St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

St Edmund's English Policy

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1. Mission Statement

"A learning community, celebrating Christ in all, building a kingdom of love, hope and joy"

2. Aims

This policy is for parents, staff and governors at St. Edmund's School. It aims to set out:

- Our approach to teaching, monitoring and assessing English, literacy and reading knowledge and skills
- How we will make sure our provision for the teaching of English, literacy and reading is of consistently high quality

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements and expectations set out in the:

- Early Years Framework
- National Curriculum programmes of study for English
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Reading framework 2023

4. Our vision for English and literacy in our school

Our school aims to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. By the time that pupils move on from our school, our aim is for them to:

- Be fluent readers and writers
- Have a positive attitude towards books and reading, reading widely for pleasure and information
- Enjoy writing in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style accordingly
- Be curious and creative when it comes to reading and writing – for example, by being interested in learning the meaning of new words
- Have a wide vocabulary and understanding of grammar
- Feel confident speaking in class and be able to clearly explain their understanding and ideas
- Listen carefully and sensitively to adults and their peers

5. Our guiding principles for the teaching of English and literacy

We teach English and literacy best when:

- There is a joyful culture around reading and reading for pleasure in school
- All staff feel they have the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional support they need to teach English and literacy effectively
- There's sufficiently detailed and frequent ongoing assessment of pupil progress
- We expose pupils to different types of reading material, such as through stimulating, high-quality and curiosity-inspiring classroom displays
- We involve families in supporting their child's reading and writing
- The English curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced
- We identify where pupils have learning gaps or aren't making the expected progress, and teaching is adapted to suit the needs of the learner.
- Interventions may be put in place where a child needs additional support, beyond what can be offered in the classroom.
- Teaching resources are available, up to date, varied and diverse, and match pupil and curriculum needs
- We engage pupils in high-quality back-and-forth interactions
- We model new language and accurate grammar to pupils
- We support pupils with speech, language and communication needs – for example, by putting on by modelling effective communication.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Governors

Governors have strategic oversight of the teaching of English across the school. This is delegated to the teaching and learning committee with a named link governor for English. Governors are responsible for:

- Having oversight of this policy and ensuring that English skills maintain their key place in the curriculum;
- Reviewing attainment data and challenging school leaders;
- Liaising with school leaders to agree strategy and interventions to improve the quality of English provision;
- Visiting the school to triangulate data and ensure that they have a clear picture of what is happening at school.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Building a team of expert teachers who know and understand the processes that underpin learning to read and write
- Providing teachers with the appropriate training and resources so that they can competently deliver the English curriculum
- Creating a stimulating school environment where pupils are exposed to different types of reading material, such as through displays, books and other classroom resources
- Promoting a culture of reading for pleasure at the core of the curriculum
- Developing links with organisations such as school and public library services, reading charities and others
- Involving parents and families in supporting their children's reading

The English Lead

Our English Lead is Annie Swarbrick. She is responsible for providing leadership and management for English and literacy to secure:

- High-quality teaching and subject knowledge of staff
- A coherently planned and sequenced English curriculum where pupils are taught to read from the beginning in reception
- A rigorous programme that includes well-conceived and structured resources for teaching phonics
- A programme of reading aloud to all pupils from reception to year 6
- Consistent assessment and accurate teacher judgements within English and literacy
- Effective use of resources
- Delivering focused training for staff
- Providing support for planning, teaching and assessing Reading and Writing across the school.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:
Planning effective English and literacy lessons
Providing opportunities for pupils to apply their English and literacy skills in a variety of ways
Completing the relevant marking and assessment
Demonstrating their understanding of systematic synthetic phonics in their teaching so trainee teachers and support staff can learn from them how to teach reading effectively
Making sure that support staff have:

- Access to planning materials and resources
- The knowledge and skills they need to support and challenge pupils

7. Curriculum

Speaking and Listening

We recognise that speaking and listening skills are pivotal for children's literacy development and therefore speaking and listening is a key part of our curriculum. Particularly in Early Years, we ensure that we encourage high quality interactions, and we use 'story dough' and 'drawing club' to encourage the children to talk about books and communicate their own ideas. Speaking and listening are also key parts of our English Curriculum and the wider curriculum as children are encouraged to share ideas before trying to put anything onto paper.

Early Reading And Writing

Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen Phonics programme. The aim of ELS is 'Getting all children to read well, quickly'. It teaches children to read by identifying the phonemes (the smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (the written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words.

