St John’s Upper Holloway CE Primary School

English policy

September 2019
English Policy
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Our Vision
*Jesus said: ‘Love each other as I have loved you’. John 15:12*
As we are loved, so we shall love.
As we are taught, so we shall teach.
As we are nurtured, so we shall flourish.

Our Mission
St John’s is a small, caring Church of England Primary School. It is committed to supporting our pupils to be happy, successful and fulfilled throughout their lives. We believe that everyone is unique and valued by God. We aspire to be a high achieving school that provides an outstanding education:
- promoting the highest standards of teaching and learning, with excellent leadership
- being inclusive, celebrating diversity and valuing all religions, faiths, cultures and backgrounds
- providing a rich and stimulating curriculum that will inspire and challenge
- being a happy, healthy and safe place
- providing excellent care, guidance and support with a strong partnership between school, parents and the community.

We seek to promote six Christian values of creativity, thankfulness, truthfulness, friendship, perseverance and courage, each linked by our core value of love. We believe these help to prepare our children for a successful and fulfilling life, so being:
- considerate and respectful with excellent manners
- confident, happy, independent and self-motivated
- co-operative and collaborative
- honest and trustworthy
- resilient, hardworking and determined
- highly principled with moral, spiritual, cultural and social awareness, including shared British Values.
Literacy Vision.
As a school we believe that staff should display a passion for all areas of the English curriculum so that children will also be enthusiastic about the subject. Children will be taught that literacy skills are for lifelong learning. They should be given the opportunity to apply their skills to real life situations as much as possible. All children should be taught to age related expectations and above. Staff should plan using the texts from the Literacy curriculum maps which have been planned with the children’s engagement and interests in mind. Literacy lessons should be vibrant, interactive and include practical aspects of the subject including speaking and listening, spelling and grammar activities and starters and drama opportunities. Presentation of work should be to a high standard and display work should ‘show off’ good examples for the individual pupil. Equal coverage should be given to all genres and children should be given plenty of choice on what to read and write throughout the school year. Personal preferences should be acknowledged and engagement should be at the forefront of all teaching in this subject. Celebrations in this subject should be shared with the whole school.

1 Aims and objectives of English policy

1.1 The study of English develops children’s abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It 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 use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

1.2 The aims of English are:

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- To develop in pupils, a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives;
- To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop children’s understanding and enjoyment of texts;
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences;
- To give pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing;
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

2 Teaching and learning style

Planning – Learning and Teaching Strategies

2.1 At St. John’s School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum. Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National
Curriculum for literacy. Teachers plan in modules towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading and other shorter writing tasks. As much as possible, writing is linked to the termly class topic and therefore the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting (shared/modelled/guided reading and writing) and within some ability led guided reading and writing groups of approximately six children. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on individualised issues which are particular to that group of children. Teachers are also expected to plan time within certain writing lessons for children to reflect on their marked work, and independently respond to teacher prompts to improve their writing. The curriculum overviews should be consulted for further details of what is to be covered.

2.2 There are children of differing ability in all classes at St. John’s School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals. As a result of in depth assessment some children are selected to work in groups or individually on intervention programmes. These programmes, such as Literacy Catch Up and Toe by Toe, give these children extra tuition and input.

3 English curriculum planning

3.1 New curriculum maps for each year group have been developed with a Literacy consultant from Hackney and staff have all texts. The Literacy Lead is currently (Sept 2019) updating curriculum maps to reflect new topics and include assessment foci for writing. The overviews cover a range of genres relevant to each year group’s current topic/s and deliver the curriculum in a stimulating and structured way. The overviews are used to support the writing and delivery of medium and weekly planning formats. Each week we plan daily lessons which support a specified written outcome at the end of the week as part of the children’s extended writing.

3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The new curriculum maps show the yearly teaching programme and identifies key outcomes.

3.3 Our medium-term plans, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.

3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This covers both guided reading or Destination Reader sessions, which take place every day, and English lessons. It lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be
learning. The class teacher evaluates the progress of individuals and groups. This assessment informs all future planning.

At St John’s the main areas of literacy should look like this:

**3.6 Reading**

A reading document has been created to ensure consistency in teaching reading across the school (Appendix 1)

Inside the classroom:
Structured early learning program – The teaching of early reading skills begins in the nursery. Children are taught during shared and guided group sessions using structured and repetitive ‘big books’ and guided reading texts.

As they progress into Key Stage 1, children use a banded reading scheme to develop decoding and comprehension skills. Guided reading in ability groups takes place every day and children have the opportunity to read with an adult at least twice per week. Some children continue to require a highly structured approach to ensure they progress as readers. For these children, daily one to one sessions with teaching assistants focus on reinforcing basic skills.

