational English**, with teachers picking up on errors and correcting pupils appropriately. Staff will constantly model the correct use of Standard English to reinforce children's understanding of it. There will be opportunities for public speaking in each class whilst grammar will also be a focus in extended, independent writing tasks.

All children will be fully included in all aspects of SPaG teaching and will be appropriately supported and challenged by teachers and support staff, to encourage correct usage of Standard English.

#### 4. Writing

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length.
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Be grammatically correct and use Standard English.
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read.

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that these elements are essential to success and we help children to develop both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

#### **Our aims and provision:**

- We have a systematic approach; we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling.
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared / collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.
- We teach grammar as a separate and discreet lesson wherever necessary.
- Grammar teaching is also incorporated into text based lessons where appropriate.
- We correct grammatical error orally or in written marking of work where appropriate and model the use of Standard English throughout teaching.
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing'.
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising.

- Independent writing tasks are completed at intervals to give children opportunities to develop skills learned during other English lessons.
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with pupils.
- We use checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively.
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed.
- We use drama, hot-seating and a range of other speaking and listening strategies to help pupils to think about other points of view.
- We provide support for all pupils, including those with learning and motor difficulties.
- We communicate and meet with parents to help them support their child.

## **5. Policy and Guidance for Handwriting**

### **Aims and Provision**

Handwriting is a taught skill and it is important that teachers put a high value on teaching and sustaining good handwriting. Children's self-esteem and pride in their work are improved through encouraging high quality presentation. We teach children correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly and, by the end of KS2, begin to develop a distinctive style. It is important that in the early years and at key stage 1 children are observed closely during the lesson to ensure that letter formation is correct. For children who are still forming some letters incorrectly in KS2 this close observation and subsequent correction is vital.

Handwriting is taught regularly and at least weekly, as a class and / or group lesson in all year groups. Teachers use Nelson schematic resources, which include photocopied sheets and text books in KS1, as well as interactive whiteboard activities, where animated examples are shown of correct letter formation. During lessons staff ensure that children sit, position their paper / book and hold their writing implement correctly using their other hand to hold their work firmly.

In addition to specific handwriting lessons, children are expected to apply their learning in their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work. Regular opportunities for children to produce presentation work are also planned, for example in topic books or for display. Teachers actively model good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Teachers strive to use the Nelson handwriting style and use the appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of this style. Children are expected to show care for their work-books, present their work with care, date work, underline where necessary and not make any marks on the covers.

### **Handwriting Materials**

A range of writing materials is available in the early years and activities enable children to physically feel the shapes of the letters and the way they are

formed, eg drawing shapes in sand, finger painting, using large brushes with water on outside walls.

Pencil grips are used selectively for children who are experiencing difficulty with hand control and triangular pencils are available in the early stages. Pencils should be used for all work in key stage 1. Children begin to use blue school purchased handwriting pen in lower KS2 as and when they are beginning to join letters correctly and with some fluency. Biro's are not used by pupils. Year 6 may choose to work using cartridge pens (blue ink) if their writing is of a mature standard, as they prepare for secondary school.

Pencils should continue to be used throughout the school for notes, drafting, all maths work, diagrams, charts and maps. Children should be encouraged to always write with a sharp pencil and to use rubbers to correct mistakes, or put a simple, neat cross after any mistakes, rather than cross it out.

### **Handwriting Books**

Four line handwriting books / boards are used up to and including year 3 and by some children in year 4. Single line handwriting books should be used by most children from year 4 onwards, but children with handwriting problems in key stage 2 may use four line handwriting books at the discretion of the class teacher or if the I.E.P. specifies it. As children are ready, from Year 4 onwards they will cease to have a specific handwriting book.

