

## **English Policy**

This policy outlines the aims of teaching and learning of English at St Michael's First School. At St Michael's, we recognise that English is a core subject at the heart of enabling our pupils to flourish, living 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

### **Aims and purpose of the policy**

- To develop a positive attitude to writing and speaking and listening.
- To promote a love of reading, ensuring children are able to read a range of texts fluently and with understanding.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all children to develop their skills in English.
- To seek to ensure that all children achieve their full potential in all aspects of English by the time they move from First to Middle education.
- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative English curriculum.
- To provide clear and consistent teaching throughout the school.
- To provide guidance for teaching staff, parents and governors on agreed practice within our school.

### **Our School Vision for English**

At St Michael's we aim to enable all children to become literate; to be able to read and write with confidence, fluency, comprehension and pleasure. We aspire for all our pupils to be able to use the English word to express themselves imaginatively and clearly, and know how to listen attentively to others. Children at St Michael's will use their English skills to communicate and work effectively with others, to develop as independent learners. We hope that through their literacy skills, they will be able to become active members in society beyond the school community.

### **Speaking and Listening**

At St Michael's, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and encourage opportunities for meaningful conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment. Through oracy, children learn how other people make sense of the world, how language is used to reason, how emotions and identities are expressed, and how to work together to solve problems.

Speaking and Listening forms a key element of the Teaching Sequence for Writing and is incorporated throughout the teaching phases. Talk for writing strategies are used frequently both within English lessons and across the curriculum. The methods for speaking and listening activities include but are not limited to: listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs, reciting and reading aloud, drama - including re-telling and role-play, debating, collaborative work and presenting to an audience.

Each year, St Michael's takes part in 'No Pens Day', a national day of speaking and listening, as we recognise that learning to communicate effectively has a profound impact on children's education and future lives. Pupils who struggle to express themselves are planned for carefully to ensure the day is fully inclusive regardless of ability.

## **Reading**

At St Michael's our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and developing the love of reading, to enable our children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies, e.g. whole word recognition, rhyme and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality texts that engage and motivate our children are the key to instilling a love of literature. From Early Years to Year 4, all children are given the opportunity to visit the school library weekly with our school librarian. Year 4 pupils run two library clubs at lunchtime for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2.

The teaching of early reading skills begins in Nursery through daily story, rhyme and song time and phonics lessons. We use the guidance given in the 'Letters and Sounds' programme to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1; enabling children to decode effectively. Upon starting Nursery, children are assessed by Nursey staff using development matters and subsequently grouped to ensure children are taught with others who are at the same stage of their learning. These groups are fluid as children progress at different stages through the phonics phases. Children begin with Phase 1 and initial sounds in phase 2 where they segment and blend words for reading and writing. In Reception, children progress through to Phase 2, 3 and 4; they revisit and consolidate these during the year. In Year 1, Phase 4 is revisited and children progress into Phase 5, where alternative sounds are introduced. At the end of Year 1, children will complete their phonics screening. (See Assessment and Feedback policy) In Year 2, Phase 5 is revisited and children progress through to Phase 6. We follow the four-part model for teaching phonics: revisit and review, teach, practise and apply. The teaching of phonics is extended to those in Key Stage 2 depending on need.

In Year 2, 'No Nonsense' Spelling and Grammar Programme is introduced. Spelling sessions are taught discretely daily and embedded in English lessons, whole class reading and guided reading sessions.

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions and whole class reading lessons. Children have the opportunity to develop their own reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading time and 1:1 reading. From Foundation Stage up to Year 4, children have the opportunity to read 1:1 with an adult regularly; with there being a particular focus on questioning to promote an in-depth understanding of the text. Questions progress from literal to inferential as the children move up through the school.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well as book banded 'real books'. Upon entering Reception, children are assessed using development matters and are placed on a book band accordingly. All children are regularly assessed using formative assessment strategies (See Assessment and Feedback policy) to monitor

progression and to ensure children are reading within the correct band. Bug Club is set up and available for all children to access at home and during guided reading.

In KS1, children take home a banded book which is appropriate to their level of ability. Children choose their books from a wide selection of schemes and real books. In Key Stage 2, children take home a banded book which is appropriate to their level of ability also but are expected to progress to a 'free reader' status so they are able to read any book from their classroom or school library.

Each child has a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily. Information is given on how to support their child in reading on the school website, curriculum letters, parent workshops and parents' evenings. As children progress through the school, they become more independent in recording what they have read in their reading records.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, such as: 'World Book Day' - where children are immersed in storytelling, authors, book discussions and the opportunity to dress up and share their favourite books. Children across the school also have the opportunity termly to visit Penkridge library. Reading activities range from Early Years story time to Key Stage 2 children completing independent research linked to their topic.

At the start of each academic year the children across the school take part in learning activities linked with an author. This forms parts of their transition as they move up to a new year group. The work begins with their new teacher in the Summer term and continues in the Autumn term with their new teacher. The unit of work is built around an author's life and work. Children will read and explore books written by the author and have an opportunity to share their learning with their peers across the school. The children's work is displayed across the school in term 1 and then transferred to our school library.

