



St Stephens' Tockholes Church of England Primary School, Blackburn

ENGLISH POLICY

Checked by: Curriculum Committee

Our Christian Vision

As a small yet unique part of God's Big family, we will inspire and nurture all to become the very best they can be. Opening up the world, we will celebrate our Father's (God's) wondrous, diverse creation. We will all live, love, laugh and learn in the light of Christ.

'I can do all things/ through Christ who strengthens me' Philippians 4: 13

Hope

To create a community where hope is firmly rooted in the fullness of God, where each individual can fulfil their true potential.

Forgiveness

To encourage respect, understanding for and forgiveness of each other.

Compassion

To inspire children to show compassion for others within school and in local and global communities.

Community

To strengthen links with the local community and Church.

To develop an inclusive community where all are included and all are valued.

Friendship

To equip children to develop socially and emotionally; having due regard for other peoples' feeling and situations. Developing empathy, resilience and self-confidence.

Humility

To inspire empathy and compassion, putting the needs of others before themselves.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning of English at St Stephen's, Tockholes school. It was developed by the subject leaders.

INTENT

English involves the ability to communicate: speak, listen, read and write. However, it is also the capacity to recognise, reproduce and manipulate the conventions of a range of texts. English is important because it enables children to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure, and to communicate effectively.

At St Stephen's, Tockholes we follow the national curriculum programs of study for Key Stage One and Two. English underpins the school curriculum by developing children's abilities to speak, listen and communicate; to think, explore and organise. This includes helping children to express themselves orally and in writing. All staff have a crucial role to play in supporting children's English development. St Stephen's School is committed to raising the standards of English of all of its children, so that they develop the ability to use English skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum and use it as a platform to cope confidently with the demands of further education, employment and adult life.

IMPLEMENTATION

ORACY

Throughout Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2), children need to be given opportunities to express their ideas in speech, to describe their own ideas, to make plans and to take part in discussions.

In parallel with this, they have to learn to listen to others and to absorb what they hear. They have to learn the conventions of conversation, taking turns, allowing others to speak, responding appropriately to what has been said and valuing the opinions of others. All members of staff at St. Stephen's, Tockholes Primary School have the responsibility to ensure that all children are empowered to speak and express their ideas. Children should be encouraged to speak in a range of contexts and, as they grow older, adapt their style of speech appropriately. Speaking and listening permeates all areas of the curriculum. The children learn from early on, to plan their work, listen to the plans of others, recall and assess their work and to listen while others recall. It is only when speaking and listening skills have been developed that children can effectively work co-operatively and collaboratively.

Informal Activities to Promote Speaking and Listening:

- Home Area
- shared play (work) areas
- reading and maths games

- shared reading of information texts, atlases, etc.
- interactive displays
- structured Activities to Promote Speaking and Listening
- drama activities
- circle time
- show and share/tell time
- oral dictations (spellings)
- shared and guided reading
- telling or reading a story to/with a class
- class debates
- speeches and persuasive arguments/
- discussions
- play scripts
- school productions and worship
- PTV
- Talkabout sessions

READING

Children in Early Years Foundation, KS1 and KS2 need to be provided with an environment that promotes reading. At St Stephen's, Tockholes we focus on two dimensions of reading: word reading and comprehension. Foundation Stage children initially take home Talkabout cards and picture books to share at home, encouraging pre-reading skills.

Home Reading Books

At St Stephen's Tockholes, we strive to instill a lifelong love of reading for all pupils so that all children leave school as skilled, knowledgeable readers. We see home reading as a vital part of our mission and below is a guide to explain how it works through school.

