

# English Policy



**Policy updated by Mrs Malley (Acting Deputy Headteacher):** December 2024

**Policy approved by Governors:** January 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Taylor".

Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr M Grogan".

Headteacher

**Policy shared with staff and shared on the school website:** January 2025

***'Never settle for less than your best'***

## ENGLISH POLICY

### Our school motto

Never settle for less than your best.

### Our Vision

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each member of our community will flourish as resilient, respectful and adaptable individuals prepared for life's journey. Along the way we will encourage and inspire each other to continue growing as beacons of light in our own lives and the wider world.

### Our Mission Statement

St. George's Central seeks to provide quality education rooted in the Christian faith, serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of the community of which it is part.

### Introduction

English is taught in the Early Years in the Prime Area of 'Communication and Language' and in the Specific Area of 'Literacy'. The children also learn English through all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum when they are interacting with others during play in an enabling environment and during directed teaching activities. Learning in all areas of the curriculum in the Early Years is supported by an 'in the moment' planning approach alongside more planned and structured activities.

At St George's Central we use the Clive Davies Learning Challenge curriculum in which classes are taught a specific topic each half term. Wherever possible, English activities link to the topic. Our topics are planned on a 2-year cycle due to the 'mixed year-groups' nature of our class structure. This 'Long Term Plan' for Key Stage 1 and 2 is available on the school website. In addition to English work being linked to the topic theme, we have discrete English 'Long Term Overviews' which ensure coverage of the English curriculum for each year group. These plans link the class topic to genres of text, writing activities and speaking and listening activities etc. They also outline coverage of 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar' for the year. 'Medium Term Plans' of English learning objectives for each year group/class have been created to outline learning for each term. The exploration and enjoyment of the English language is our priority and we value all its aspects – speaking, listening, reading and writing. English is taught daily across the whole school with work appropriately differentiated to match all abilities. There are also weekly reading lessons through the approach of 'Book Talk' and the 'Are you really reading project' and weekly spelling lessons and tests.

All children have a statutory entitlement to access to the Programmes of Study for English as set out in the National Curriculum. Our vehicles for achieving this access will be the National Curriculum 2014 for English and our own curriculum planning for English. The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are explicitly addressed through the objectives detailed in the National Curriculum 2014.

### Aims

#### Speaking and Listening

The Early Years Foundation Stage 2023 states that planning to help every child to develop their language is vital. Through conversation, story telling and role play, where children share ideas, they will become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and they will learn to listen well.

Talking is fundamental to learning. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly, confidently and with expression in order to state their ideas and opinions. Just as important is the need to listen carefully to others and respond in appropriate ways. At St George's Central, pupils are given opportunities in all areas of the curriculum to develop their speaking and listening skills, in paired, group or whole class situations. Therefore, role play, small world and drama activities are intrinsic elements of speaking and listening across the school. Extra support is given to children with speaking and listening difficulties and with English as an Additional Language. Children take part in a weekly Picture News session, which encourages them to debate and discuss current affairs and develop speaking and listening skills. Each half term, year groups learn a poem from a diverse range of poets, which they share in a whole school celebration performance assembly. We also embrace regular visits from poets to develop spoken language, performance and written poetic techniques.

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## Reading

In our Early Years and Key Stage 1 discrete phonics lessons are taught in a systematic way on a daily basis. The skills learnt in these sessions are explicitly modelled and applied across the curriculum. Children who have not met the required standard in phonics by the end of KS1 are given extra phonic support as part of the transition to Key Stage 2.

Children who read for pleasure gain a richer vocabulary, more knowledge, critical thinking skills and become independent learners. Whole class reading is an important part of our curriculum. Children work in focused groups to develop their reading skills and their understanding of texts. We provide children with rich reading experiences within English lessons and encourage them to appreciate the author's use of language and writing techniques in order to develop their own writing skills. Children take their reading books home daily to share with their families/carers.

Throughout the school, children are given responsibility for making their own reading choices from the excellent resources we have in school. Children visit the school library each week with their class to change their library book. The library is also open before school and during lunch times for children to access resources. Each class teacher implements a reward system to encourage reading at home. We reinforce the school message 'Reading, it's a kind of magic' to develop children's love and passion for reading. Each class also has its own reading area which is accessed at different times throughout the school day. This area contains books linked to current topics, graphic novels, low level high interest, poetry and popular authors. Children in the Early Years, also take their favourite 20 books to their new class to support reading and oracy as part of our transition offer.

We have aligned our teaching of reading with Jane Considine's 'Hooked on Books' approach. Three times a week, children take part in 'Book Talk' which is a whole class guided reading session. In those Book Talk sessions children read by themselves, read with a partner, read as a whole class or listen to the class teacher model reading. Children use the 'Reading Rainbow' to read and respond to texts through different lenses within 3 different zones of reading: The Fantastics, The Stylistics and The Analytics. In the Early Years the children focus on the 'Fantastics' zone in their Book Talk sessions and the Reading Rainbow symbols are embedded into continuous provision areas. Book Talk is key to developing oracy skills. Children collaborate in groups using sentence stems and high utility words to develop a Book Talk response. Book Talk sessions are supplemented by using the five strands from the 'Are you really reading project' and texts from a range of genre and sources to ensure children receive exposure to a wide variety of reading material.

All home reading books are book banded, with great emphasis being placed on ensuring the children in the early stages of reading have books which let them apply their phonics acquisition. Every class ends most days with a class reader.

Children also have access to online reading resources such as 'Reading Plus' and 'Little Wandle'. These are used as part of children's weekly Home Learning activities and are also used to provide teachers with information regarding children's reading level and progress.

## Spelling

We place great value on the importance of accurate spelling. A structured programme of spelling extends across the whole school following 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' in EYFS and Key Stage 1. There is a natural transition to the support for Spelling programme at the end of Key Stage 1 and beginning of Key Stage 2, and this continues to be used through to the end of Year 6. Spelling is further supported in focused phonics and spelling lessons. Vocabulary is extended using word lists from the National Curriculum 2014 and subject specific language. This is supported by the use of the Rising Stars Boost Spelling Programme.

As a school we use the online resource 'Boost Spelling' which follows the scheme of work we use. This is used as a class based resource and provides resources to support home learning. Vocabulary development plays an important role in all aspects of school. Each classroom displays key vocabulary as well as topic specific vocabulary based on current topics being taught. Each classroom uses a 'Frayer' model for teaching vocabulary within all curriculum subjects which ensures it is used in classroom practice.

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## Writing

At St George's Central we aim for children to be independent writers. We encourage them to write clearly and with confidence in any given genre. We teach them to use punctuation and grammar accurately, to be able to proof read their own work and make amendments and improvements. We give children a wide range of opportunities in which to develop their writing skills and display work of which they are proud.

In the Early Years, children have equal experiences of guided, shared and independent writing to support them to flourish as confident writers.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 writing is taught in a sequential way to allow children to become familiar with a genre and apply their learning in a systematic way. Specific practices include:

- Planning meaningful and, where possible, real life purposes and audiences for writing within and beyond the classroom;
- Planning purposes for writing which require pupils to write in a wide variety of forms;
- Planning creative teaching sequences which engage and inspire pupils;
- Providing extended writing opportunities for pupils, from Reception to Year 6, as opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt;
- Providing pupils with opportunities to evaluate their thinking and write independently as well as with their peers and teacher.

Through our English curriculum, we aim to nurture in the children a love of literature and language, and the confidence to continue reading and writing throughout their lives. Using our genre led approach to the teaching of writing we ensure that children are taught to:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length;
- Develop a neat, clear and fluent handwriting style;
- Spell and punctuate sentences with increasing accuracy;
- Use an increasingly wide range of grammar correctly;
- Write down ideas fluently;
- Use an increasingly wide vocabulary;
- Communicate ideas effectively with a clear awareness of audience and purpose;
- Expand the range of their writing.

Our children are involved in the setting of their own targets for improvement from Key Stage 1 onwards and their progress is rigorously monitored through termly target setting and Pupil Progress Meetings.

## Drama

Our staff appreciate the role of educational drama strategies as:

- a learning tool across the curriculum;
- an effective factor in the development of oral and aural skills;
- a means of developing empathy with others and an understanding of self;
- a way of encouraging interaction with texts.

Drama is incorporated into daily English lessons. It may also be used across other curriculum subjects as well as being used in the weekly Picture News session.

## Progression, Continuity and Differentiation

Progression and continuity are dependent upon teachers' assessment of current achievement in knowledge, skills and concepts as well as previous learning experiences. This knowledge then shapes the planning of future teaching. To this end, assessment, target setting and planning processes are followed by all staff. The National Curriculum 2014 is followed to ensure continuity throughout English. Differentiation can be provided in a number of ways: by outcome, by adult support provided, by differentiating resources, by differentiating through planning or by task differentiation.

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## Planning

We seek to ensure that planning delivers the requirements of the EYFS 2021 and the National Curriculum 2014, is suited to the needs of particular groups of pupils and provides a creative, enjoyable sequence of learning in oracy, reading and writing, culminating in opportunities for extended writing.

Our planning ensures that:

- There is a clear focus on outcomes;
- There are appropriate and achievable learning objectives for all pupils;
- The needs pupils working below or above age-related expectations are met;
- Teaching is differentiated by task;
- There is continuity and progression in pupils' learning;
- There is balanced coverage of word, sentence and text-level learning;
- There are opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own progress;
- Links are made with other areas of the curriculum, where appropriate.

