



St. Michael at Bowes CE Junior School

English Policy

‘An inclusive Christian community building on firm foundations for successful lives.’

At St Michael at Bowes we believe that our vision underpins everything we do and as such we strive for our children to ‘build on firm foundations’ in order for them to lead successful lives. We believe that the English language plays a central role in the development of children as learners and takes place both through the spoken and written word. Our aim is that all children will enjoy reading, spell accurately, become creative and thoughtful writers and use drama, art and music as a vehicle to enhance their learning.

1 Aims

1.1 Our aims in the teaching of English are:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their audience;
- To encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- To show children how to adapt their speech to variety of audiences and situations;
- To teach children effective communication skills, including both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of creative activities which include drama, art and music;
- To help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge;
- To develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- To close the ‘word-gap’ by providing all children with a language rich environment;
- To develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- To encourage meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction or another genre;
- To develop a sense of ownership and pride in their work and an interest in writing;
- To develop their knowledge and understanding of English grammar and punctuation as an aid to improving their writing;
- To improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work to make our children competent and confident when writing or reading.
- To provide our pupils with aspirational life opportunities.

2 Teaching and learning

- #### **2.1**
- At St. Michael at Bowes CE Junior School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. Within a lesson, children can experience whole-class reading or writing activities, focused word or sentence activities (SPaG – Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar), a guided group or independent activity, and whole-class plenaries either throughout the session or at the end to review progress and areas for development. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and their learning is supported

with a variety of resources, including dictionaries and thesauruses, as well as online resources. Most writing cycles last for three weeks and link to other areas of the curriculum. We encourage a purpose for writing, in order to help children focus on audience and applying appropriate features for a desired effect. There is a heavy emphasis on immersion activities to prepare the children through the development of language and exploration of grammatical structures. Children use computing in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as well as in drafting their work, creating books, filming and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we plan opportunities and encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum and at home.

- 2.2 In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities to challenge every child allowing them to flourish in their own way. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons, through differentiated group work, while in others, we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas independently or with help. Both class teachers and teaching assistants support a variety of children, which enables learning to be developed in a one-to-one setting or in a group. (ref: Teaching and Learning Policy)

3 English curriculum planning

- 3.1 We use the 2014 National Curriculum statements as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.
- 3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in two phases (long-term and short-term). Our long-term plans outline the genres and SPaG skills to be taught each term in each year group. This ensures good curriculum coverage and progression of skills in each year group. It also outlines links between literacy and topic areas. Our short-term plans have two parts. The first part – the overview – outlines the success criteria for the chosen genre and identifies the year group specific statements to be explicitly taught within a two/three-week cycle. The planning identifies those previously taught skills to be reinforced and developed further. These plans ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across the unit. The subject leader is responsible for monitoring and reviewing these overviews.
- 3.3 Each year group complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This details the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, giving details of how the lessons are to be taught. Details of how work is scaffolded for all pupils is discussed at this point. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and class teachers and the subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis or formal basis when required.
- 3.4 We plan activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan progression into our scheme of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

4 English across the curriculum

- 4.1 The children develop and apply their skills across the full range of subjects taught in the school. We teach a wide range of topics including the Vikings and Romans, to London during the Great War and where possible, we link themes and activities in these subjects. This helps to ensure that children are practising subject specific skills and using them for a purpose. All pupils are encouraged to learn through reading, writing and importantly discussion, which is something that takes place in every curricular subject, resulting in children that are well rounded and able to voice their opinions. The understanding of key vocabulary no matter the subject is vital in order to ensure of a language rich environment.

5 Assessment for learning

- 5.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson helps them to adjust their daily plans. They match these lesson by lesson assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Verbal or written feedback is given to help guide children's progress. All children are encouraged to assess their own work against the agreed success criteria and to make judgements about how they can improve. (ref: Marking and Feedback policy)
- 5.2 Towards the latter stages of a two/three-week cycle, the class teacher will give verbal or written feedback about how their 'final piece of writing' can be improved. This is used to measure progress against key objectives, and to help teachers plan for the next unit of work.
- 5.3 Teachers make summative assessments at three stages during the academic year, using SATs, moderation of writing (both internal and external) and optional tests as quality assurance for their own judgements. These are used by the subject coordinator and senior leadership team to assess progress against both school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, targets are set for the upcoming school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.
- 5.5 The English team and leader has a number of samples of children's work in a portfolio from every year group for Autumn, Spring and Summer term. These are used to moderate teacher judgements and provide a bank of evidence of the attainment in writing across the school. Regular phase and cross-phase meetings are used for the moderation of judgements as a team and it is expected that in addition to this, year groups moderate writing regularly during their team meetings.
- 5.6 The English team and leader take an active role in disseminating good practice, monitoring and evaluating current practice and the impact of any new initiatives, and making recommendations for staff development. These are shared, where possible, in staff meetings and through individual or whole school feedback after book moderations and learning walks.
- 5.7 Children are assessed in Accelerated Reader (AR) four times a year and given a reading range from which to choose a book. These assessments also provide class teachers with a reading report on each child, including attainment, progress and reading age.

