English Policy

St Luke's Primary School

'Love God. Love your neighbour as yourself: be the Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37

Reviewed by Keith Grey September 2024

English Policy

At St. Luke's, we believe that language is the single most important tool for communication. It lies at the heart of understanding and is the foundation upon which effective communication is based. We believe that being able to read and write effectively are key life skills, which enable us to understand others and express ourselves confidently. We promote and encourage children to discover the value of strong communication and the importance of reading and writing in all aspects of their lives. A strong understanding of literacy skills gives children the building blocks for all their future learning. We are committed to helping children develop their technical skills of reading and writing and to inspire a life-long passion for both.

CURRICULUM RATIONALE

What do we teach? Why do we teach it?

St. Luke's Primary School has the highest of expectations of all our pupils. It is our rationale to provide our pupils with a high-quality ambitious education in English. By the time our children leave school, our aim is for them to communicate effectively through speaking and listening; to read and write with confidence and fluency. English is at the heart of our learning and teaching - essential to every area of the curriculum. The St. Luke's English curriculum is designed with the rationale to foster a love for reading and writing in children from Early Years to Year 6. We want every child to achieve their individual potential; express their individuality; and to take pleasure in reading and writing across a range of genres.

Through the study of English our rationale is:

- to develop a shared love and understanding of English
- to develop and nurture a love of reading
- to promote high standards of Literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English so enabling children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions effectively
- increase the breadth of pupil's vocabulary by fostering a curiosity and interest in words, their roots and meanings and to actively develop an increasing vocabulary in both written and spoken form. As a result, enhancing a deeper understanding of the cultures of others
- to enjoy and embrace language and explicitly teach the language of books
- to expose children to a wide range of texts and genres, whilst developing one's individual reading preferences
- to develop increasing stamina in reading and an enhanced comprehension of text
- to focus on writing for purpose
- to work as authors, taking ownership of their writing through drafting, redrafting, editing and self-assessment
- children will use grammar and punctuation accurately showing deep understanding and skilful application across the curriculum of sentence structure and punctuation

- for children to learn and understand spelling rules and conventions whilst being aware of exceptions to the rules
- children can produce writing that is joined, legible and neat whilst forming letters correctly and accurately thus promoting pride and self-esteem.
- to further enhance meaningful links across the curriculum deepening the knowledge and understanding of our pupils
- to ensure an entitlement for all pupils
- to ensure the highest expectations for and from all

CURRICULUM ROLL-OUT

How do we teach and assess and how does this look in practice?

English skills are taught every morning and these skills are actively reinforced across the curriculum during the afternoon sessions where appropriate, to ensure basic skills and knowledge are reinforced and built upon to promote understanding and application. For children to reach their full potential, we understand they need consistent high-quality teaching, sufficient coverage and time with shared and guided modelling and independent practice. We have a rigorous timetable in place to ensure all aspects of the English curriculum are rolled-out effectively.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS, children are exposed to Literacy right from the start through sharing books with adults, listening to, learning and performing nursery rhymes, songs and stories. We recognise that literacy skills are dependent on communication skills and there is a strong focus on the development of listening and attention, understanding and speaking. Staff model and encourage effective behaviour for listening during daily circle time and focused activities. EYFS staff place great importance on listening to, and identifying, rhythm to aid early language formation. Clapping, singing and listening to music and words helps pupils to identify syllables and break down words. Furthermore, carefully planned role-play areas offer opportunities for children to be surrounded by rich language and vocabulary.

Children who have delayed language skills are identified early and additional support is put in place to help them to catch up. The EYFS environment offers a literacy rich environment promoting engagement with reading and writing across the curriculum both inside and outside.

Phonics

We place a strong emphasis on phonics teaching because we believe this lays the foundations for successful reading. At St. Luke's we teach phonics through the DfE approved **Essential Letters and Sounds** Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme which is designed to teach reading through the act of decoding and blending.