## Inclusion

We are committed to providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils and apply the three principles for inclusion to planning and teaching. Suitable learning challenges will be set for all pupils with the aim of maximising achievement for all pupils at an appropriate level for each individual. Teachers will respond appropriately to pupils' diverse learning needs and be aware of the needs of differing genders, special educational needs, disability, as well as different cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and this will be reflected in the curriculum offered to pupils and in the conduct of staff and pupils.

## Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The assessment and recording of English is part of the overall assessment of children and should be seen alongside all the other areas of development. Assessment takes place in line with the agreed school's assessment policy and is regarded as an integral part of learning and teaching. Teachers are responsible for assessing and recording children's progress in English. Assessment opportunities are built into the planning of lessons and a range of other methods are used as appropriate. Standards are checked both in-school and through external moderation opportunities. Key elements of our English assessments are:

- Termly Rising Stars reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar tests;
- Teacher assessment of year group objectives for reading, writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar decided on the basis of termly teacher assessment and tracking;
- Statutory end of Key Stage tests;
- Optional standardised tests in non-SAT year groups;
- Termly Salford Reading Assessments and
- Annual spelling age assessments and
- Regular benchmarking to provide reading ages and book bands for pupils.

Formal written reports are provided each year and this information is shared with parents/carers. In addition, two other meetings are held each year with parents/carers to discuss progress informally and to share targets for progress.

## Resources

Core scheme and supplementary books at appropriate ability levels are stored in individual classrooms. A centrally stored library is available for class access to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Individual and group access is on a timetable. The library is open before school and once a week a lunchtime. Class collections of books appropriate to age and ability are available within classrooms for reading enjoyment. All classes display alphabet friezes in the school handwriting style, and/or age appropriate word walls to aid children's independent writing. A regular allocation is devolved each year from school budget for English resources. Decisions are made regarding expenditure in consultation with staff and governors. Priorities are established through review of the school improvement plan, the English development plan and requests from staff. Resources are then purchased on the basis of this information.

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### Cross-curricular Links

We recognise the unique position of English as a medium for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for children to explore and develop language use in other curriculum areas are identified by teachers at the planning stage. Media education provides particularly strong links with English by enabling pupils to analyse the way in which language is used for effect with target audiences. Radio and television programs, computer software, newspapers, comics, photographs and advertisements are all used on a termly basis as outlined in the National Curriculum to ensure pupils receive access to a full range of texts.

Computing links are also promoted whenever possible to assist and enhance English skills. These include opportunities for pupils to compose, revise and edit texts as well as use desk-top publishing facilities to improve the presentation of work. Specific English software is also available to develop skills such as spelling, interactive reading etc. Access to the Internet is also used when appropriate to enhance research skills.

### Monitoring

The teaching staff monitor their children's progress through questioning, observation, discussion, teacher assessment, assessment for learning, marking work and formal assessment. The teaching of English is managed through book monitoring, lesson observations and drop-ins, monitoring of short and medium term planning, interviews with children, discussion during staff meetings, whole school and key phase writing moderation, learning walks and tracking children's progress in formal assessments.

### Role of the Subject Leader

The school subject leader for English is responsible for co-ordinating English throughout the school. This includes:

- Ensuring continuity and progression from year group to year group;
- Advising staff and arranging and delivering in-service training where appropriate. This will be in-line with the current School Impact Plan and within the confines of the school budget;
- Advising and supporting colleagues in the implementation and assessment of English throughout the school;
- Assisting with the requisition and maintenance of resources required for the effective teaching of English. Again this will be within the confines of the school budget;
- The monitoring of English, in different ways, to ensure for example, that planned lessons are being delivered, that all aspects are being covered and that tasks are suitably differentiated;
- Analysing data from assessments to inform future whole-school actions, strategies and planning;
- Keeping up to date on changes to the curriculum or any new initiatives;
- Regular meetings with the governor responsible for English.

Through the above activities, it is hoped that the subject leader will be able to foster a climate which motivates and inspires staff to develop and maintain confidence and positive attitudes towards English.

### The role of the Governing Body

**The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that:**

- There is a current policy statement and curriculum for the teaching of English.
- English is included in the basic curriculum.
- Sufficient time and resources are devoted to English to enable the school to meet its legal obligations and to deliver a quality English curriculum.

### The role of the Headteacher

**It is the Headteacher's duty to ensure that:**

- An English education is provided in accordance with the Governors' Agreed Syllabus for all registered children at the school.
- Appropriate staffing and resources are made available to meet the aims and objectives of English within the school.

### Conclusion

At St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery we believe that it is our professional duty to share this policy with all new members of staff, parents/carers on request. The policy will be reviewed in the light of experiences, new developments or requirements. The leader will discuss any aspect of this policy on request.

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