By KS2, the children are developing specific reading skills and strategies as well as reading for pleasure, studying authors and selecting their own books.

All children, in KS2 will follow the Destination Reader approach. Children will have a daily shared reading session, in which, the teacher explicitly models the skills and strategies of a good reader.

The approach involves daily sessions incorporating whole class modelling, prior to the children applying these skills through partner work and independent reading. Children deepen their understanding of the texts they read through the systematic use of a series of strategies and language stems.

Children use the DR resources to support their language and comprehension skills.

During one DR session per week (the ‘Big Picture’) children are explicitly taught comprehension skills which they then apply to seen or unseen texts.

The aim of using the DR approach, is that children will develop the skills and enthusiasm of a good reader. This in turn will support them in all areas of the curriculum. They will be exposed to a wide variety of high quality texts and in turn, develop their own preferences and be able to talk with confidence about them.

In all classroom children are taught these comprehension skills as well as encouraged to read for fun. They do this through:

- Storytelling and re-enacting stories;
Daily guided reading sessions for all children;
Reading for a real purpose;
Buddy reading;
Reading across the curriculum;
Author studies;
Reading/writing weeks;
A dedicated library area in each classroom;
Regular library visits;
Teachers read a new class novel every half term or term;
Lots of talk and discussion about reading, books, genres and authors in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal;
Creating a language rich environment;
Reading for fun!
Children are also expected to read every night at home, writing in their reading records to share ideas about books and to keep a record of what they are reading.
3.7 Writing

At St John’s we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers we encourage children to fulfil their creativity whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically.

- Writing takes place within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum;
- We select stimulating and engaging texts for children to respond to in writing;
- Extended writing is encouraged and developed weekly;
- We establish a real purpose for writing from the outset;
- We provide stimulating first hand experiences beyond the reading model;
- We teach writing as a sequenced activity;
- We provide regular helpful feedback;
- We provide opportunities for the children to re-draft and publish their work for an audience.

There are guidelines for writing which all teachers are expected/encouraged to follow. They are as follows:

In order to raise standards, it is vital that we have a consistent approach to writing at St John’s Upper Holloway. Therefore we...

- Use exciting stimuli to hook children in from EYFS to Year 6 (Alan Peat games, engaging texts, story maps, story bags etc).
- Challenge children through short burst writing games.
- Model and incorporate new vocabulary into all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Celebration boards will show examples of children’s writing.
- In KS2 children will have a zero input lesson at the start of a new genre.
- At the start of each writing topic and where needed, teachers will model writing, shared writing, group writing and paired writing.
- KS2 children will have done an extended piece of writing in extended writing books each week.
- Steps to success will be developed by the whole class in KS2. In KS1 they will be given and discussed.
- Children can assess against class success criteria after a piece of extended / independent writing.
- Extended writing will be assessed and levelled every half term in KS2 using writing assessment grids.
- Writing genre sheets that are on the shared drive will be displayed and shared when covering that genre.
- Have a consistent approach to what we call things such as conjunctions.
- Use appropriate oral differentiation when explaining words such as adverbs of manner. (Use
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- ‘ly’ words or ‘words like quickly or happily’.
- KPI checklists need to be stuck in books (KS2)- these will inform teachers and children of their targets.

AFL
- Each child will do at least one next step / gap task a week- children’s gap tasks should be completed in blue pen.
- Children’s success criteria will include grammar exercises (the sentence will depend on your focus and your group of children).
- Children will peer and self-assess using agreed proformas in KS2. In KS1 children are guided through self-assessments using an agreed proforma.

Presentation
- In KS2 children will write the long date.
- Children miss a line between L/O and work.
- Children should not use rubbers but put a line through mistakes.
- Children should use handwriting pens when teachers feel that they are ready to do so.
- In KS2 children should start speech on a new line and a new paragraph on a new line. It does not need to be indented.
- EYFS and KS1 use green pencils to edit work and add punctuation.

3.8 Grammar
- Throughout the school, there is a focus on the mastery of grammar for effective spoken and written expression.
- Grammar is taught explicitly at the appropriate level and referenced implicitly in English lessons from Key Stage One onwards.
- A range of teaching approaches is used to help children understand and apply grammatical terms.
- Teachers follow the national curriculum for grammar as set out in the English overview for their year group.

