

St. Michael's Catholic Primary School

English Policy

Updated November 2013
Subject leader for English: M. Fergusson

English Policy

In formulating and applying this policy, the Directors and Staff of our Catholic Academy seek to promote and implement in relevant ways the aims and intentions of the mission Statement, "Praise the Lord in Work, Play and Prayer," that has been agreed by the whole school community.

The new national curriculum in English unites the vital skills of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening and Drama. Confidence and competence in language use, both spoken and written, are critical to school success, underpinning independence. At St. Michael's we aim to offer high quality learning experiences where children can achieve their best and reach high standards in the core subject area of English and in their use of literacy across the curriculum.

Aims and Objectives

We seek to help all children to:

- Communicate with confidence and understanding in a variety of contexts and experience the language used in all major genres.
- Articulate their experiences and be ready to respond to stimuli (experiential writing)
- Achieve their best in an environment which is safe, secure and provides encouragement, support and challenge in literacy work
- Develop an interest and fascination with words, either spoken or as text (handwritten, printed and electronic) and the work of significant authors.
- Make reasoned choices and grow in independence as they communicate, read and write in a growing variety of modes and media.
- Be responsible in their use of language.

Every Child Matters

Through providing learning environments that are language-rich, stimulating, supportive, engaging, challenging and rewarding, we will also be playing a part in working towards the five outcomes for young people as outlined in "Every Child Matters" Each child should be:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Enjoying school and achieving well
- Becoming economically aware
- Contributing to the community

Inclusion

Furthermore, we are committed to the effective support of all our children, both individuals and specific groups (such as boys, ethnic minorities, gifted and talented etc). Effective planning for inclusion takes account of the appropriateness of the objectives; the teaching style to which children respond best; and the removal of any barriers to learning such as

providing for first language use by EAL learners or increasing the writing challenge for more able pupils.

Teaching and Learning

At St Michael's we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our Literacy lessons in order to meet the needs of all our pupils. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, understanding and independent learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2 we do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a range of reading or writing activities, a guided group or independent activity, and a whole-class session to review progress and learning.

In all classes children have a wide range of abilities and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and developmental stage of the child. Staff have high expectations that all children can achieve their full potential. Wherever possible there are Teaching Assistants working in class supporting all ability groups, specific individuals or groups of children, ensuring that work is matched to the needs of the child.

Speaking and listening activities are embedded throughout the Curriculum. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and individual word banks. Staff provide balanced and varied learning opportunities within the classroom. Children use ICT in Literacy lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the Curriculum.

We use a variety of contexts for learning as appropriate:

- Sets and class based groups
- Guided reading / writing groups
- Intervention for targeted children.
- Support for reading from parents.

Teaching approaches, whilst being referenced to the National Strategy, are developed by individuals to suit their own classes. The following generic strategies are seen as particularly effective:

- Sharing objectives, targets and outcomes
- Demonstration and modelling
- Explanation
- Questioning
- Discussion
- Taking roles, including "teacher in role"
- Encouraging review

Learners are most engaged when activities are:

- Interactive and interesting
- Appropriate and differentiated
- Planned with purpose and audience in mind
- Varied and tightly-timed and include opportunities for thinking and discussing
- Planned over a number of sessions, so that the issue/text is explored well
- Based around a whole text as well as extracts

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION

In the Foundation Stage language and literacy development are incorporated in all areas of learning. Opportunities are provided for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Purposeful role-play is used to develop spoken language and imagination. Children are given opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, songs, poetry and books.

An environment is provided which reflects the importance of written language through signs, notices and books. Children are provided with opportunities to see adults writing and they can experiment with writing themselves. Children receive daily phonic sessions.

To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in CLL we give particular attention to fostering positive relationships, providing an enabling environment and responding to the learning and development of all our individual children.

OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Directors determine, review and support learning in English – there is a link Director on the Curriculum Committee.

We believe that parents have a vital role to play in helping their children to progress in English. We seek support for English through home reading and literacy homework. We listen to parents and encourage them to work with us to support reading, writing and talking together. It is vital that we build on the growing recognition that support from home makes a dramatic difference to progress at school.

We seek the views of learners in reviews of units of work and class discussion.

PLANNING

Literacy is a core subject and as such we carry out the curriculum planning in Literacy in three phases (long-term, medium-term/short term). The National Curriculum details what we teach in the long-term.

Our medium-term/short term plans are adapted from the NC and give details of the main teaching objectives for each unit. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each unit covering a range of genres.