KS1

In Key Stage One the following year groups will take home:

Reception

- 1 decodable reading book that matches the child's current phonic knowledge
- 1 reading for pleasure book
- 1 tricky and decodable word card that matches the child's current phonic knowledge experiences. Reading books will be changed regularly and the child will only move

Year 1

- 1 decodable reading book that matches the child's current phonic knowledge
- 1 colour banded book
- 1 tricky and decodable word card that matches the child's current phonic knowledge experiences. Reading books will be changed regularly and the child will only move

Year 2

- 1 decodable reading book that matches the child's current phonic knowledge
- 1 colour banded book
- 1 tricky and decodable word card that matches the child's current phonic knowledge experiences. Reading books will be changed regularly and the child will only move

The decodable reading book should match the sounds that your child currently knows and the aim is that your child should be able to read it confidently and fluently. It is recommended that it is read at least 3 times during the week: once to decode, once with fluency and once using expression and intonation. The colour banded book will also be in line with your child's current reading level.

In your child's reading record book, please can you write down the title of the book that you are reading and the date on which it has been read, as well as your initials. On each day that your child reads a book or part of a book, a dojo will be awarded to your child. This will hopefully be an added incentive to encourage your child to read as much and as frequently as possible. Teachers will always read and acknowledge any comments written in your child's reading record book and address any issues raised. Books will be changed weekly and should be brought to school daily for staff to read with the children as well.

KS2

In KS2, all children will take home a reading book with a reading level to help them build their fluency and develop their understanding of a text. We use reading levels because it allows children to feel and become successful readers, completing multiple books over the year, letting them experience a wide range of genres.

Our home reading books offer a range of text types so children can enjoy a variety of texts:

Greatest Stories - Classic children stories

Chucklers - Funny stories

Myths and Legends - Classic famous tales

inFact - Non-fiction on a variety of topics

Reflect - A mixture of non-fiction stories with positive messages about being a good citizen

When deciding a child's reading level we use a running record, which shows us how successful children are at word reading, followed up by some questions for understanding. A home reading book should be easy for the child to read, building their confidence and developing a pleasure for reading. We have planned in assessment windows across the school year to enable teachers to see whether children need a different level reading. As list of questions to ask children when reading can be found [here](#). If you have any serious concerns then please talk to your child's class teacher.

Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension will be taught through **Ready Steady Read Together** units which are built around engaging, vocabulary-rich texts and provide a wealth of opportunities for reading, discussion and metacognition. Each unit follows a clear sequence of learning episodes, supports vocabulary development in context and includes structured opportunities for retrieval, fluency and strategy modelling and discussion. Gamification elements and interactive low-stakes quizzes link directly to the KS1 (Year 1-2) and KS2 (Years 3–6) reading content domains, reinforcing understanding while ensuring progression through the National Curriculum. Progression is actively embedded within teaching to build comprehension skills, word reading, understanding of terminology and knowledge of the content domains step by step, ensuring consistency and clarity across the year groups.

Methods for Promoting Reading

- book areas so books have a high profile in every class
- attractive displays of books in classrooms
- audio books
- library visits
- Reading Eggs/Reading Eggspress
- Class novel
- Book theme days

Phonics

In Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 children use the Monster Phonics phonics programme. The children are taught using a six phase programme. This ensure a very structured approached to teaching phonics, beginning with the teaching of individual sounds, moving onto sound blending and segmenting and introducing children to digraphs (e.g. ee, ay etc.) The programme follows a four step approach of revisit/review, teach, practise, apply. From here children learn to read and write sentences using their knowledge of letter sounds. Throughout the programme children work in ability groups and lessons move at a pace suitable for the children. Children are assessed regularly to ensure progress is being made and it is at this time that children can be moved from one group to another.

WRITING

Organisation and Curriculum Coverage

Ready Steady Write empowers teachers to provide high-quality teaching of writing through high-quality literature. These detailed units of work centre on engaging, vocabulary-rich texts, with a wealth of writing opportunities within and across the curriculum. They provide:

- Clear sequential Episodes of Learning
- Vocabulary learning and contextualised spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Wider reading for the wider curriculum
- Example Texts linked to writing outcomes
- A wealth of supporting resource

Our English curriculum is developed around a sequence of high quality age-appropriate texts, using Literacy Count's **Ready Steady Write** units of learning. We use each book to create opportunities to:

- develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to use and apply across the wider curriculum, through sentence accuracy sessions;
- explore the Writing structure and features of different genres, identifying the purpose and audience;
- plan and write an initial piece of Writing with a clear context and purpose before evaluating the effectiveness of Writing by editing and redrafting.

Building on this foundation, we teach literacy using a range of strategies which include:

- Group Discussion – Children discuss and interrogate new ideas in a small group or whole class setting. They listen to and value each other's ideas whilst taking on board feedback so as to improve their own explanations.
- Partner Talk – Children work in partners to discuss their ideas. They are able to explain their ideas about texts they have read and prepare their ideas before they write.
- Questioning – Teachers use a range of questioning strategies to establish children's current understanding and develop their learning.
- Modelled Writing – Teachers model Writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the Writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the children to utilise in their own work. This happens daily, through sentence accuracy
- Shared Writing – Teachers use the ideas from the children to create shared pieces of Writing. This enables the children to see the Writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.
- Editing – All children are signposted to regular opportunities for reviewing and editing their own and the work of others.
- Working walls – Teachers and children regularly update working walls to ensure learning is documented within a unit of work.

Class teachers ensure that the Writing process is clearly evident on working walls, with modelled examples being available to all pupils as the sequence of lessons develops.

Resources

Each class has a resource box with their **Ready Steady Write** vehicle texts, reveal objects that support the themes and genre being taught for that half term. The lesson plans, resources and leadership support is found on the membership homepage online. The Enhancements for the units can be seen in our indoor and outdoor areas in EYFS.

Working Walls and Table Resources

Each class is expected to develop an English working wall which adapts daily with teaching. Displays should model the writing process and scaffolds needed for children to apply to their own writing. Spellings, handwriting and supporting phonics materials should also be displayed within the classroom to aid children's writing. Sentence accuracy checkers are available to all children, both in their books and in the environment. Staff will model the expectations throughout the curriculum.

Planning

The entire writing curriculum is mapped out on coverage and progression documents. Then, the **Ready Steady Write** units include all of the resources needed for each teacher to plan and deliver lessons. There are a range of scaffolds and supporting resources and teachers tweak and shape the units to meet the specific needs of their children. There are also assessment proformas which are completed half termly and identify next steps for children.

Handwriting

At Tockholes we use the Kinetic Letters® handwriting programme. This programme uses four main threads:

- Making bodies stronger,
- Holding the pencil,
- Learning the letters, and
- Flow and fluency,

It enables children to develop legible handwriting that is produced quickly and automatically. With the development of automaticity, handwriting becomes a valuable tool and not a hindrance to learning. The Kinetic Letters® font covers all the letters in the alphabet and is based on a set of rules that have been made as simple as possible to enable fast learning. The order in which letters are taught recognizes the cognitive development of children. The programme can be used with any reading programme including phonics. Initially reading and writing are taught separately (as recommended by phonics programmes); later on, reading and writing are combined.

Strength. Writing is a fine finger operation; children must have core body and arm strength to be able to control their fingers precisely.

Pencil hold. The pencil/pen grip must be comfortable to allow writing for long periods (eg exams often last for hours). Pens and pencils with a triangular cross-section assist in developing the correct hold.

Letter formation. The movements to form the letters begin with whole body movements and progress through writing in sand trays to writing on whiteboards and finally writing on paper. In Kinetic Letters®, all the letters and numbers are formed by one of two monkeys, a brave one (Bounce) who goes to the top branch of the tree, and a scared one (Skip) who goes to the lower branch.

Flow and fluency. Letter movements are minimized to help a fast writing style to develop. There are no lead-in strokes.

For further information, please see separate handwriting policy.

SPELLING

Our spelling curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all children. We follow the award-recognised **Ready Steady Spell** from Literacy Counts to ensure that all pupils become fluent, accurate spellers. Our spelling curriculum is research-informed and impact-proven, helping children secure the essential skills and strategies they need to spell confidently across the curriculum. Through engaging activities, consistent teaching routines and regular opportunities to revisit prior learning, we help children move spelling knowledge into their long-term memory. Our aim is to build confident writers who are equipped with the tools they need to communicate clearly and effectively. Spelling is taught in a clear and systematic way, with regular reviews and assessments. Additional support is provided through Ready Steady Spell: Go sessions, which offer targeted intervention for pupils who need further consolidation.

Home Learning

Children are encouraged to access their spellings at home to practise their weekly spelling list.

Non-negotiables

The importance of correct spelling is emphasised throughout each and every lesson. Children know that if a word is available to them (displayed on the board or on a word mat) there is no excuse for spelling the word incorrectly in their work. If they do this, they are encouraged to correct the spelling using their green pen.

Vocabulary

In addition to weekly spelling rules children are encouraged to use a wide range of and vocabulary throughout all their lessons.

Knowledge organisers are used in each curriculum area. Children are introduced to the new vocabulary and are provided with opportunities to investigate these words (identify meaning, word class, syllables etc.) and are encouraged to use them in their writing across all subjects. Visual vocabulary lists are displayed in class linked to the current topic in English, Science, History and Geography.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion (See School Policy)

All children take part in English irrespective of ability, race and gender.

Inclusion

Children with English as an additional language:

It is vital that children who have English as an additional language have English modelled accurately by all staff at school. Collaborative work with peers (where English is their first language) is essential and EAL children should be provided with consistent opportunities for this verbal interaction. All teachers include a range of strategies to support children with EAL which includes:

- Teacher and peer modelling and consistent use of visual support
- Repetition and recasting of language features
- Word banks and scaffolded speaking and listening activities
- Resources that include images to secure language understanding
- Use of technology to support interpretation of Example Texts

Teachers work with the SENDCO to best meet the needs of individuals within their classes. Children who are new to English are assessed and support is put in place by the SENDCO to help them make rapid progress.

Children with Special Educational Needs:

Some children experience learning difficulties, which affect their progress in English. Class teachers inform the SENCO if they are concerned that a child may have underlying learning difficulties. Some children then receive SEN support. This may include:

- scaffolds and supports to develop writing ideas and language acquisition
- technology to support the generation of ideas, develop words banks and plan and write
- explicit instruction, including the modelling of sentences, paragraphs, planning and editing – with opportunities for the children to practice modelled techniques
- a focus on cognitive and metacognitive strategies to help children articulate their learning
- flexible groupings to ensure peer support and appropriate level of challenge

Gifted and Talented (G&T)

Where possible, more able children will be taught through differentiated group work and extra challenges. Special arrangements will be made for an exceptionally gifted pupil. For example, they may attend lessons in the next year group or follow an individualised programme.

IMPACT

Assessment and Recording

We summatively assess reading and GPS at the end of each term using the NFER scheme of assessment and Ready Steady Read/Spell assessments. Reading is monitored every half term with all children being heard read to determine whether they are reading at an accurate level. Phonics assessments are scheduled throughout each half term and Year 1 children complete the national phonics assessment in the final summer term. We assess children's writing by looking at their work through the whole curriculum. Teachers draw upon observations and continuous assessment to ensure children are stretched/challenged and to identify those children who may need additional support. End of Unit writing outcomes are completed to identify next steps. In KS2 additional pieces of writing are evidenced through cross-curricular pieces of writing which also include a cumulative essay completed at the end of each History and Geography unit, summing up what they have learnt, that progresses in difficulty through the school. We measure the impact of our curriculum with pupil voices, book looks and lesson drop ins. The collection of this range of information allows us to make informed decisions about our curriculum, ensuring we expose our children to the best possible English curriculum