These lessons are taught every morning to all children from Nursery (when children are judged to be ready) to Year 2 (for children who may still be in need). Children are regularly assessed for progress to ensure all children are continuously taught to their individual needs. Children in lower KS2 who did not pass their phonics screening at the end of KS1 are given additional phonics support.

All children from Nursery to Year 2 take home a reading levelled book appropriate to their needs to practice their reading at home with parents and family. This also applies to children in Years 3 – 6 who need additional reading support.

Key Stage One and Key Stage Two Reading

Daily Supported Reading

In KS1, we supplement the teaching of phonics with Daily Supported Reading so that children can build on their understanding of text. The Daily Supported Reading method has a proven track record of raising reading attainment in KS1. Children read in ability groups daily with an adult. This instils good reading routines and practice from a young age and helps all children increase their enjoyment and maximise their progress in reading.

Whole Class Reading

In KS2, all children have a time-tabled daily Whole Class Reading lesson (starts in Year 2, when children have been assessed as ready). We use high quality reading texts which supports children in developing their fluency and understanding of text. Children are exposed to reading - modelled by an expert reader; opportunities for high-quality discussion around a text, thus developing comprehension skills; and exploration of new and challenging vocabulary.

Reading for Pleasure

All St Luke's pupils from Nursery to Year 6 are encouraged to develop their love of reading. This is achieved through the positive promotion of reading both at school and home. All children are read to at least once daily. Every class has access to a high quality, well-resourced book corner and a school library and are encouraged to take books home to read. Opportunities are sought for children visit the local Islington Library. Children take part in the Islington Reading Road Map Challenge, motivated by certificates celebrating reading milestones.

To encourage reading during school holidays, children are encouraged to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge at their local library. This is actively promoted in whole school assemblies, school newsletters and leaflets.

Reading is high profile in the school and events such as World Book Day, author/poet workshops, bookfairs, celebrate this positive reading culture.

READING VOLUNTEERS

A team of reading volunteers from local partners and supporters read with children identified as benefiting from a reading mentor. Not only do the children receive reading support but they have quality 'me time' with an additional dedicated adult to explore topics that arise from their reading. Our children in KS1 and Year 3 receive support from **Chapter One** (formerly known as ***Tutor Mate*** – a remote access platform. Our KS2 children receive **in-person reading support** during lunchtimes from dedicated city partners.

Writing

Writing is an integral part of our curriculum. All children from Foundation Stage to Y6 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across a book-led curriculum; we offer a reason and context for writing which enables children to write for purpose and audience. Writing builds from mark making and learning to hold a writing tool in EYFS; to drafting, editing and redrafting final proofs in Year 6.

From the book, children learn about the features of text genre, develop their grammar and punctuation knowledge and skills, plan and write an initial piece with a clear context and audience before evaluating the effectiveness of writing by editing and redrafting.

We use the Alan Peat approach to writing and this is firmly embedded in the teaching sequences.

THE WHOLE BOOK APPROACH TO ENGLISH

A typical unit of writing takes approximately 5 weeks and follows the teaching sequence below:

Immersion in the text type:

Children study an example(s) of a text type so that they can see what a good example looks like. They will pull this apart to understand the genre features and text level objectives (appropriate to their year group). This phase will involve opportunities to teach comprehension skills, vocabulary clarification and drama opportunities to explore the genre. A learning wall will be created for key learning from this stage.

Building towards a writing outcome:

Children are taught grammar and sentence level objectives in preparation for their final written outcome. Short writing opportunities (note taking, diary entries, character profiles etc.) allow children to 'have a go' with their' new learning'. Activities will be closely aligned with the studied text plot or content, depending on the genre.

Shared writing:

Children write their first piece of extended writing. This is scaffolded by modelling and shared writing.

The final written outcome:

The children now plan and write their own, independent piece of extended writing. Children have the opportunity to proof-read and edit / peer edit their writing to create a final edit for their writing portfolios.

At St. Luke's, we give opportunities for children to show their pride in their work by having a writing wall display in every class. At the end of each academic year, copies of the final edited drafts are collected and are presented in each child's individual writing portfolio, as evidence of their progression and writing journey.