3.9 Spelling
- Key Stage One pupils work are encouraged to ‘have a go’ in their first drafts and refer to class word banks when writing;
- Children practise spelling corrections in their literacy books as part of their response to marked work. We link handwriting to common spelling patterns;
- Children learn to spell explicitly in weekly spelling lesson, using the ‘No Nonsense’ spelling programme.
- They practice their spelling in their spelling journals
- From Year One, children are actively encouraged and taught to proof read their writing for spelling errors;
3.10 Handwriting

- In the early years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills.
- We use the Nelson Handwriting scheme as the basis for our teaching, which links handwriting to common spelling patterns.
- We take the view that handwriting should be taught little and often – at least 3 X 15 minutes in Key Stage One and 2 X 15 minutes every week in Key Stage Two;

4 The Foundation Stage

4.1 Communication, Language and Literacy Development is an integral part of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children in Reception and Nursery follow the Development Matters and Early Learning goals using the Letters and Sounds programme, supported by resources from Floppy’s Phonics. Children have daily phonics sessions and experiences of a variety of texts. A love of books is fostered through story telling and book handling. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, both with adults and to their peers, to listen carefully and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary.

5 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children’s skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

5.2 Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

5.3 Computing

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

5.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. They...
discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other’s views.

5.5 **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

6 **Teaching English to children with special needs**

6.1 At St. John’s School we teach English to all children, adapting our teaching and resources to suit their personal needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children and groups in their Pupil Passports and provision maps. Teachers provide help with communication and English through:

- effectively differentiating/making accessible all lessons to meet the needs and abilities of all children
- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;

7 **Assessment and recording (See Assessment Policy)**

7.1 Teachers assess children’s work in English in a variety of ways. The short-term formative assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans so that children can make progress. Assessment for learning (AFL) enhances children’s learning. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. They use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key performance indicators and objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. The school has introduced clear assessment sheets for reading and writing and plans regular moderation sessions to validate judgements. Teachers make long-term summative assessments at the end of each term and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. These are recorded on a termly tracking sheet. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the leadership team and the child’s parents or carers. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-term tests and teacher assessments. If children are under-achieving various intervention programmes such as Literacy Catch Up or Five Minute Box are utilized. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, plus summative assessment tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5.
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8 Resources

8.1 Each classroom has a range of resources to support the teaching of English according to national requirements and the children’s needs. These include:

- Phonics word mats (as appropriate)
- Statutory word lists
- Dictionaries and Thesaurus
- Reading areas - containing a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts
- A range of banded reading books for independent reading
- Topic books (with additional books and resources from Islington Library Services)
- Internet access through the school laptops
- A range of phonics resources

8.2 There is a central storage area which contains guided reading books. Oxford Reading Tree and Rigby Star books for Key Stage 1 and Rigby Navigator books for Key Stage 2. The phonics resources are resources created by Anne Smallburger phonics.

8.3 The Library has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in different genres and appropriate for all ages. These are available to support children’s individual reading and research.

9 Pupil targets

9.1 Teachers use objectives from the curriculum objective sheets (TAF) for writing. These are used to ensure curriculum coverage of all objectives. Long writing is marked in detail with next step targets which outline what each child needs to focus on next to improve their writing. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own next steps and are given regular opportunities to make progress towards them.

9.2 DR in KS2 will use weekly Big Picture lessons to assess children’s comprehension skills and written responses to texts. They will be based on test style questions to prepare children for a range of question types.

9.3 Reading targets/next steps are to be shared with children based on ‘gaps’ in their reading skills as evidenced during guided reading sessions as well as reading tests.

10 Monitoring and review

10.1 Monitoring of the standards of the children’s work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader meets with the head teacher to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicate areas for further improvement. The named governor responsible for English meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.
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Approved by staff _________________ (head) on __________

Approved by governors _________________ (chair of C&S committee) on __________
Appendix 1

Reading at St John’s Upper Holloway

Our vision for reading:

Developing a love of books and reading is at the heart of our curriculum. At St John’s we believe that reading opens doors for children - improving their language and vocabulary, stimulating imagination and giving them the opportunity to gain new experiences. By teaching every child a range of strategies, we aim to create passionate, lifelong readers who are skilled, confident and independent. We aim to create a reading community where children and staff read, discuss and share books enthusiastically.

EYFS

Daily phonics session (20 min in Reception / 15 min in Nursery)
- Phonics taught in accordance with the Phonics Policy and Phonics Overview
- Teachers follow the Anne Smallberger /Tower Hamlets scheme of work and use ‘teaching scripts’ provided in the phonics overview (P:/curriculum/English/Phonics/overview & lesson plans)
- Resources for each phase stored in the Therapy Room.
- Daily interventions as necessary.
- Further resources (including videos of lessons) available at: www.whatever-it-takes.org.uk/ktc, password: phonics123, video password: SDSA

Daily guided reading session (15min)
- Led by Teaching Assistant.
- One group per day (every child reads 1x per week)
- Clear objective / focus for each session.
- Children involved in self assessment against the objective after every session.
- Class Teacher reads with each child individually once per week and makes notes in yellow reading records.
- Core text focus every week.
- EYFS children use the school library every Friday morning with their parents.

