

# ENGLISH POLICY

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## Christ Church C of E Primary School

### English Policy

Date of policy: March 2018

Review date: March 2020

### **Mission Statement**

**The Christian Faith is at the heart of our school community. At Christ Church we care for each other and learn together.**

Christ Church is a small, caring school which is committed to a broad, balanced curriculum and to a continual raising of standards. We aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical needs of every individual.

We are a Church of England school, with a strong commitment to the teaching of Christianity whilst supporting a multi-faith approach to the curriculum. We recognise, value and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that exists in our school.

The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in our positive, disciplined and calm atmosphere. We believe that effective learning takes place when children work in a purposeful and stimulating environment that supports a wide range of learning styles. Mutual respect between adults and children promotes excellent behaviour and well developed social skills. With this approach we seek to achieve high academic standards.

We aim to cater for each individual, taking particular account of any specific needs or abilities. We endeavour to ensure that all our children fulfil their potential and, within this context, we emphasise health and safety, enjoyment and achievement and the beginnings of responsibility for themselves and others. These skills will be carried forward to the next phase of education and throughout life.

The whole school community is committed to a collective responsibility for the implementation of the values inherent in this statement.

# **Our School Aims - Every Child Matters**

## **The Ethos of the School**

The school aims to provide a positive, disciplined, purposeful environment, within a Christian context. We aim to teach children to be caring, to exhibit good behaviour and appropriate social skills and to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

## **The Values of the School**

The School aims to value every child and to contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical well being of our whole school community. We value the diversity of our community and we aim to promote the health and safety of everyone.

## **The Standards of the School**

The School aims to teach a balanced Curriculum and to ensure that each child fulfils his or her potential. We aim to provide teaching and learning of a high standard. We believe that this is achieved when pupils are highly motivated, enjoy coming to school, and are appropriately challenged.

## Introduction

- This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and teaching strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Christ Church Primary School.
- This policy needs to be read in conjunction with:
  - *The 2014 National Curriculum*
  - *Letters and Sounds*
  - SEN policy
  - Teaching and Learning policy
  - Marking policy
  - Assessment policy
- This policy will be submitted to the Governing Body. Review of the policy will take place once every two years.

## Rationale and Equal Opportunities

Our purposes in developing a written policy for English are:

- To raise the standards of teaching and learning of English throughout the school.
- To enable us to have a unified and consistent approach to the teaching of English throughout the school.
- To help teachers in planning and implementing activities for the children appropriate to their stage of development throughout the school.
- To provide a framework for monitoring, evaluating and targeting children's progress in English and for developing, reviewing and revising our work as a staff.
- To have a joint statement and explanation of our policy available for parents, governors and teachers.

## **Aims and Objectives for the Teaching and Learning of English taken from 2014 National Curriculum**

### **Language and literacy**

The primary aim is to develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects and therefore to enhanced outcomes in life.

### **Spoken language**

Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to:

Justify ideas with reasons

Ask questions to check understanding

Develop vocabulary and build knowledge

Negotiate

Evaluate and build on the ideas of others

Select the appropriate register for effective communication.

They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

### **Reading and writing**

To read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure.

To develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

To understand the correct use of grammar.

Writing should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.

## **Vocabulary development**

To increase pupils' store of words

To make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words.

In this way, pupils expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write. In addition, it is vital for pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects.

## **Teaching and Learning Strategies and Planning**

Children's knowledge, understanding and skills are developed through daily English lessons. At Christ Church we plan our programme of work in line with the 2014 National Curriculum for English (See Appendix programmes of study on school website)

The KS1 and KS2 curriculum is organised into three main blocks: narrative, non-fiction and poetry. These blocks are further divided into suggested units of learning and teaching. These units may run from one week to four weeks, depending on the complexity of the teaching objectives. In general, a unit will be planned over two to three weeks, during which a balance of reading and writing opportunities will be provided. During this period, related spelling and grammar objectives will also be covered. The unit will conclude with the publishing of a piece of work matched to the overall intended outcome; a complete traditional story, a class anthology of humorous verse, a non-chronological report linked to another curriculum area topic etc.

A typical unit will follow the teaching sequence outlined below:

- 1) Exposure to text and familiarity with features
- 2) Exploration through short reading and writing tasks
- 3) Longer piece of writing matched to genre and grammar objectives. This will include time for modelled, shared, guided and independent writing.

In addition to work on a specific genre children participate in an extended writing lesson once a week- see writing section of this policy.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting (shared/modelled reading and writing) and within ability lead guided reading and writing groups. Children also work independently, with a partner, or with their whole group on set tasks. Learning is also consolidated in other curriculum lessons as well as through story time and additional independent reading time.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

In the EYFS, overall teaching and learning objectives are drawn from the Communication, Language and Literacy section of the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Practitioners support children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write. They also provide opportunities for children to gain confidence. They support and encourage them to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of

purposes. Children in the EYFS are given a vast array of opportunities to 'mark make' both in their indoor and outdoor environments. The teaching of early reading and writing skills and understanding is further supported by guidance from the DfES Letters and Sounds document.

