

Pott Shrigley and Bollington St John's
Church of England Primary Schools



Sharing our Gifts and Growing our Talents Together

English Policy

1. Aims and objectives

English across the Federation is taught in an inclusive manner. We aim for all children, whatever their level of ability, to enjoy and achieve during their English lessons. Through appropriate resourcing, staffing and planning we ensure that all children have full access to the English curriculum.

1.1 The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, thus using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

1.2 The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognize its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

2 Teaching and learning style

- 2.1** Across the federation we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended by the New Primary Curriculum (2014). Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through a daily lesson that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. During these lessons children experience a whole-class shared reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity and a whole-class session to review progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonic paddles to support their work. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.
- 2.2** There are children of differing ability in all classes throughout the federation. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

3 English curriculum planning

- 3.1** English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the updated Primary Curriculum (2014) and Hamilton Trust planning scheme 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 three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.
- 3.3** Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.
- 3.4** Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives

details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

4 The Foundation Stage and The Big Write

- 4.1** We teach English in reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

The Big Write

The Federation has undertaken to improve standards of children's writing as a main priority within the school improvement plan. The schools have decided to adopt the Big Write approach to proactively teach writing skills and produce written outcomes.

VCOP – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation

By proactively teaching VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation) this will equip the child with the understanding and skills to write increasingly sophisticated text.

Each teacher can choose how they wish to teach and deliver these four generic targets of Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation but they should be taught systematically and in lively fun ways. Proactive teaching of these tools will enable children to have the tools to grow into confident writers with a range of strategies at their disposal.

The Big Write session

Throughout KS1 and KS2 all children should have opportunity to engage in a Big Write session every other week. This will be up to each individual teacher to plan and decide when the sessions are appropriate. In KS2 the session should be long enough to allow a talk and planning session, a short break and then a timed writing session.

Teacher input

During the Big Write session the teacher may wish to model writing themselves or move from child to child quietly reminding them of personal targets. The teacher should also give children time targets and reminders about the use of connectives, openers, and punctuation as appropriate.

Children should keep their Big Write work in a writing portfolio that is valued. Throughout the Federation we will use a special scrap book to hold all of our Big Write pieces.

Specific talk homework relating to the Big Write topic

It is vital that children develop a “writing voice” as well as their community voice. This is based on the principle that ‘If a child can’t say it, they can’t write it’.

Parental input with this aspect of the Big Write is vital and would be very much appreciated. Teachers will give children a piece of talk homework prior to the day of big write. This is when children are asked to think about and discuss the topic that will be focus of the Big Write, at home as well as at school. This will be individual to each class and member of staff and used as a supportive technique when appropriate. KS1 children will provided with a planning sheet in order to record some of their ideas at home in order to aid them when doing their Big Write piece.

5 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

5.1 The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children’s skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

5.2 Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

5.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

5.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

5.5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

6 Teaching English to children with special needs

6.1 Across the federation we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the SEN provision mapping. Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- using translators.

7 Assessment and recording

7.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help teachers to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. They use termly assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. A bought set of tests and reading age assessments feed into this process. Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and summarize the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher also uses these long-

term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, plus the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress using the level descriptions of the National Curriculum. All pupils' progress is tracked and monitored by teaching staff and the senior management team.

- 7.2** The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the QCA and the DFE.

8 Resources

- 8.1** There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer. Access to the Internet is also available via the laptop suite. Audio-visual aids are also available when needed. The classrooms contain a range of books to support children's individual research.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English lead and the Senior Leadership Team. The work of this team also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The team gives the Headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The team has specially-allocated regular management time in order to enable him/her to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The named governor responsible for literacy meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.

Parents are kept updated regarding the English curriculum via parents' evenings, newsletters, curriculum evenings and specific meetings (such as the Year 6 SATs briefings)

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