Home Reading
- Books sent home according to ability with clear instructions for parents.
KS1

Year 1
Daily phonics session (20 min)
- Phonics taught in accordance with the *Phonics Policy* and *Phonics Overview* (attached)
- Teachers follow the Anne Smallberger / Tower Hamlets scheme of work and use ‘teaching scripts’ provided in the phonics overview (P:/curriculum/English/Phonics/overview & lesson plans)
- Resources for each phase stored in the Therapy Room.
- Daily interventions as necessary.
- Further resources (including videos of lessons) available at: www.whatever-it-takes.org.uk/ktc, password: phonics123, video password: SDSA

Daily guided reading session (25 min)
- **Planning:** Weekly plan includes objectives and activities for each session (P:/Planning/Year Group Planning 2018-19/Planning proformas)
- Children sit in reading ability groups.
- Each child reads with the teacher and the teaching assistant every week.
- Adults record notes on individual reading tracking sheets (linked to reading objectives).
- Children who are not reading with an adult, read their book independently (some groups using the ‘question’ dice as a focus), carry out an activity related to the book (recorded in guided reading exercise books), or a high frequency word reading activity. These are differentiated accordingly.

Home Reading
- Children choose books from the book band they are reading at.
- Books recorded in yellow reading records along with comments from parents.
- Reading records checked daily by TA and marked off in register.

Year 2
Daily phonics session (20 min)
- Phase 5 revision as necessary during Autumn 1 following Anne Smallberger scheme (see above – year 1)
- Daily interventions for children who have not reached Phase 5.
- Phase 6 taught using the *No Nonsense Spelling* scheme.
Daily guided reading session (25 min)

- **Planning**: Weekly plan includes objectives and activities for each session (P:Planning/Year Group Planning 2018-19/Planning proformas)
- Children sit in reading ability groups.
- Each child reads with the teacher and the teaching assistant every week.
- Adults record notes on individual reading tracking sheets (linked to reading objectives).
- Groups who are not reading with an adult carry out a focused activity (comprehension) or read independently, using the key skill introduced in the shared session.
- Recorded work kept in group folder with a sleeve for each child and marked according to the school marking policy.

Home Reading

- Children choose books from the book band they are reading at.
- Books recorded in yellow reading records along with comments from parents.
- Reading records checked daily by teacher or teaching assistant and notes sent home with children who are not reading or bringing in reading record.
KS2

Year 3

Daily Reading sessions (45 min)
Autumn Term (until all children are at the correct level) Reading taught through Destination Reader as follows:

- **Monday & Tuesday** – Whole class session (15 min), reading in mixed ability pairs (25 min)
- **Wednesday, Thursday, Friday** – Whole class session (15 min), followed by a guided reading in groups, teacher and teaching assistant to read with each group
- **Friday** – Big Picture session (whole class taught comprehension in which specific skills are introduced and reinforced, children practise using specific question types).

After Autumn Term or when all children at the required level, reading as for Years 4 and 5 (see below).

Planning
- Guided reading is planned on Literacy plan (additional box)

Years 4 & 5

Daily Reading sessions (45 min)
Reading taught through Destination Reader as follows:

- **Monday & Tuesday** – Whole class session (15 min), reading in mixed ability pairs (25 min)
- **Wednesday & Thursday** – Whole class session (15 min), reading in ability groups (Teacher and Teaching Assistant each work with a group, focusing on the reading strategy being focused on and the reading objectives for that year group, comments recorded on individual tracking sheets).
- **Friday** – Big Picture session (whole class taught comprehension in which specific skills are introduced and reinforced, children practise using specific question types).

Planning
- Reading planned half-termly using the Destination Reader Half-Termly Planner (P:Curriculum/English/Reading 2018-19/Planning Proformas). Teachers to specify the reading strategy to be taught each week and the text to be used.

Year 6

Daily Reading sessions (45 min)
Reading taught through *Destination Reader* as above, but mixed strategies and two ‘Big Picture’ sessions per week (one seen text, one unseen).

Extra reading time fitted in where possible and Teacher and Teaching Assistant focus on specific children.

**Planning**
- Reading planned using the Literacy Medium Term plan.

**Home Reading KS2**
- Children select their books (checked by an adult if necessary).
- Children record own comments in yellow reading records (using the Destination Reader stems in the front).
- Reading records should be checked weekly by the teacher and children who are not bringing them in followed up.