

English Policy



Date of Amendment: November 2018
Review Date: November 2021

English

"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"

Introduction

English is a vital way of communicating in school, in life and throughout the world.

Literature in English is rich and influential, reflecting the experience of people from many countries and times. Pupils develop skills in speaking & listening, reading and writing when they study English. This enables them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, whilst also improving their ability to communicate with others effectively. The study of English helps pupils to understand how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins.

Within the school, we are concerned with becoming a more literate community and aim to provide and sustain learning experiences and teaching contexts, which enable children to share the power and enjoyment of literacy, its scope and application.

Curriculum

We at St Thomas' agree to follow the Curriculum as stated in the *National curriculum in England: English programmes of study (July 2014)* and support its aims that all pupils will:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing, and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

The curriculum will be broken down into three key areas:

1. Spoken language
2. Reading (word reading and comprehension)
3. Writing (transcription and composition)

All of these areas will be in the context of a unit of work focused around a particular genre of text, lasting between two to four weeks. These units are mapped out so that each term pupils will study narrative, poetry and non-fiction texts (see appendix I – New Curriculum 2014 English Yearly Overview).

Spoken Language:

Spoken language opportunities are explicitly covered in the National Curriculum 2014. Teachers need to give pupils confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that they value their talk. Within classroom activities teachers encourage children to participate in speaking and listening activities to enhance their oral skills and creativity. We believe that these skills are essential for children to be able to formulate their own ideas. Spoken language skills are developed through explicit lessons in addition to use in cross-curricular contexts. Planned activities may include: the language of discussion; the development of ideas for writing and drama activities to develop comprehension of reading. Teachers and non-teaching staff should be aware that all adults in the school provide models of speaking and listening in interactions with the pupils.

Aims

Pupils will be taught to:

- speak clearly, fluently and confidently in a range of situations and settings
- listen sensitively to the views of others
- participate in group discussions
- use the main features of spoken Standard English
- think clearly about the needs of the audience through content and vocabulary
- learn to use language in an imaginative way and express feelings through drama and role play
- transfer skills learnt in English to all areas of the curriculum

Reading:

Our aim is to encourage all our children to have a love of reading, and to read confidently and independently in a range of contexts with a wide range of texts. We support opportunities to read for pleasure and for information from a wide range of materials including: written texts, picture books, images and film. We use a wide variety of teaching strategies and opportunities across the curriculum to deliver the National Curriculum. Teachers acknowledge the diversity of pupils' learning styles and provide a balance in the approaches used to teach reading. Different methods are used according to the focus of the learning objective, they include:

- Independent read and respond
- Individual reading
- Class Comprehension
- Group reading

Aims

At St Thomas' we aim to consolidate the skills that pupils have developed at KS1 and move their learning forwards, therefore, the focus of reading skills shifts away from decoding using phonics; word recognition and simple comprehension towards more advanced reading skills. However, children working below their chronological age are supported appropriately. The former helps to develop a deeper understanding of the structure, purpose and meaning of the increasingly complex texts they are encountering, and, ultimately, support the development of the children's writing skills. Consequently, as the children move through the school and their reading accuracy improves, the focus on individual reading lessens. Teachers seek to develop higher order reading skills through discussions and questioning during group and class reading, and through evidence in their written work.

We use the four key strands of reading comprehension: literal understanding, skills of inference, deduction and evaluation. Children are additionally taught:

- knowledge of grammatical structures;
- contextual understanding;
- to use their knowledge of other texts they have read;
- to scan and skim text for information and overall impression;
- to use organisational features and systems to find information;
- to critically distinguish between fact and opinion;
- to distinguish between different fiction and non-fiction genres;

- to recognise the difference between author, narrator and character;
- to consider poetic forms and their effect.

Whole class comprehension sessions take place four times a week, in which children read and discuss appropriately challenging texts linked to the genre of writing being studied.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading throughout their time at school. All pupils have a school reading scheme levelled book and make regular weekly visits to the school library, where they can choose an additional title for reading or sharing at home. Entries in the homework diary are recorded by adults in school and parents at home, where discussion about books read (e.g. plot, characters, vocabulary choices, interpretation of themes, predictions etc.) is encouraged.