Children begin learning Phonics at the very beginning of Reception and it is explicitly taught every day during a dedicated slot on the timetable. Children are given the knowledge and the skills to then apply this independently.
Throughout the day, children will use their growing Phonics knowledge to support them in other areas of the curriculum and will have many opportunities to practise their reading. This includes reading 1:1 with a member of staff, with a partner during paired reading and as a class.
Children continue daily Phonics lessons in Year 1 and further through the school to ensure all children become confident, fluent readers.
We follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our children to practise their existing phonic knowledge whilst building their understanding of the 'code' of our language GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). As a result, our children can tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.
Children experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support each child's journey to becoming fluent and independent readers.
We begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to diagraphs **'sh'** (two letters spelling one sound), trigraphs **'igh'** (three letters spelling one sound) and quadgraphs **'eigh'** (four letters spelling one sound).
We teach children to:
Decode (read) by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently
Encode (write) by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.
The structure of ELS lessons allows children to know what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success. This makes it easier for children to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading.
ELS is designed on the principle that children should 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Since interventions are delivered within the lesson by the teacher, any child who is struggling with the new knowledge can be immediately targeted with appropriate support. Where further support is required, 1:1 interventions are used where needed. These interventions are short, specific and effective.

Reading

In whole-class reading lessons, there is a strong emphasis on fluency and comprehension, as we know that children have to practise as much as possible and be involved in rich discussions in order to become competent readers.
From Year 1-Year 6, we complete whole class reading lessons five times a week which involve the teacher reading the class book, children reading a small section with their partner and then an activity which links to VIPERS (Vocabulary, Infer, Predict, Explain, Retrieve, Summarise) reading comprehension questions.
VIPERS gives a wide breadth of reading questions to develop well rounded reading skills.
Class novels and fiction books are interlaced with related non-fiction and poems to expose children to a wide range of reading materials and develop their knowledge of different genres, language structures and text styles. as well as supporting their development of their own reading style, finding out what they enjoy reading most.

Children are expected to practise their reading regularly. As soon as children have made sufficient progress in the phonics scheme, they are given decodable books to practise with. These books only contain the letters and sounds that they have been

taught and so there is no need for them to guess any words from the context. Children are encouraged to practise reading each day, rereading the same book two or three times to encourage fluency.
In Key Stage 2, each class has a wide range of age-appropriate books, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry, which have been carefully selected to challenge children to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills. They also have regular access to our library where they can choose books to read or have read to them at home.
All children are given a reading record, which parents are asked to sign when their children have read at home. In year 6, children are expected to write a thoughtful log of their reading in their reading record themselves. Reading records are checked by the class teacher each week. Class teachers should hear their children read individually once a fortnight.

Writing

We recognise the important role of oracy in the development of writing. Because of this we emphasise speaking and listening skills, particularly in our Early Years. We use 'Story Dough' in Nursery, 'Drawing Club' in Reception and Curious Quests in Year 1 to encourage our children to write purposefully and to give them plenty of opportunity to rehearse their writing orally.
In Year 2-6 we base our writing around our class novel, linking reading and writing and providing inspiration from real authors. This lessons the cognitive load on children as they can stick to one theme throughout their English lessons. There is a strong focus on the audience for our writing along with its purpose and effect to create meaningful lessons.
To build successful writing in Year 2 we write using a two week structure. In week one, children are given a model text to analyse and will learn different sentence structures and get appropriate, embedded grammar taught. In week 2 children have the opportunity to plan, shared write and create their own version of the model text which can then be assessed by the class teacher.
In Key Stage 2 we move to a three week structure to build a piece of writing. In week one, children are given a model text to analyse and will learn different sentence structures and get appropriate, embedded grammar taught. In the second week there is intensive shared planning, shared writing and shared editing work completed for all children to build a full piece of writing from start to finish together with their class teacher. In week three children can put all that they have learned into practise and independently plan, draft, edit and publish their work ready for their teacher to assess their progress.

Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation is embedded within writing lessons with features taught in reference to the text type that is being studied. Explicit grammar lessons are taught in week one of the lesson structure and will cover appropriate terminology, word classes, sentence structures and punctuation. This is all done through the lense of becoming an effective writing to build the text which is being taught at the time. This is regularly reviewed against National Curriculum targets and Teacher Assessed Frameworks to ensure there is full coverage.

Spelling

In Year 2 and above, children receive 5 lessons of spelling a week.

In Year 2, we use Essential Letters and Sounds Essential Spelling to teach spelling. These lessons follow the same format as Essential Letters and Sounds Phonics, and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for Year 2.
In Key Stage 2, we follow HFL Essential Spellings
Both these schemes focus on teaching spelling rather than testing spelling. Teaching focusses on spelling rules and the application of these rules through a range od different activities. Although children are encouraged to practise their spelling at home, they are not formally tested, but rather given the opportunity to practise through dictations and other exercises.