Furthermore, children read, perform and display their written work to their parents and the rest of the school community in sharing assemblies. Examples of children's writing are also posted in the class pages on the school website or celebrated in weekly certificate assemblies.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Grammar and punctuation are taught within writing units following the National Curriculum expectations. The whole class reading book is referred to as a source of inspiration for the teaching of this element of English.

For spelling we follow the No Nonsense spelling scheme because it supports the National Curriculum expectations and provides suitable teaching sequences and guidance. The scheme is easy to adapt into the Whole Book Approach teaching sequence.

Handwriting

We follow the Nelson Handwriting scheme across the school and teach short 15-minute lessons weekly to enable children to form and join letters correctly.

WHAT TO EXPECT TO SEE IN AN ENGLISH LESSON

- Less direct whole class teaching and more of an emphasis on independent exploration and guided practice for grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Speaking and listening activities
- Word-banks and other writing resources readily available to aid children's understanding and learning
- More able children being challenged
- Teachers and TAs targeting any children who requires more support, both during the lesson and in intervention sessions
- Children's work will be marked in lessons where possible with adult support to correct misconceptions and next steps given to deepen and extend learning
- Self and Peer assessment: Children are also encouraged to take ownership of the marking process and identify next steps in their learning

WHAT TO EXPECT TO SEE IN ENGLISH EXERCISE BOOKS.

- Clear sequencing of learning of text type
- Evidence of new learning being applied in extended pieces of writing
- Clear evidence of progression and differentiation- more able children doing additional more challenging tasks
- Where children have received additional adult support or rapid interventions this will be clearly indicated
- Evidence of children self-assessing / peer assessing against objectives
- High presentation expectations
- Clear evidence of curriculum coverage.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessments are undertaken in line with our school assessment policy. Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what needs to be done to achieve the next steps. Group and individual targets are discussed and set accordingly.

Marking of work in English constitutes the school's formative assessment of pupils' work and should also be in accordance with the School Marking Policy.

Specific marking in writing should highlight and praise particular achievements and be followed by recommendations for the next steps needed to move the individual child forward where appropriate. Children are given focused time within the English lesson to read and act upon the teacher's marking. Marking should always be for the children and be manageable for the teacher. Self-Assessment and Peer marking is used when appropriate, so that children can identify and learn from, their own strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment of Reading and Writing is based on the objectives and expectations of the National Curriculum in England, KS1 and KS2 framework document. The objectives for each

year group are based on the statutory programmes of study and expectations in English and complement our whole school consistent approach to the teaching of English.

Consultations with parents and carers take place each term and an annual written report is given in the last term of the school year. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into school and actively encouraged to contact school should the need ever arise. Teachers also contact parents/carers to discuss the progress of a child and to celebrate achievement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher, members of the SLT team and The English Lead monitor English, via learning walks, planning scrutiny and book-looks. These are designed to support teaching staff and enhance individual practice and ensure a whole school approach. New members of staff are coached and mentored by experienced team members to ensure whole school consistency.

CURRICULUM OUTCOME

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils are able to read fluently and write effectively and with confidence in preparation for their next stage of learning at secondary school.

They will master the mechanics of both reading and writing and develop a passion for English and language to enable them to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions effectively.

Children will make, at least, good progress in Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening from their last point of statutory assessment. We intend that the outcome of our English curriculum will ensure our pupils are academically and emotionally well prepared for life beyond primary school and throughout their exciting educational journey. By the end of KS2, our pupils achieve above the Expected Standard (the statutory national expectations) in Reading, Writing, and GPS based on the National Curriculum in England, KS2 framework document 2014. We expect the number of pupils achieving at the higher score within the expected standard to be at least on par with the national picture, however, we strive for this figure to exceed.

We continuously monitor, record and act upon the outcome of our English curriculum by:

- Asking the children how they feel about English (pupil voice).
- Verbal feedback during the course of lessons
- Regular book looks which provide opportunities to discuss and develop activities.
- School cluster group moderation.
- Identify areas of CPD