Writing:

The teaching of writing is a major focus at St Thomas'. The National Curriculum 2014 ensures that pupils cover: fiction, non-fiction and poetry writing styles. Writing skills and techniques are taught both in their own right and also in relation to other aspects of English, such as spoken language and reading. While these skills are taught through dedicated English sessions, cross curricular links provide vital opportunities to apply them in planned, purposeful and realistic situations. We encourage each child to have a positive self-image as a writer, to show enjoyment, commitment and confidence. Good writing is praised, valued and displayed in a variety of ways throughout the school.

The use of good quality texts provides structures, themes and purposes for their writing. An awareness of audience is encouraged by all teachers and opportunities to write for a real purpose are used whenever possible. We provide a number of different teaching strategies for developing writing skills;

- Modelled writing
- Shared writing
- Guided writing
- Independent writing

Lessons will include the direct teaching of English grammar and punctuation with regular opportunities for sentence structuring and text analysis highlighting the grammatical conventions of the English language. As a school we will follow the statutory appendix from the New National Curriculum 2014 to teach, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation in order to prepare pupils for the end of the Key Stage assessments and their secondary education.

Aims

Pupils will be taught to:

- write to suit a particular purpose and in doing so broaden their vocabulary and use language and style appropriate to the reader
- use features of layout, presentation and organisation effectively
- develop their writing on paper and on screen. They will be taught to: plan, draft, revise, proof-read, present and evaluate their own work
- punctuate their written work correctly, using punctuation carefully for effect
- apply knowledge of spelling conventions, common letter strings and visual patterns
- spell the statutory spelling words for Year 3 & 4 and Year 5 & 6 accurately

- check their spellings using word banks, dictionaries and spell checkers; to know the word families, roots and origins of words to aid correct spelling; to know some of the differences between Standard and Non- Standard English usage
- understand word classes - nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, articles and conjunctions
- understand the features of different types of sentences including statements, questions and commands; use the grammar of complex sentences, including clauses, phrases and conjunctions and use organisational features of paragraphs

Spellings:

Pupils learn spellings weekly focusing on targeted spelling rules and key lists of words that they should know how to read and spell. These spellings are taken from the statutory appendix from the New National Curriculum 2014: Programmes of Study for English. In addition to these set spellings, teachers will indicate to pupils when they have spelling errors in their work and encourage pupils to practise these words for future use.

Assessment and accountability

Short-term assessments will be an informal part of every lesson to check understanding and give the teacher information, which will help to adjust day-to-day lesson plans. Ongoing medium term assessment will take place throughout the course of the year, through using the Target Tracker Assessment Statements. Long-term assessments will take place towards the end of the school year to assess and review pupils' progress and attainment. These will be made through compulsory National Curriculum English tests for pupils in Years 6 and supplemented by relevant end of year tests for years 3 - 5. Just before each half term (October, February and May), staff input pupils' data onto Target Tracker in a Professional Development Meeting. Staff are also given the opportunity to update data on Target Tracker at the end of each term (December, March/April and July).

Computing

A weekly sign up system allows all classes access to the Computing Suite. Frequent use is also made of extra PCs, iPads and laptops in the classroom, in addition to the interactive white board for whole class teaching. The school holds subscriptions to Espresso, Purple Mash and Lexia, which enables teachers to choose activities to directly support the children within their class.

Recording and expectations

Yellow A4 exercise books are used in English lessons. Children may use a pencil or a handwriting pen, at the teachers' discretion, for writing. It is expected that by Year 6 most pupils are able to write in pen. SMART, skills-based and child friendly learning objectives (in the form of 'Can I ...?') and success criteria are articulated at the start of each lesson, recorded in pupil books, and reviewed at the end of lessons with opportunities for self-review by pupils. Pupils may record their work in other ways as a result of paired/group activities, use class PCs and other current technologies.

In addition to the daily exercise books, each child will have a green assessed writing journal. This will be handed out at the start of Year 3 and retained throughout their time at the school, providing a portfolio of unaided writing throughout each child's KS2 education.

Marking

Marking should always reflect the objective from the beginning of the lesson and be positive. At least once a week, detailed marking should be carried out; this will include a NS (Next Step), showing specifically what the pupil needs to do in order to progress further. Time should then be built into the next lesson for pupils to respond to this marking. On other occasions, work will be marked to the learning objective (double tick for fully achieved, single tick for partially achieved, dot for not achieved). Please refer to marking policy for full details and other codes used. In some lessons a comment may not be necessary, but pupils should always know what the next steps are in their learning. If a piece of work is marked together, members of staff should still check this work.