Weekly short term planning details the objectives and the differentiated activities, the target groups the pupils are in and include TA support, where appropriate. This is followed through with teacher assessment against the learning outcomes in the next steps.

We include regular Extended Writing sessions which cover different genres and allows children to re-visit writing objectives. This is levelled and time is built in for children to evaluate their work against their targets.

Guided reading occurs within the literacy sessions and is based on a rotation within the class. Children are grouped according to ability and when not reading the children are given a purposeful activity to do independently.

The school uses the 'Bug Club' reading scheme which enables children to interact with books on the computer at home and in school which are specifically targeted at their own academic level. Hard copies of every text are also available for anyone requiring them.

All teachers have high expectations in the presentation of work in all areas of the curriculum. Handwriting plays an important part in this.

When children have reached a good standard of handwriting in all areas of their work, they receive a handwriting pen license from their Phase Manager.

Planning is reviewed as part of the monitoring cycle by the Senior Management team and the subject leader.

MARKING, ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Marking is undertaken in accordance with the school policy. Teachers mark in depth at appropriate times and spend some time giving clear advice on how to move learning to the next level.

Assessment and tracking in writing is based on regular writing tasks which are marked against criteria for each level. Each child is tracked from the beginning of the academic year to the end. Reading is tracked during guided reading sessions and half termly assessments. Teacher assessments are also recorded at the end of each half term. These outcomes are matched to end-of-year SATs so that a full picture is gained of each individual learner.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS AND KEY ASPECTS OF LEARNING

Every opportunity to improve English across the subjects of the curriculum should be taken. History, Geography, RE and Science offer good opportunities to practise the range of text types described in the literacy strategy. Planned talk activities should also be included in planning the foundation subjects. From time to time planning will be monitored to audit how far literacy skills are being encouraged across the subject boundaries. Key Aspects of Learning are defined in "Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and Teaching in the Primary Years" We encourage creative thinking, working with others, problem solving and enquiry because they develop confidence in handling language precisely.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RACE EQUALITY

See school policies – we are committed to inclusion and equality and we seek to demonstrate this in our approaches and responses in Literacy. There are clear support mechanisms to enlist help for our newly – arrived children who are learning English. It is the class teacher’s responsibility to tailor the curriculum and challenge and support EAL pupils to achieve their full potential.

ICT

The use of information and communication technology, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of Literacy at word, sentence and text level. ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of a word processor permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. Groups can work at a computer and input text. A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills. Lessons can focus on what pupils have achieved using ICT, or ICT can provide the means of presenting their outcomes (via multimedia presentation). A range of equipment such as digital cameras and digital camcorders are used to promote speaking and listening and also prepare children for writing experiences. The Interactive Whiteboard is used regularly to model writing and use at an independent level and allows children to interact and engage with the writing process.

Resources

There is a wide range of resources to support the teaching of Literacy across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and Y2 – 6 have thesauruses. Each classroom has sets of textbooks appropriate to their year group. All year groups have access to the Pen Pals handwriting scheme and the Searchlight spelling scheme. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts as well as the Story Spinners CDs. Access to the Internet is also available in the classroom. There is a range of ICT equipment which can be used e.g. digital cameras and laptops. The library contains a range of books to support children’s individual research.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher, SMT and Governing Body

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching

Literacy Manager

- To have an impact on raising standards of attainment for Literacy across the whole school.
- To monitor the whole school and individual needs to be able to assess individual professional development opportunities and needs.
- To maintain the availability of high quality resources.
- To maintain an overview of current trends and developments within the subject.
- To ensure, together with the Head Teacher, an effective programme of lesson observation monitoring.
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of children's work sample monitoring is in place.
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of short-term planning is in place.
- To ensure there is regular reviewing and monitoring of targets.
- To effectively manage any funding designated to Literacy.

Class Teachers

- Ensure the effective implementation of the Curriculum for English.
- Adapt and use the National Curriculum for Literacy across the whole school that meets the needs of our children
- Make effective use of Assessment for learning within Literacy.
- To ensure work is differentiated to enable all children to reach their full potential.

Teaching Assistants

To support the class teacher in the effective implementation of Literacy.

Parents / Carers

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings to discuss children's progress
- sending an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can develop their learning
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework
- support their child by hearing them read daily and encouraging them to use the 'Bug Club' resources at home.

Review

Policy Reviewed :

November 2013 By Mrs M Fergusson

Shared with Governors:

Date for next review: November 2014