## **Inclusion**

We aim to include all children in English lessons, regardless of ability and individual needs. We provide opportunities for all children to make good progress through a differentiated approach to learning. Our lessons aim to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), those with Gifts and Talents (G&T), and those with English as an additional language (EAL). This includes planning for differentiated activities and additional adult support. Interventions for SEN children are put in place to target their individual needs at School Action level, such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), or at School Action Plus, where support is provided by outside agencies, e.g. Language and Communication services. Intervention programmes include: Toe by Toe (phonics); Phonics Box; Project Code X (reading); one-to-one tuition. EAL children will be catered for through a range of strategies, including the use of visual cues and resources, dual language texts and targeted group work led by the EMA teaching assistant. We aim to utilise a range of resources in our English sessions which reflect the cultural diversity of our school community.



# The English Curriculum

## Spoken Language

Pupils are taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

At Christ Church we plan a range of opportunities for children to develop these skills, not only in English sessions, but across the curriculum. These activities include:

- **Listening** to, and joining in with, stories, poems, rhymes and songs.
- **Rehearsing, role-playing** and **re-telling** what they have listened to or read
- Use of **talk partners** for **discussion** during whole-class sessions
- **Exploring text types** through discussion as a whole-class, in small groups or in pairs
- **Collaborative group work** in order to complete an individual task or small project
- Opportunities for **debate**, including the School Council forum
- Individual or group **presentations** of tasks completed, including class assemblies and performances.
- Encouraging the children to **ask and answer questions** about what they are learning

- Planning discussions where children can **express their views and opinions**
- Recital of well-known poems in class or assembly.
- Adults seek to model good speaking and listening skills for the children and their grammatical errors are corrected.

## Reading

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners.

Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech.

At Christ Church we aim to develop children's reading skills whilst fostering an ethos of reading for enjoyment. We provide ample opportunities for children to explore, evaluate and enjoy different text types, thus developing the skills of confident, fluent and critical readers. These opportunities include:

- **Story time sessions** involving the sharing of whole texts on a daily basis
- **A structured early reading programme**, developing reading skills through the use of **shared and guided reading sessions** using big books, online texts and guided reading scheme texts. These sessions are further supported by daily, ability-grouped, sessions focusing on the development of **phonic skills**, guided by the DfES Letters and Sounds document (YN to Y2)
- **Independent reading**- We expect and encourage the children to read at home. Parent reading workshops are held in all classes, to provide opportunities for parents to learn about how we teach reading and how they

can support their child's reading development. Each child is provided with a reading record book and parents are encouraged to write in it regularly. In EYFS/KS1 appropriate book banded texts are selected for children to take home and read to their parents in order to help them develop independent reading strategies. These texts are then shared with the class teaching assistant and changed regularly. Children are also encouraged to choose a story book from the class library to share and enjoy with their parents. As children's reading skills develop in KS2, children move onto selecting their own short novels from the class library to read at home and discuss with their parents. These are also shared regularly with the class teaching assistant, to assess progress, and can be changed independently once completed.

- **Reading ages-** These are sent home twice a year to enable parents to keep abreast of their child's current reading levels and to support us in working collaboratively in order to improve their reading further.
- **Exploring texts-** A variety of activities are used during daily literacy sessions to support the children in learning the features of text types and enhancing their abilities to infer and deduce. Regular modelling of good reading practice takes place during whole class and guided reading sessions. Other activities include discussion, questioning, re-telling, role-play, hot-seating and drama.
- **Reading for a purpose-** Regular planned opportunities are provided across the curriculum for children to develop their research skills. These can be linked to whole class topics and conclude with a written task e.g. non-chronological report. Texts can be presented through a variety of media including web based texts and film extracts.
- **Sharing texts in different settings-** In addition to planned opportunities in literacy and other curriculum area sessions, reading skills are also developed during the following activities:
  - ✓ Independent reading with an adult
  - ✓ Paired reading with a peer
  - ✓ Volunteer reading sessions
  - ✓ Reading club
  - ✓ Silent reading time (including use of iPads and Kindles for reading).

## Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Children are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

At Christ Church we aim to create an environment which stimulates writing and allows children the opportunity to apply what they have taken from reading. We teach writing skills explicitly during literacy sessions in order to support the children in becoming confident and effective writers. We also provide numerous opportunities across the curriculum for children to write for a range of purposes.

The teaching of writing involves:

- **EYFS**- Children are involved in a range of independent and adult-led **mark making** activities linked to a variety of topics and purposes. Children learn in a stimulating and print-rich environment and a focus on **language development** becomes the first step towards 'talk for writing'.
- **Teaching sequence for writing**- KS1 and KS2 teachers plan a literacy unit to run over 2/3 weeks during which children build up the knowledge and skills needed to complete the main writing objective. Each unit follows the sequence outlined below-
  - ✓ Reading texts matched to genre
  - ✓ Re-reading, analysing and investigating text aspects
  - ✓ Teacher demonstration; modelled, shared, guided and independent writing
  - ✓ Editing, publishing and review

The purpose and audience for each writing outcome is made explicit and links are made with first-hand experiences or other topic areas.