English across the curriculum

We recognise the importance of English skills and techniques being applied to other curriculum subjects. We value chances for the pupils to make connections between subjects and to put into practice in one subject the skills base that they are learning in another subject. "Learning (should be) seen as a seamless whole and links (should be) made explicit in all (pupils) do" (NCSL Research Associate Summary Report, Spring 2007). Opportunities for this arise in a variety of subjects such as History (e.g. analysing historical sources), RE (e.g. writing prayers, speeches, retelling stories), Science. (e.g. explaining and presenting about different processes and concepts) and computing (e.g. typing and communication skills).

Individual subject leaders have a responsibility to ensure that English is planned for within specific areas of the curriculum (e.g. English links in art, geography and PE etc).

Display

English work and resources should be displayed to inform children and celebrate their achievements. Each classroom must have a working wall, which should be current and evolving constantly using models; key features of the text type being taught; vocabulary and pupils' work. They are used to directly support the children's learning and should be referred to and developed with the pupils.

Planning

English planning operates at three levels; whole school planning (long-term); year group planning (medium-term); individual teacher's planning (short-term). Planning follows the New National Curriculum 2014: Programmes of Study for English and the Primary Framework for English. Teachers discuss planning for the following week at weekly planning meetings in year groups. Teachers make use of the yearly overview to plan their units and present weekly planning on the agreed school format.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The English Subject Leader, Headteacher and SLT members monitor and evaluate the English curriculum throughout the year.

Marking should be monitored to ensure that the policy is being carried out in each class/English group across the school. This should particularly focus upon the use of next steps in marking, and that there is evidence that the children have an opportunity to respond to these and then repeat the skills learnt later in the pupils work. The English Subject Leader will carry out these monitoring exercises at least once a term.

Various areas are monitored including: the quality of teaching; the learning environment; the implementation of the English curriculum policy; planning, recording and reporting; analysis of assessment; progression in learning; continuity; perceptions of children; the standards of achievement and the use of resources; up to date areas of focus from the Raising Achievement Plan (RAP).

Partnership with Parents

At St. Thomas' we believe in the importance of working together with parents in all aspects of school life. In English, one important way parents can help their children is by supporting the completion of the weekly set homework. It is expected that pupils will read a minimum of 3 times per week to an adult at home and practise their spelling rules for weekly tests. There will be regular communication with parents through the use of the homework diary; regular slips from teachers will keep parents informed of work in class, ideas for other practice at home or other specific tasks that could be completed. Teachers, parents and other adults at home and school will record reading completed each week in the homework diary. (See additional details in the diary). In the upper school children will also be set one compulsory additional piece of English homework per week. This helps children prepare for expectations at secondary school.

Parents are updated on their child's progress in English as well as the other curricular areas in the form of written reports in July of each year. The written report contains details of a child's efforts and attainment in English over the year. Parent-teacher consultations take place twice in the academic year.

The School expects parents to:-

Be actively involved in their children's English learning both in school and at home; understand and support the school's English and Homework policy and scheme of work.

Disability Equality Scheme

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007)

It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support (where necessary), that every child, irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all 'reasonable adjustments' are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in the English curriculum.

Role of the governing body

The named governor for English should support the subject leader and keep up to date with policies, strategies, procedures, etc. through regular visits. These visits are used to become familiar with and monitor English teaching, observe lessons first hand and to promote levels of accountability, challenge and support. Following a governor visit, a written report is submitted to the English Subject Leader and Headteacher and discussed at a full governing body meeting.

Mastery in English

Effective mastery in English reflects independent learning which demonstrates creativity, imagination and innovation across a range of genres.

Planning longer sequences allows children to know a book inside and out, to look at how writers use language and words to impact on the reader and use them as models for their own writing.

Precise questioning during lessons ensures that pupils can think deeply about a text or area of focus.

Time is given to explore words, develop phrases, play with sentences and paragraphs, meaning that children always consider the impact on the reader when they write and justify their choices.

Less emphasis is made on covering so many text types in each year group, ensuring children develop greater depth and secure knowledge in genres.

Differentiation and scaffolded thinking supports all children to work with the same objective.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught explicitly and in context across the curriculum. When pupils are working at greater depth, they can apply the skill confidently, accurately and effectively in a range of writing.

The use of high quality texts and approaches such as whole class comprehension are used to promote a love of English.

Review

The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years, or as new guidance becomes available to schools from the Local Authority (LA) or Department of Education (DfE).

Policy reviewed: November 2018

Next policy review date: November 2021