## **Writing**

At St Michael's we follow a long-term plan with carefully mapped out genres of writing to ensure children are exposed to a breadth of writing across their time with us and we are following expectations set out in the National Curriculum. A range of text types are used to enhance the learning that, where possible, are linked to the current learning in foundation subjects. We strive for our children to be enthusiastic writers and see purpose in what they produce, therefore, our teachers begin a unit of work with a 'hook' into that genre of writing. Often this then forms the purpose of the outcome of the children's writing and maintains the children's focus. Teachers will continue to refer to the learning outcome and what this will look like as children progress through the writing phases.

Children begin their unit of work by completing a 'cold task'. This is an assessment opportunity for the teacher to ascertain key elements of the children's writing needed to be developed and is used to inform planning. The following phases are then used as a guide for teachers' planning; time spent on each phase may differ according to the needs of the pupils as identified with their cold writes:

Phase 1:

Children are fully immersed within the text type; this involves in depth discussions around the text, focussing heavily on vocabulary and oral comprehension. Children are encouraged to express opinions on their likes and dislikes regarding the text. Teachers plan enhancement, experience opportunities to ensure children have a sound grasp of 'What a Good One Looks Like' by the end of this phase. Children will have been exposed to and have read a variety of examples of the text type, analysed the features, made comparisons with other texts, explored the language choice and writers' style, boxed up the sequence of ideas, discussed the effectiveness of the writing and have a solid grasp of purpose and audience. Children will also co-construct a writers' checklist, as they have grasped what ingredients are needed for this piece of writing to be successful.

Phase 2

Children have the opportunity to practise the skills needed for them to be successful as writers based on the gaps shown in their cold writes. Teachers will model these skills and give children the opportunity to develop as writers as they work towards their individual writing targets. In story narrative, children will explore characters and settings and begin to gather ideas for their own innovations. Styles of writing will be explored further and practiced, alongside the development of specific vocabulary. In non-fiction writing, 'experience' lessons may need to be planned for to ensure children are equipped with the knowledge needed for them to be independent writers.

Phase 3

Children have the opportunity to 'have a go' at developing their own piece of writing whilst 'hugging' the teacher's model. The teacher will model each part of the text through a 'guided write'. Teachers will make explicit links to grammar, spelling and punctuation during this and ensure that the level of writing is aimed at the majority of the children's writing ability in their class. The Success Criteria is shared with the children to support their independent writing skills. The teacher will make reference to this throughout his/her own modelling. The Success criteria grids are generated from the co-constructed writers' checklist from phase 1 and enhanced with the specific learning targets for the children. The grid is progressive from A,B and C according to the writing capabilities of the class. Guided groups are then planned for daily, where the teacher will work alongside smaller groups using the model, to maximise children's learning. The teacher's modelled writing will be carefully planned out to maximise on the specific learning needs of the class, derived from the children's writing targets and gaps identified in the cold writes. However, the guided write is written 'live' by the teacher to model the thought process that goes behind being a successful writer.

Phase 4

The teacher will model editing and improving the modelled guided write to the children and then the children will have an opportunity to make improvements to their own writing. Children will refer to the success criteria to self-assess how successful they were with their writing and identify what would make it even better. Children will share their writing with their peers; they will be able to share their successes and take into account views of others of their writing.

After a period of 2-3 weeks, the children produce their own independent 'hot task'. A hot task is when the children create their own independent writing without the aid of the teacher, but with a given stimulus for their writing. Children will be able to access all the writing tools needed for their writing to be successful, as developed in the initial phases of their unit of work. This is used as an assessment tool for the teacher to track pupil progress on individual writing grids and set future writing targets. (See Assessment and

Feedback policy) The children will then publish their hot task into their individual writing portfolios.

Writing portfolios are introduced in Reception and are carried through each year of the child's journey at St Michael's. These are a record of the individual progress each child has made as they develop as writers. Teachers will annotate the areas where the child has been successful in their writing and identify a writing target. The children's writing targets will be used to inform subsequent medium term plans.

### **Leadership and Management**

The subject leader's role is to empower colleagues to teach English to a high standard and support staff in the following ways:

- By keeping up to date on current issues; disseminating relevant information and providing training for staff members (either directly or through other professionals).
- Leading by example by modelling lessons or styles of teaching.
- Having a knowledge of the quality of reading and writing provision across the school and using this to provide a coaching and mentoring role.
- Identifying and acting on development needs of staff members.
- Monitoring expectations, provision and attainment across the school and providing feedback to develop practice further in order to raise standards.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored as part of the appraisal process through lesson observations and through the progress and attainment documents. In addition, continuity and progression across the school is monitored by the Deputy Headteacher and Subject Leader as is the implementation and impact of Assessment for Learning. The subject action plan and the Schools Improvement Plan identify actions intended to raise standards. The English Subject Leader will also provide an annual summary report to the Headteacher in which the strengths and weaknesses in English are highlighted and areas for further improvement are indicated. This report is shared with governors during the annual Curriculum meeting.

### **Communication with Parents**

In September parents are invited to attend a meet the teacher meeting where they are informed of year group overviews, including year group expectation of reading, writing and spelling. Parents are informed on how they can help child at home by attending English workshops throughout the year, including a phonic workshop in Early Years and Key Stage 1 and a Spelling and Grammar workshop for Key Stage 2. During Parents' Evenings, in the Autumn and Spring term, writing targets are shared, and a written report is completed annually in the Summer Term.

The policy is reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was adopted by the Governing body on:

Review date: 2023

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)