6 Resources

- 6.1 There are a range of resources used to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries, thesauruses and other year group specific textbooks. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts, levelled according to the Accelerated Reader system. Access to the internet is also available in all classrooms through iPads, MacBooks or Chromebooks. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

7 Handwriting

- 7.1 All year groups teach handwriting at least twice a week for 10-15 minutes using the LetterJoin Handwriting scheme as a guide for letter formation and joining letters. Pencil is used initially in Years 3, 4 and 5, although children who are ready and have well developed skills can earn a 'pen licence' at any time. Pens are introduced formally to all remaining children in Year 6 to support children in developing a fluent, neat and legible style of writing.

8 Spelling and Phonics

- 8.1 When the children start school in Year 3 or as a casual admission, children are assessed and assigned a phonics group. Identified children have daily phonics lessons for 25 minutes (Read, Write, Inc). This is for those who need further support in securing their understanding before beginning whole class spelling and reading lessons. Children receive a decodable phonics book each week to read at home. Groups are homogenous and children are regularly assessed (half termly or more regularly if necessary).
- 8.2 Children in all year groups are taught spelling using the National Curriculum word lists and patterns. Spelling is taught weekly and the focus is on a specific spelling pattern or rule each week. Classes will also look at 2-3 words per week from the Year 3 and 4 or Year 5 and 6 spelling list. They are tested regularly to ensure understanding..

9 Reading

- 9.1 Guided Reading:
This takes place every day and outside of the main English lesson for 25 minutes, giving the children the opportunity to read and discuss a range of texts with their adults. Each session is planned for and the children's attainment is assessed on an ongoing basis using the reading domains. In all year groups, Guided Reading is taught as a whole class session with all year groups using 'MIDAS' reading skills to support lessons.
- 9.2 Individual Reading:
Across the school, children are regularly listened to reading aloud. Those children who are identified as struggling with reading are assigned a 1:1 reader and are read with daily. This gives adults a chance to listen to children reading their chosen book and to aid in developing children's fluency. Additionally, some children in years 3 and 4 are also assigned a Reading Buddy from Year 6 who reads with them twice a week.
- 9.3 Home Reading:
Children throughout the school are encouraged to read at home to themselves or an adult, discussing what they have read and to read for research purposes linked to their topic area. Each class has a selection of home reading books, have access to the school library books that they can choose from and they also take home their Accelerated Reading book. All children are given home reading records and a selection of tasks to complete in these. The expectation is that all children read a minimum of 4 times a week.
- 10 Reading Enrichment
- 10.1 We firmly believe that children who read widely and for pleasure will become the best and most creative writers. To that end, we provide many and varied opportunities for the children to read and experience books and stories:
- We have regular visits from authors and displays around the school show all members of staff enjoying reading;

- Our class and school libraries and book areas are used regularly by all classes so they can learn how to choose appropriate books and how to care for them;
- 'Mystery books' are shared around the school with the receiver of the book sworn to secrecy about what the book is.
- Every class has a class book and they read this daily for 15 minutes. This time is called 'The Big Read';
- We celebrate World Book Day every year, taking the time to celebrate books and stories from a range of authors;
- Regular book and reading assemblies are held, where books and stories are shared and achievement and progress in reading are praised and rewarded.
- Children are regularly chosen to receive a book from our school vending machine.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1 The coordination and planning of the English curriculum are the responsibility of the English Team, consisting of teachers, teaching assistants and pupil representatives from each year group, who also:
- Support colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
 - Audit resources and monitor the storage, use and care of books around the school
 - Give the Headteacher a termly summary report in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in English and indicates any areas for further improvement;
 - Use specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe English lessons across the school.
- 11.2 A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of literacy. The literacy governor meets regularly with the subject leader to review progress.

Reviewed by: C lesini- Spring 2023

To be reviewed as required: As required;