

All Saints' Federation

English Policy

'Building the bridge to success together'

February 2020

Aims and Purposes

The ability to communicate is vital in our quest to know about and investigate the world around us. The school builds upon the early foundations laid in the home and it is vital that parents and teachers work together to support, inspire and encourage pupils in their language development by acting as continuous role models. It is our belief that children learn best when they are actively involved in their learning.

By adopting a whole school approach, we aim to:

- Enable pupils to become proficient and confident users of the English Language
- Develop confident writers able to produce a range of styles suited to audience and purpose
- Create 'reflective writers' who actively edit and improve their writing, focusing on grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting
- Enable pupils to become fluent, confident and expressive readers
- Enable pupils to read for both pleasure and meaning
- Equip pupils with higher level reading skills (literal, inferential, wider world context)
- Immerse pupils in a creative reading culture, both in and out of school
- Provide all children with the tools of effective communication (verbal/non-verbal) and to be confident in the art of speaking and listening
- Enable children to acquire a rich and varied vocabulary

Teaching practice

Spoken language

The ability to communicate effectively is vital in our quest to know about and investigate the world around us. Speaking and listening underpins all learning and nurturing these skills is seen as a priority in developing confident and independent learners.

We will ensure that:

- Adults model all aspects of quality communication within lessons and in all school contexts
- Children have regular opportunities to express and explain their understanding of books and other reading materials
- Children have time to rehearse ideas before articulating their thoughts either orally or in written form
- Opportunities are provided across the curriculum for children to discuss and debate issues and respond in a respectful manner
- Opportunities for drama are provided across the curriculum

Reading

The ability to read is an essential life skill. It is necessary to ensure success in all other curriculum areas and is a vital tool in our quest to know about and investigate the world around us.

Phonic development: see Phonics policy

Developing language comprehension

Guided reading

All children from Foundation Stage 2 through to the end of Key Stage 2 will participate in daily guided reading sessions. Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1 complete a carousel of activities throughout the week, where they are provided with opportunities to explore a range of texts which are decodable at their current phonics attainment level. They make predictions about texts and complete tasks afterwards to gauge their understanding of the text. Whole class guided reading is taught starting from Year 2, through to Year 6. Texts are carefully chosen according to the reading ability of the class and activities are planned where children are expected to respond to what they have read, both independently and with support from adults. During guided reading sessions, the teacher will model the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader. Children will join in the reading where appropriate and there will be a combination of teacher reading, group reading, independent and chorus reading.

A dialogic approach to reading (Reading for Real) is used in upper Key Stage 2 where children are taught comprehension skills. This is based around three question types, literal, inferential and real world or beyond the book questions. It involves the children displaying a dialogic approach to learning and provides them with the opportunities to challenge and support each other's thinking.

Independent reading

The school aims to provide an environment that is rich in print and possibilities for communication. Each classroom has a reading area, where children may independently access a variety of texts including fiction, poetry and non-fiction, activities, CDs of books, print and text. Children are also provided with reading books to take home and read to an adult. From FS2 to Year 2, these books are decodable and match the child's phonics attainment level. A home reading record is provided for adults to record the child's reading in and also any comments about their progress. When a child reads to an adult in school, this will also be recorded in their reading record. The school's expectation is that all children read to an adult at home at least three times a week, and that this is recorded and signed in their reading record.

Writing

For children to be good writers they need to be immersed in good quality reading and writing. Teachers should read regularly to children, promoting authors and discussing texts. By discussing language used and highlighting good ideas, children will begin to "magpie" words and phrases and incorporate them into their own work. Pupils need to write regularly and for different purposes in order to become fluent writers. They need to have the opportunity to orally rehearse their ideas before writing.

Modelled writing

Teachers need to model good writing by thinking aloud and modelling the thought processes involved. Teachers should demonstrate improving writing and children should be involved in this process, encouraging children to make conscientious decisions in their writing.

Shared Writing

Shared Writing takes place during whole class teaching, where ideas are shared and discussed. The sessions should be pacy and interactive, with (for example) the teacher making intentional errors / the use of whiteboards by pupils for the quick composition of ideas. These ideas are recorded and refined by the teacher, modelling the skills needed to be a writer. The Shared Writing session primarily focuses on how to achieve the success criteria for a given objective within the writing to be completed. It also provides opportunities for the teaching of grammar. Children then have the opportunity to practise and extend their own writing independently.

Guided writing

Teachers and assistant teachers will lead regular, well planned guided writing groups within English lessons. Common learning needs are targeted with a small group of pupils. Ideas are shared and discussed and then recorded by the teacher, modelling the skills needed to write successfully. This modelling process may be repeated as necessary. Children then evidence their progress independently using the success criteria.

Independent writing

Children will complete independent assessed pieces of writing. During the weeks prior to this, lessons will be planned around providing children opportunities to learn the structure of specific genres in order to prepare them to write through modelled, shared and guided writing sessions. Teachers will plan time for children to edit and improve their drafts and also publish any work (when appropriate). During independent writing sessions children should have access to age appropriate resources in the classroom (word mats and working wall) and be encouraged to use the school's spelling system to support their writing. Each year group throughout the school has success criteria which we are 'Always Looking For' (ALFs). Children are encouraged to assess their own independent writing against these.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation and grammar skills need to be taught and practised explicitly so that they can then be applied within written work. Punctuation is taught in line with the expectations for the year group. The correct grammatical terms should be introduced to the children as the concepts are taught. Spelling is an integral part of the writing process. Pupils who spell with ease are able to concentrate on their writing. Whilst it is important to remember that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling often has a profound effect on the writers' self-image. Children will learn how to spell a number of high frequency words and common irregular words within the daily discrete phonics session in Key Stage 1, enabling them to write fluently. As their phonics progresses they will begin to investigate and learn to use common spelling patterns, frequently used prefixes and inflectional endings in their own writing. Children are taught and encouraged to use simple dictionaries, a range of word banks and their knowledge of word families to support their writing. The children will use a range of strategies when writing to spell words correctly. (See school spelling strategy). Discrete spelling lessons are taught throughout the school and children use a range of

spelling activities to learn spelling rules and patterns. Spellings are sent as homework on a weekly basis in Years 1-6.

Handwriting and Presentation

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage handwriting should focus on the development of fine motor skills and strengthening the muscles required for writing through a variety of activities. Children join in with daily Squiggle While You Wiggle and Dough Disco sessions in both FS1 and Fs2. Where appropriate these fine motor activities should continue into Key Stage 1 and 2. Developing a good pencil grip and appropriate posture are key features of teaching effective handwriting. In EYFS children will complete daily fine motor or handwriting sessions to ensure that the foundations are secure.

All teachers should have high expectations about handwriting and presentation. Teachers and support staff must model neat and legible handwriting in line with the agreed policy. Weekly handwriting sessions will be planned using the handwriting scheme and where children are observed forming letters incorrectly these should be addressed promptly to prevent reinforcement of incorrect letter formation. Children are encouraged to produce their best efforts of handwriting/presentation in writing opportunities both in English lessons and across the curriculum.