- **Creative/extended writing-** In addition to the overall writing outcome for each unit, teachers plan weekly extended writing activities. These sessions are used to encourage the children to write independently for extended periods of time, applying the skills they have learnt during previous reading and writing skill sessions. Focus is placed on improving vocabulary and punctuation and on individual writing targets. As with all writing activities, the children write with a specific purpose and audience in mind.
- **Competitions/visits/themed weeks-** Where possible we encourage children to enter writing competitions and we seek to take advantage of external opportunities that arise e.g. author visits. We also regularly hold themed writing weeks where the whole school is given a stimulus for writing, in order to raise its profile. Celebration assemblies are held.
- **Writing areas-** Each class is equipped with a writing area to provide children with opportunities for rehearsal and extension. These areas are themed in order to provide cross-curricular links with other topic areas.
- **Feedback-** Children receive regular and purposeful feedback about their writing, following the school's marking policy. Examples of writing which have met the learning intention or child's writing target (see section on Assessment) are highlighted and an area for development is identified, followed by prompts for improvement. Children are taught how to edit and improve their own work and given opportunities to 'up-level' their work during extended writing sessions.

## Spelling and Grammar

At Christ Church we understand that it is not enough for pupils to learn and know how to spell words out of context. They need to transfer their knowledge successfully to their independent writing. We encourage our children to do this by:

- Developing their **phonic knowledge** and strategies in EYFS and KS1. Children are encouraged to independently apply this knowledge to their reading and writing.
- Providing a print-rich environment, including **word banks**, for children to refer to during writing activities.
- **Explicitly teaching spelling patterns and conventions** using a range of activities and resources. Children are encouraged to review and edit their work with these in mind.
- Setting regular weekly **spelling homework**, targeting individual/group needs. Children are taught to use the 'look, cover, write, check method' to learn and practise their spellings. Spelling lists include topic relevant vocabulary.

- Grammar is taught through explicit sections of English lessons, or through discrete lessons. Teachers use the 2014 National Curriculum Grammar Appendix to create lessons based on the relevant objectives.
- Children are taught specific grammatical terms and they are assessed on their use of correct grammar as part of their English assessment.

## Handwriting

At Christ Church we aim for our children to develop the skills needed to write fluently and legibly. We do this through the following activities:

- In the **EYFS** the emphasis is placed on the development of **fine motor skills** in preparation for writing. A variety of activities and resources are used to support the children in developing the control needed to use writing tools. Adult modelling of correct letter formation is provided during purposeful activities, such as name writing.
- The **Nelson scheme** for handwriting is used to develop handwriting skills throughout KS1 and KS2. In KS1 handwriting skills are taught explicitly three times a week. Handwriting sessions take place three times a week in KS2. These sessions are short and focused on specific **handwriting patterns**. Formations are modelled and practised using a variety of techniques such as 'writing in the air' or tracing, and then recorded independently on worksheets or in handwriting books. Letter formations used support the children in developing a legible, **joined handwriting style** by the end of Year 3. Children are encouraged to apply their handwriting skills across the curriculum.
- Children write in pencil until Year 4. After this children are encouraged to work towards gaining their 'pen licence'. These are granted to children who demonstrate clear and fluent writing.

## Assessment and Monitoring

(See also Assessment policy)

At Christ Church, English is assessed regularly, both formally and informally, and individual progress is tracked. Formal assessment includes:

- **Termly assessment** of reading and writing using tests based on the 2014 National Curriculum
- **Annual target setting** based on school assessment system
- Setting of **writing targets** based on individual/group needs- Children have a record of their writing target at the back of their literacy books for easy reference. Teachers set regular writing activities to assess children's progress against their target and mark accordingly. Each time a child achieves their target in a piece of writing they record this on their target sheet (see Appendix). Targets are reviewed termly and new targets are set.
- Twice yearly- monitoring of **reading ages** using the NFER reading age test. The information obtained is sent home to parents via a letter, including previous reading age obtained and difference between reading age and chronological age.
- In KS1 reading is also assessed through the PM Benchmark running records test. This assesses children's individual miscues when they are reading, in order to provide clear, next steps.
- **Pupil progress reviews** allow us to identify pupils who are a cause for concern. In such cases appropriate intervention is identified and effectiveness monitored.

## Policy Monitoring and Review

The English Subject Leader is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The impact of this policy on the practice of the school is monitored and reviewed in light of findings. The governing body will review this policy and consider any amendments in light of review findings.

## **Appendices and web links**

Whole School English Curriculum map: [www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk](http://www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk)

Assessment Policy: [www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk](http://www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk)

Spelling year group word lists: [www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk](http://www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk)

Reading list: [www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk](http://www.cchurchnw1.camden.sch.uk)

Letters and Sounds:

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190599/Letters\\_and\\_Sounds\\_-\\_DFES-00281-2007.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf))

National Curriculum 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>