## Handwriting Guidance

### **EYFS / Key Stage 1**

*In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught:*

- *How to hold a pencil/pen*
- *To write from left to right and top to bottom of a page*
- *To start and finish letters correctly*
- *To form letters of regular size and shape*
- *To put regular spaces between letters and words*
- *How to form lower and upper case letters*
- *How to join letters*
- *The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively*

### **Key Stage 2**

*Pupils should be taught to:*

- *Write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed*
- *Use different forms of handwriting for different purposes (for example, print for labelling maps or diagrams, a clear, neat hand for finished presented work, a faster script for notes).*

## Scheme of Work

The scheme of work is based on the **Nelson Handwriting Scheme**. This sets out a programme of work for the whole school. Teachers encourage individual children to move to the next stage when they are ready, so whilst the following guidance provides a structure for progression, where children are ready to move to the next stage they will be taught to do so. Those children who are forming letters clearly with the correct flicks will begin to learn how to join their letters as soon as possible. Joining patterns begin in Reception as a preparation for the flow of joining letters in words.

**EYFS\_**

- to allow children to choose/develop their dominant hand.
- to explore and have the opportunity to develop a comfortable grip using a variety of malleable materials and graphic tools.
- to model anti-clockwise circles.
- to model lines from top to bottom.
- to model left to right orientation.
- to model correct pencil hold and the use of joined Nelson script.
- to model the foundation for joined up writing, i.e. with a flick.
- to practise correct letter formation using Nelson script.
- to develop a conventional tripod pencil grip.
- to produce a controlled line which supports letter formation.
- to rehearse letter writing in the air whilst teacher demonstrates and verbal instructions.
- to write letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- to space and regulate letters and words.
- to write from left to right and top to bottom of the page.

**Year 1**

- to consolidate a conventional tripod pencil grip.
- to continue to practise correct letter formation using Nelson script.
- to follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme in line with our letter formation sheets in order to develop sequential progress.
- to practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion, in a style that makes the letters easy to join later.

**Year 2**

- to practise handwriting patterns from Year 1.
- to consolidate size, proportion, spacing and legibility.
- to practise the four basic handwriting joins:
  - diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. *ai, ar, un*;
  - horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. *ou, vi, wi*;
  - diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. *ab, ul, it*;
  - horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. *ol, wh, ot*.
- to practise handwriting in line with phonic/spelling patterns.

- Year 3**
- to practise correct formation of basic joins from Year 2.
  - to continue to demonstrate, rehearse and verbalise as in KS1.
  - to consolidate consistency in size, proportion, fluency and spacing between letters and words.
  - to develop clear, neat hand for finished work.
  - to build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice.
- Year 4**
- to use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.
  - to know when to use:
    - a clear, neat hand for finished presented work.
    - informal writing for everyday informal work, rough drafting etc.
  - to build up speed continue to consolidate consistency in size, proportion, fluency and spacing between letters and words.
  - to use a range of presentational skills, e.g.
    - print script for captions, sub-headings and labels;
    - capital letters for posters, title pages and headings;
    - a range of computer generated fonts and point sizes.
- Year 5**
- to continue to consolidate consistency in size, proportion, fluency and between letters and words.
  - to revise all rules for joining.
  - to develop fluency and speed of own style.
  - to use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.
  - to know when to use:
    - a clear neat hand for finished, presented work.
    - informal writing for everyday work, rough drafting etc.
- Year 6**
- to consolidate and develop individual fluent and legible style.
  - to learn to write in differing scripts e.g. *italic*
  - to use scripts appropriately for different purposes.
  - to continue progress in joining by observing different features affecting neatness.

## **Assessment**

Teachers provide oral and written feedback to children about their handwriting. Children are encouraged to self-assess their skills and to set their own targets, in line with our Assessment and Marking and Feedback policies. Handwriting is continually assessed through the marking process to inform actions and further support. It is also formally assessed termly as part of our English assessment termly rota. Assessed pieces are annotated by the assessor and examples are kept in class evidence folders, stored in classrooms. This helps to keep a check on progress and to plan next steps.

## **Encouraging Good Handwriting**

The following guidance may be useful in diagnostic assessment of pupil attainment.

1. Position at the desk/table, height of chair and table in relation to body size.
2. Position of paper to body: right handers need this over to right, left handers to left. Slanting the paper helps take account of visual factors to body size.
3. Grip of writing implement: most children should use a conventional tripod grip, but other holds are possible. Check also tightness or floppiness of grip.
4. Letter formation: should follow conventional direction
5. Spacing between words: a letter space is usually sufficient (or a finger space for beginning writers).
6. Slant of letters: notice whether this is roughly in the same direction.
7. Position of letters on line: check that mid-zone letters or parts of letters are sitting on the line.