Handwriting

We use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. Handwriting lessons take place five times a week.

8. Cross-curricular links

We will facilitate cross-curricular learning of English and literacy skills, making sure that the links with other curriculums are natural and not forced. This will be achieved through activities in other subjects such as:

- Annotating sources
- Group discussions
- Comprehension
- Topic research

9. Adaptive teaching

We will provide suitable adaptationa to make sure that every pupil makes maximum progress in English and literacy, by:

- Recognising where some pupils need specific help with their English skills – for example, if they have dyslexia
- Providing resources such as phonics mats and writing frames to scaffold pupils' learning
- Identifying pupils who would benefit from more support in an area of their English learning, and running small intervention groups for targeted support each week to aid their progress and attainment. We will monitor these closely to move pupils in and out of these groups as needed
- Planning 'tell me more' opportunities for higher learners to extend their thinking
- Using strategies such as 'share the pen' to support transcription.

10. Marking and feedback

Deep marking is expected during shared writing lessons with time for children to respond and edit their work. This will use agreed marking codes which have been taught to the children. Lessons will be reflected upon with triangle marking from children and adults.

Teachers in Years 1-6 will mark assessed, independent writing against the Teacher Assessed Frameworks at least 8 times a year to give a clear idea of targets hit and those which need working on further.

Please see our assessment and feedback policy for more information.

11. Monitoring, assessment and moderation

Monitoring

We will monitor the teaching and learning of English, literacy and reading in our school to make sure that all of our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.

School leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Conducting learning walks
- Reviewing marking and feedback
- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Planning scrutinies
- Book scrutinies

Assessment

We will track pupils' progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment. Each child has a writing assessment sheet and this is reviewed after each independent write to support planning and assessment. Class teachers report levels at the end of each long term. Teachers should hear their children read at least once a fortnight and informal, formative assessment will happen at these times. Additionally, children sit the NFER reading test at the end of each long term.

Our pupils will sit the following formal assessments:

- The phonics screening check at the end of year 1
- National Curriculum tests in the summer terms at the end of KS1 (optional) and KS2
- KS1 and KS2 grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) tests

We will provide regular targets for pupils and provide termly verbal reports against these at parents' evenings. Pupils will receive a written report annually.

Moderation

We will standardise writing samples to:

- Demonstrate how pupils' work meets National Curriculum attainment targets for KS1 and KS2, to help with assessment
- Make sure staff have a consistent approach to marking pupils' work

We will refer to the exemplification materials for KS1 and KS2 from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) to support with this.

We will moderate teacher assessments of reading and writing each term.

- Look at the national curriculum statements and check teaching allows for full coverage.
- Check activities that have been completed and the conditions completed in- e.g. shared working, TA supported, independent work, test conditions.
- Look at Teacher Assessed Framework checklists for writing and check appropriate statements have been checked and standards for that year group met.
- Check Reading NFER test data against teacher assessed data and flag any inconsistencies for discussion.

12. Learning environment

Pupils will learn English and literacy in spaces that:

- Are well-organised
- Contain appropriate and good-quality resources for pupils to refer to (in a space where they can find or see them easily)
- Have minimal distractions
- Display letter cards and posters showing grapheme-phoneme correspondences that match our school's phonics teaching programme

Book corners

When visiting their book corner, pupils will be able to:

- Browse the books
- Revisit the ones the teacher has read to them
- Borrow books to read or re-tell at home
- Spend time there

When arranging the book corner, teachers will display books clearly and in an engaging way.

13. Resources

Books

We will select and use books that meet the recommendations in the 2023 reading framework, including that they:

- Cover a wide range of subjects and vocabulary
- Elicit a strong emotional response
- Have a strong narrative

- Have illustrations that are engaging and reflect children from all backgrounds and cultures
- Include fiction, non-fiction, modern and traditional stories

Once we have chosen our books, we will:

- Identify a core set of stories for each year group
- Refresh the list regularly (at least once a year), as new books are published and as our school welcomes new teachers
- Share the list with parents, and explain its purpose, so they can buy or borrow the books

Rhymes and poems

We will choose rhymes and poems that will develop pupils' language skills. The subject lead will identify a core set of poems for each year group, based on the criteria on page 30 of the reading framework.

Dictionaries and thesauruses

To support with writing and spelling, we will make sure that pupils have access to dictionaries and thesauruses by:

- Having at least 1 dictionary and thesaurus available in each classroom
- Allowing pupils to use the computer during lessons to look up word meanings and synonyms

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by the English lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- SEN/SEND policy and information report
- Assessment and Feedback policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Behaviour policy
- Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy