

# Our Lady's RC Primary School English Policy





## Our Lady's Mission Statement

At Our Lady's RC Primary School we want to  
**'know God, love God and serve God'**

We will try hard to :

- Learn about the **WORD** of God.
- **WELCOME** everyone into our school as Jesus welcomes us into His family.
- Care about the **WELFARE** of others and help those in need.
- **WORSHIP** God through prayer and praise and use the talents God has given us.
- Be a true **WITNESS** to Jesus by showing everyone that we respect, value and love one another.

We will try to live like Jesus every day.

*At Our Lady's, we seek at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. We remember this when putting our policies into practice.*

## The Contribution of English to the School's Curriculum

At Our Lady's RC Primary School, we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. Improved performance in reading, writing and spoken language will enable our children to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, accurately and, ultimately, to their greater satisfaction. This will also help them to learn and communicate their understanding more successfully within other curriculum subjects, while enriching their lives beyond school. The teaching and learning of language skills are therefore given a high priority in our school. Our overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping children with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

### We aim for our children to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At Our Lady's RC Primary School, we encourage all children to become independent learners and be confident in all strands of learning. The children will be given opportunities to speak in a variety of contexts and learn to listen to and value the views of others.

### Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014).

## Curriculum Delivery

In Reception Class through to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through differentiation and the support of Teachers and Teaching Assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential. Children may receive additional support if necessary outside of the English lessons. Children that have an EHCP or IEP may also be withdrawn in order to receive intervention that focuses on the child's more specific individual needs.

A clear lesson objective and success criteria are a feature of all English lessons. Working walls and displays contribute to supporting learning in the classrooms.

Evaluative marking is used in accordance with our Marking Policy. Assessment informs planning and reference is made to the National Curriculum in medium term plans. The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. We encourage children to use ICT as a resource for learning whenever appropriate. We provide a rich and varied experience for children to draw on in their writing and reading which should include many cross curricular opportunities across the whole curriculum.

## Approaches to speaking and listening

UN convention for the rights of the child states:

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) - Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 13 (freedom of expression) - Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions.

It is our responsibility to provide this.

The four strands of speaking and listening: speaking, listening, group discussion and drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all children in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in preparation for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, to develop pleasure and empathy and contribute to group discussions effectively.

We achieve this by:

- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We encourage a respect for the views of others.

- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with children and with other adults in our school.
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts.
- Providing pupil voice opportunities where the opinions and views of the children are sought on matters relating to them and others. E.g. Teaching and Learning reviews, Interviews, book choices, development ideas for the playground, Healthy Eating Policy etc.
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies, debates, poetry recitals, presentations, pupil voice and productions, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers.
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.
- by developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.

#### Approaches to phonics

The teaching of phonic skills is embedded within English teaching in each class. It is taught in Early Years in daily phonics lessons which include the use of 'Letters and Sounds' and the 'Jolly Phonics' Scheme and through the daily sharing of books and structured activities as part of the continuous provision provided. The daily teaching of phonics for both reading and writing continues in KS1 and is reinforced in KS2 and includes the learning of all of the phonemes and the exploration of their various corresponding graphemes. During these sessions children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing skills both in their reading and their writing.

#### Approaches to Reading

We recognise that learning to read has different aspects including phonic decoding of letters and sounds, reading words on sight and comprehension (reading for meaning).

We teach the children all of these skills. Some children can use their phonic knowledge to read any word but they do not understand the content of what they have read. We concentrate on all aspects of reading. In the EYFS we start with book talk. Children share several books every day. They learn how to read words from left to right, how to turn the

pages, they talk about what is happening in the story (both text and pictures), they learn how to predict what may happen next and they talk about the feeling of characters and how the characters feel and why, they act out the story and they express what they liked or disliked about the story. They are encouraged to make links to the story and aspects of their own lives. This helps to develop their comprehension/understanding of the story.

This is continued throughout the school and questions are refined to encourage the children to move on from literal understanding of a book to develop the ability to deduce and infer, comment on the writer's use of language, explain the purpose and effectiveness of the layout and organisation of a text. They back up their answers to questions by quoting text from the book as evidence and they learn to put their answers in writing rather than just talking about the book.

Children have opportunities to engage in independent, guided group and whole class shared reading throughout the school. A diverse range of individual, group readers, whole class texts, staged reading scheme and library books are available. We believe that it is important to provide all children with a wide selection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books from different genres and a range of cultures.

All children start by accessing the Oxford Reading Scheme graded reading books at their individual level and as they progress, their reading experience is integrated and enriched with a range of non-reading scheme 'free readers' from a range of age appropriate texts.

Reading ability is assessed throughout the year to identify children who require additional support with their reading. Staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their phonic application, fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension.

Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a reading record book where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading.

Reading challenges are offered within school and national World Book Day and book week is held where the whole school celebrates books and engages in a range of reading activities and produces a whole school display of work relating to the book theme.

## Library

All children can access the library every week. During their library lesson, they share and talk about a book and they also learn about the way that a library is organised. They can choose a book to take home from a wide range of books available and they can change their books at least each week.

Children are involved in purchasing new books for the library. A different group of children go out to a local book shop each year to choose books for the library that reflect the interests of the children using it.

We are aware of gender bias in books and are proactive in finding books that avoid stereotypes and promote equality and positive role models.

## Book Swap

In order to develop a literature rich environment and encourage a love of reading in the whole school community, we have introduced a 'book swap' for both children and adults. This consists of families donating books that they have read to the school. These will be available for parents or children to take from the school then replace when finished. We aim to generate and make available a large number of books which can be shared and enjoyed across the whole school community. We are a multi lingual school with around 40% of children with English as an additional language. We encourage books in a variety of languages so that the book swap is inclusive to all families.

## Approaches to Writing

To develop our children as writers we:

- treat children as writers from the earliest stage, who have ideas that they will want to communicate, building on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment
- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of meaningful purposes and audiences for example, class participation in the weekly parent's newsletter, applications for roles and responsibilities such as digital leaders
- use guided writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, evaluate, edit and improve their writing

- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation by checking their work independently for sense, accuracy, meaning and effectiveness provide children with clear success criteria, support materials and checklists in order for them to organise their writing, include what is needed and assess the effectiveness of their work
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers
- employ 'Talk for Writing' strategies to enable children to rehearse their writing orally
- employ 'Narrative Therapy' strategies to improve the content of narrative writing
- employ a range of speaking, listening and drama based activities e.g. hot seating and soundscapes, to develop children's empathy and feeling in order to improve the quality of their written work
- enrich children's experiences through trips and other extra-curricular activities in order to give them real experiences to draw upon in their written work
- share exemplary writing in assemblies to inspire and motivate others
- have as high expectations for the standards and presentation of writing across all subject areas as we have in English lessons. There is an expectation that subject specific vocabulary will be used correctly across all foundation subjects
- provide children with clear success criteria, support materials and checklists in order for them to organise their writing, include what is needed and assess the effectiveness of their work
- use ideas from schemes such as Babcock Spelling and Babcock Grammar to support the teaching of writing
- use 'Pearson Graded Grammar' materials where appropriate to support and assess children's learning.

## Handwriting

Handwriting begins in the E.Y.F.S with mark-making and patterns. All children are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practice their early fine motor skills. The needs of left handed children, or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary are accommodated with resources or specific intervention. Children are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. We believe that discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen should take place at least once a week and more frequently in the foundation stage. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources.

The national expectation at the end of year 6 is that children will join their handwriting. Staff use the MSL handwriting scheme which is a dyslexia approved scheme. It is a progressive scheme which is effective in teaching all the letter joins so that the children will be able to build up stamina and fluency and produce written work in the continuous cursive style.

The introduction of the scheme begins in year 1 with discrete lessons following a clear scheme of progression. As the children move up through the school they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluent hand-writing.

## Cross-Curricular Links in English

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links where relevant. They plan for children to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Many writing opportunities are made with foundation subjects e.g. writing scientific reports, letter writing from evacuees in History, written explanations to support Design and Technology, poetry writing in response to current issues etc. Reading is practiced across the whole curriculum and ICT is used to support the English curriculum.

## Assessment and Target Setting

- Work is assessed in line with the Assessment Policy.
- Teachers use developmental feedback in their marking in order to identify where children have included elements of the success criteria. They also identify the child's target and next steps in learning. Children are given the opportunity to respond to the marking by revisiting their work to edit and make improvements. (Green pen response work)
- Pupil Tracker is used to highlight the key skills in writing achieved for each child and their progress is tracked.
- Summative assessment is used three times a year in order to assess the children's writing against Age Related Expectations.
- Examples of children's writing are kept in a standards file.
- Writing targets will be generated as a result of ARE assessments.
- Summative assessment is used three times a year in order to assess the children's reading against Age Related Expectations. This happens in the form of the PIRA comprehension test.
- Standardised scores and reading ages will be derived through the testing process for each child.
- Year 2 and Y6 children undertake SATs tests in May. They each take English tests in Reading and SPAG. The teachers will assess the writing against Age Related Expectations. Writing moderation will happen between partner schools and external moderation of writing will happen on approximately a 3-year cycle.
- Year 1 complete the National Phonic Screening in June. This will test the children's phonological knowledge. Gaps in learning will be picked up and those who do not pass the test in Year 1, will be targeted with additional support and booster classes before being retested in Year 2. Children who don't pass the retest will be targeted with additional support in Year 3.
- Workshops will be provided for the parents of children involved in the National Tests so that they can support their children at home.
- Individual pupil's Reading and Writing targets will be shared with parents/carers each term.

## Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve their full potential in English according to their individual abilities.

We identify which children or groups of children who are under-achieving or not making the progress that they should be. Support is put in place to improve their attainment. More academically able children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided to ensure that their progress is realised at a greater depth.

- Children with identified SEND in English receive an IEP with SMART targets and individually tailored support from Teachers and TAs and where appropriate other professionals and agencies.
- Children who are identified as having additional needs with reading, receive extra support from Teachers and TAs.
- More academically able children in English are identified and challenged appropriately. Challenges for these gifted children are provided within English lessons or in addition through a range of wider opportunities.

## Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, cultural or social background.

## Role of the English Leader

The English Leaders are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. This will involve:

- monitoring pupil progress/standards in English
- conferencing with children regarding all areas of English
- analysing data and action planning
- monitoring the provision of English in the curriculum
- monitoring teaching and learning of English
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up to date with recent English developments
- analysis of SATs results to identify areas for development
- checking that assessment for English is carried out in line with the school's assessment policy

- introducing whole school initiatives to raise standards in English
- feeding back to governors on standards in English

### Parental Involvement

Parents can play a vital role in the development of English skills. We aim to foster a strong home-school partnership regarding English. We encourage parents and carers to be involved in reading with their child on a daily basis. We also encourage parents and carers to help their children learn their letters and sounds and spellings every day. Home school record books are designed to develop communication between home and school, especially to support children's reading development. A variety of workshops are provided to help parents to support their children in English work at home. 'Speak UP' English lessons are offered to parents with English as an additional language

### Conclusion

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Marking Policy
- SEND Policy
- Presentation Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

This policy will be reviewed by staff and presented to governors for approval every three years.