8. Size of writing: appropriateness.
9. Proportion in letters.
10. Orientation difficulties (e.g. mirror writing).
11. Problems associated with left-handedness. Staff are aware of the need to provide particular guidance to left-handed children in relation to their pencil-grip, positioning of themselves and their paper and where necessary resources are adapted accordingly.
12. Problems older primary children have with maintaining legibility at speed.

## **SEND**

Some children identified as having SEND may have an IEP target specifically relating to handwriting. These children will receive additional support in the form of resources and TA / teacher support and will be subject to reviews of progress 3 times a year (see SEND/Inclusion policy).

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

English Managers will monitor the teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school (with support from the Headteacher), through regular work sampling, analysis of assessment pieces and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring is used to inform staff of necessary developments in order to raise standards.

## 6. Vocabulary Development

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is the key to *'learning and progress across the whole curriculum'* (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active and holistic.
- Progressive/ systematic.
- Encouraging the making of links to known words.
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning.
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations.
- Inclusive of subject specific words (e.g. accurate mathematical or scientific words).

### **Our aims and provision:**

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn.
- Weekly spelling tests in various year groups where appropriate.
- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects on our 'English Wall' displays.
- Using the correct vocabulary orally.
- By Staff modelling correct vocabulary and use of Standard English.
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns.
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar spelling aid resources.
- Using texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have.
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils.
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate.
- Termly spelling tests and analysis of results and progress.

## 7. Planning and Assessment

### 7.1 Planning

- Long term overviews are published to parents for Key Stages One and Two.
- Pupils are taught in ability based groups in Key Stage Two and planning shows differentiation by ability.
- Medium term (half-termly) planning is stored centrally and is monitored by the English Curriculum Managers.
- English is planned separately to other subjects using proformas that incorporate outlines from both the LEA published English scheme and the 'Wordsmith' English scheme.
- Short term plans are drawn from the MTPs and are similarly monitored by the English Curriculum Managers.
- Planning for Basic Skills sessions is done weekly on the school planning pro-forma and is monitored regularly.
- Schemes of work for phonics and grammar and spelling are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge.
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions.
- Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium funding are given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly.
- Pupils with EAL are given additional English support where appropriate, which is tracked and monitored termly.

### 7.2 Assessment

English Managers monitor and assess the teaching and learning of English throughout the school. This is done through regular work sampling, subject Learning Walks, analysis of assessment pieces and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring is used to inform staff of necessary developments in order to raise standards. Monitoring is supported by the Head-teacher.

- Staff assess pupils learning during and after every session. Further planning is adapted accordingly.

- Formal assessments of reading comprehension ability and spelling are carried out, tracked and monitored at least termly.
- Writing levels are assessed using the newly updated Ros Wilson Criterion scale and Teacher Assessment to inform current levels of attainment. These are tracked termly, as is progress.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar is assessed termly through use of the 'SPaG - Rules Reinforcement' (Pearson) materials.
- Work scrutiny is carried out termly by the English Managers and other senior leaders.
- English subject 'Learning Walks', lesson observations and pupil interviews are used to help inform assessments of the quality of teaching and learning in all key stages through a termly rota.
- Teacher Assessment and other forms of assessment are collated and recorded termly, as part of the school tracking system.
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the English Managers and Head teacher and feed into the school SEF, development plan and performance management.

## **8. Specific groups (see also SEND / Inclusion Policy)**

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed and plans made.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium are given additional English support and this is monitored for effectiveness termly.
- Pupils with EAL are given additional support in all aspects of English.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional support, differentiated curriculum and may be entered for Level 6 tests at the end of Key Stage Two.
- Pupils with SEND will have English based targets on their IEP. These are reviewed termly.

## 9. Professional development

- The English Managers attend termly training within LEA and report back to all staff regularly on changes, new initiatives and other relevant information.
- The local cluster has an English group which meets termly.
- Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year and feedback to colleagues thereafter.
- A writing moderation file is held in the office for consultation.

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