

## **St. William's Catholic Primary School**

### **Policy on English**

#### **1 Aims and objectives**

1.1 The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of 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.

1.2 Our objectives in the teaching of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work.

#### **2 Teaching and learning style**

2.1 At St William's School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Literacy Strategy and the revised Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a whole-class reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity, and a whole-class session to review progress and learning. Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and VCOP materials. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

2.2 In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to 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. In some lessons, we do it through differentiated group work, while in others, 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.

### **3 English curriculum planning**

- 3.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Literacy Strategy and the revised Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.
- 3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching and the revised Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics detail what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year. Within each year group a Scheme of work is used as the foundation for planning, and is then built upon to engage the identified year group in a creative and relevant way.
- 3.3 Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.
- 3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and the support they will be given i.e. by the class teacher or class LSA. The class teacher keeps these individual plans on which annotations are made, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.
- 3.5 We plan the activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan progression into the scheme of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

### **4 The Foundation Stage**

- 4.1 We teach English in reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

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

- 5.1 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 at school.
- 5.2 Mathematics

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.
- 5.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship.

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices, and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

#### 5.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts bring them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together, and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

## 6 English and ICT

6.1 The use of ICT, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text levels. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, e.g. interactive and non-linear stories.

6.2 ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent levels. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of a word processor permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available through the Internet to encourage the framing of explicit questions. Groups can work on a laptop and input text via standard or overlay keyboard. Software is used to support independent reading (text to speech) and writing (predictive word processors, word banks and spell checkers). A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills. Lessons can focus on what pupils have achieved using ICT, or ICT can provide the means of presenting their outcomes.

## 7 English and inclusion

7.1 At our school, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

7.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

7.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English.

7.4 We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a theatre trip, for example) we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

7.5 Teaching assistants provide help by using:

- texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- visual and written materials in different formats;
- ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;

## **8 Assessment for learning**

- 8.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work, i.e. by using marking ladders and star and wish, to identify success and areas for development.
- 8.2 Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. They use a class record of the key objectives as the recording format for this.
- 8.3 Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, they are able to set targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.
- 8.4 These long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5.
- 8.5 The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio as evidence of their achievements. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school.
- 8.6 Staff are keen to improve their subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development. Effective resources are shared and update meetings are arranged to monitor progress.

## **9 Resources**

- 9.1 There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and thesauruses and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their key stage laptop bus. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The coordination and planning of the English curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:
- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
  - gives the Headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in English and indicates areas for further improvement;
  - Uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe English lessons across the school.

## Policy on English

- 10.2 A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of literacy. The literacy governor meets regularly with the subject leader to review progress.
- 10.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Signed:**

**Date:**