



## English Policy

At St Hilary's School we recognise that the personal development of pupils plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive, caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the cultures.

We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to state the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English. It has been developed through a process of consultation between teaching staff and is periodically reviewed.

### WHAT IS ENGLISH?

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and helps them learn to use language to communicate ideas, views and feelings. It also enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as 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 listening across a range of different situations.

### AIMS

- To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text level knowledge.
- To encourage them to become enthusiastic, fluent and responsive readers.
- To help them enjoy writing and recognise its value.
- To enable them to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction.
- To increase their ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.
- To encourage them to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard.
- To enable them to speak clearly and audibly.

### ORGANISATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery – Reception), English is taught based on the requirements set out in the EYFS Development Matters document. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals, in particular the Prime area of learning *Communication and Language* and the Specific area of learning *Literacy*.

At Pre-Prep, English is taught in class groups by the Class Teacher, with the help of a Classroom Assistant. Cross-curricular links are made wherever they are appropriate and English skills may often be taught through a topic. Differentiation is achieved by task/activity and grouping within the class.

At Prep, English continues to be taught in class groups but by specialist teachers. Cross-curricular links are made where possible, particularly with Geography and History. Differentiation is achieved by grouping into ability sets. (Years 3-6)

Children with special educational needs receive extra lessons with the Learning Support staff in addition to normal English lessons and are supported weekly within the classroom situation. Regular liaison between the English and Learning Support Departments ensures appropriate tasks are planned to meet each child's individual needs and to support their learning in the classroom.

MGPT pupils are provided with opportunities to extend their thinking and broaden their experience through challenging activities linked to lesson objectives. The pupils are encouraged to express their thinking through oral and written language where appropriate.

Pupils who are gifted in English are likely to:

- have highly developed auditory skills
- often think in words
- like reading, playing word games, making up poetry or stories
- copy words effectively

## **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

### **Reading**

To develop pupils as readers we:

- teach them to read fluently and accurately using a range of strategies
- help them to understand and respond to what they read using inference and deduction
- encourage them to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books
- encourage them to read independently and with enjoyment
- teach them how to seek information and learn from the written word

Reading is developed through:

- use of structured reading schemes in EYFS and Pre-Prep which include; Animaphonics, Rhino readers, Jelly and Bean, Oxford Reading Tree and Collins Big Cat, as well as access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books both in the classrooms and in the Pre-Prep and main school library. In Prep colour coded books are used to support the transition from Pre-Prep and to ensure every child is reading books at a suitable level.
- regular one-to-one reading for all children from EYFS through Pre-Prep until the end of Year 3.
- the teacher reading stories and poems to the class to foster an enjoyment of reading
- the involvement of parents. In the EYFS, children begin to take home library books, reading books and/or phonic activities. By the beginning of Reception, they all have a book and/or phonic activity daily and are encouraged to read to their parent/carer, or independently as they get older and more confident.
- provision of weekly library lessons in Pre-Prep and Prep, with records kept of each child's reading books.
- the use of reading records throughout the school, which are written in by staff and parents from EYFS until Year 4, and used by the children to review the books they have read from Year 3-6.
- Although we prefer our pupils to read physical books, we understand and appreciate that for some, the ability to alter font size and colour, as well as background colour, assists in the practice of reading. For this purpose, Kindles may be used in school, on the condition that they are not Wi-Fi enabled. Pupils are

responsible for keeping these devices charged prior to coming into school and they are also responsible for their safe-keeping during the school day. They must be clearly and securely named. The school takes no responsibility for any loss or damage incurred while these devices are on the school site.

## **Writing**

To develop our pupils as writers we:

- teach them to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of readers, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate
- encourage them to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment
- show them how to write in a variety of forms, such as stories, poems, reports and letters
- show them how to evaluate and improve their writing
- teach them how to use punctuation to make meaning clear to the reader
- give them the knowledge and strategies to become confident and accurate spellers

Writing is developed through:

- ensuring shared planning and writing sessions take place in English lessons
- responding positively and with interest to all their attempts at writing
- one to one time with the teacher going through their writing
- careful marking of all work according to the school's marking policy
- developing vocabulary with teacher support and the use of thesauruses and dictionaries

**See also separate Handwriting and Spelling policies.**

## **Speaking, Listening and Drama**

To develop our pupils as speakers and listeners we:

- give them opportunities to take part in group discussions
- encourage them to listen and respond appropriately to others
- help them to understand the need to adapt their speech to different situations

Speaking, listening and drama is developed through:

- ensuring there are a variety of speaking and listening activities within English lessons, including collaborative discussion work, debates and question and answer sessions
- ensuring the questioning by the teacher encourages discussion and that questions solicit opinions and ideas
- opportunities to perform readings of their work in front of others
- rehearsing for drama/musical productions

## **The use of ICT**

The children are shown how information technology can be applied in their English work and are given opportunities to explore these possibilities. Within the department we also use ICT as a teaching tool through the use of interactive whiteboards, Netbooks and iPads where appropriate.

## **Homework**

Regular homework is used to support English from EYFS through to Year 6.

**See separate Homework Policy**

## **Verbal Reasoning**

Pupils at St Hilary's start Verbal Reasoning lessons in Year 4 and continue until the Spring Term of Year 6, with a timetabled half an hour lesson each week within the English curriculum. Verbal Reasoning is a form of problem solving based around words and language. It involves thinking about text, solving word problems, following written instructions to find a solution, finding letter sequences and deciphering letter and number-based codes. Verbal Reasoning encourages the pupils to be inquisitive and explore topics to gain a greater understanding and think for themselves. Verbal reasoning tests are a key part of most Senior School selection and 11+ exams. The exams are intended to test a child's ability to understand and reason using words, and are a test of skill, rather than of learned knowledge. Verbal reasoning homework is allocated in the Summer Term of Year 5 and Autumn Term of Year 6.

### **STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING PROGRESS AND CONTINUITY**

Schemes of Work to implement the English Policy have been developed by the Head of English in collaboration with all who teach English. They are based on the National Curriculum and incorporate objectives from the Primary Strategy for English. These are then developed into detailed weekly plans by individual teachers. In Foundation Stage, the EYFS Development Matters guidelines are followed.

At EYFS and Pre-Prep, weekly planning meetings are held in each year group.

In Prep, meetings are held 5-6 times a term and as required. These meetings are used to review lesson plans, assess children's work and are also used for monitoring and evaluation.

Termly reviews are monitored by Senior Management.

### **MGTP**

**Pupils who are Gifted in English will show the following attributes:**

- achieve 130+ and fall into stanine 9 in PTE assessment and the NGRT reading and NGST spelling assessments, plus have an NC writing level of 4 parts above the national average (eg 3a/4 at Y2 and 5a/6 at Y6)
- Particularly competent and voracious readers will also be identified, based on the number and type of books they are reading as well as their ability to comprehend challenging texts and discuss their themes.

### **ROLE OF THE HEAD OF ENGLISH**

- Take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in English throughout the school.
- Support colleagues in their development of detailed lesson plans, implementation of the curriculum and assessment and record-keeping.
- Monitor progress in English and advise the Headteacher on action needed.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of English resources.
- Keep up-to-date with developments in English education and disseminate this information to colleagues.

### **FEEDBACK TO PUPILS**

This is achieved through discussion and the marking of work.

**The guidelines laid down in the school Marking, Assessment and Recording Policy are followed.**

In EYFS and Pre-Prep, work will be marked in the presence of the child whenever possible. As they move through Year 2, more work will be marked away from the child and then feedback and correction time is given.

In Prep, all children have marking guidelines in their English books to enable them to respond to the teachers marking appropriately and to use recognised symbols when editing their own work. As the children progress

through Prep they will be expected to edit, mark and comment on their own work as well as that of their peers. Individual targets are set for each child at least once a half term and recorded on a target card in their English books.

### **ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING**

Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils in English. Each child's progress in the various aspects of the subject is identified in order to plan the next stage of his/her learning.

- Short term assessments are carried out by teachers as part of every lesson to help them to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives.
- Medium term assessments are used to measure progress against the key objectives and to help future planning
- Long term assessments are made in two formal assessment weeks in October and May and these are used to track pupil progress from year to year

Please see the **Marking, Assessment and Recording Policy** for detailed information of the formal summative assessments carried out in each term for each year group.

Samples of children's work from across the ability range are kept in a portfolio.

### **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

In EYFS, there are Parents' Meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms. There is a written interim report and a written end of year report and Profile Summary, which parents are invited to discuss.

In Pre-Prep, Parents' Meetings are in the Autumn and Spring terms and a written report is given at the end of the Summer term.

In Prep this involves Parents' Meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms, an interim report in the Spring Term and a full report at the end of the Summer Term. Year 6 have reports in the Autumn and Summer terms.

In addition, parents can, at any time, make an appointment to discuss their child's progress in English with their English teacher or Head of English.

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**Reviewed:** August 2019, June 2020, June 2021, June 2022, June 2023, June 2024

**Next review date:** June 2025

**Person Responsible:** Mrs Louise Beach (Head of English)