

# ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOLS' LITERACY POLICY

**Faith in action,  
Growing together,  
Walking in the footsteps of Christ**

## **Aims**

At St James' R.C. Primary School we recognise that English has a pre-eminent place in education and society. Children need to develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening so that they can express themselves creatively and communicate with others effectively. This policy summarises the approach to the teaching of Literacy at St James'. It ensures systematic and consistent practice and results in pupils leaving the school as confident, independent and literate learners. We aim to offer an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum which develops the skills of each child to the highest level.

## **Statutory requirements**

The statutory requirements for English are set out in The National Curriculum Framework Document, 2013.

## **Organisation**

We recognise the value of teaching literacy skills explicitly as well as encouraging the children to apply their knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum. We aim to teach five hours of literacy a week in each class. Within a lesson there will be learning questions, clear learning intentions, steps to success and opportunities to build on and connect to prior learning. There will be time for reflection and self and peer assessment, including opportunities for the children to make decisions on future learning. We ensure that children are offered learning opportunities that allow for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning.

In the Foundation Stage the children have daily phonics sessions. They are encouraged to write in role play situations. They have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child-initiated activities.

In Year 1 daily phonics sessions continue and these develop into spellings in Year 2. Children take part in both guided and individual reading sessions.

In KS2 phonic sessions continue if appropriate. Children take part in whole-class guided reading and independent reading, grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting sessions.

All classes have a daily story-time session.

Even though we believe that all aspects of literacy are closely interconnected this policy has been divided into separate subject sections.

## **Speaking and Listening**

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to talk in a variety of situations and to varied audiences. Speaking and listening is an integral part of the whole of the school day and is therefore included in drama, productions and role play, story time, hot seating, collaborative work, circle time, debating, assemblies, talk partners and Philosophy 4 Children. We teach Standard English whilst acknowledging individual dialects.

## **Reading**

Reading is a skill essential for life and it is vital that our children leave school able to read fluently, confidently and have a love of reading. Children need to see adults loving books and staff are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children.

Phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading and we use “All Aboard Phonics” and Phonics Play to support this. Daily phonics lessons in EYFS and KS1 enable children to decode efficiently using blending and segmenting. This is continued into KS2 where necessary.

Teachers model reading strategies during Guided Reading, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail in these sessions. During Guided Reading teachers use a range of texts to focus on comprehension and specific features in relation to VIPERS objectives. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader. For Guided Reading, the text chosen is at a level slightly higher than the majority of the group and the teacher plans differentiated questions around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment.

In EYFS children are given the opportunity to explore books which may involve books without words where the children are encouraged to tell the story, learn how to handle books, discover the directionality of print, look at and learn high frequency words and talk about familiar stories.

In KS1 children are grouped according to their ability. The teacher will introduce the text and the learning intention for the session and discuss and model the strategies for reading which the children are working on. The children will then read the text independently while the teacher moves around the group and listens to individuals read. The group will then come back together for a discussion that allows the teacher to check comprehension and to promote discussion that reinforces the learning intention for the session. In KS1 there is a central collection of Guided Reading Books.

At KS2 Guided Reading is taught through a whole class reading approach. As with KS1, this gives the opportunity for the teacher to model good reading, however this takes place with the whole class using one high quality text. Subsequent questioning and discussion of the text is based around VIPERS (Vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, summarise). Each session culminates with a short written response recorded in the children’s Guided Reading Journals. Whole class Guided Reading sessions in KS2 take place twice a week and last for 45 minutes each. In KS2 each class has their own collection of class Guided Reading books.

Independent Reading provides time for both assessment and individual teaching. During Independent Reading children engage in sustained reading. It provides an opportunity for pupils to read and enjoy a range of texts and to apply reading strategies. Teachers keep a record of what the children are reading. Each class has its own way of commenting on the books the children read and this could be in the form of reading journals. Every class has examples of poetry, plays, fiction and non-fiction. We ensure that time for reading is found during the school day.

Children in the EYFS and KS1 take home a book that can either be read with a family member or a book that a family member can read to them. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily as this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading. Teachers monitor reading choices for home reading, check that books are returned to school and follow up any books that are lost. Information is given to parents on how to support their child in reading at reading workshops, class briefings and at

adult helper training sessions. In KS2 children choose books to take home and read. Throughout the school children become more independent in recording what they have read in a range of reading journals.

### **Reading for Enjoyment**

We want to encourage children to become enthusiastic and thoughtful readers who understand and engage with what they are reading. We hold annual EYFS and KS1 Reading Workshops for parents and reading is encouraged at home. We celebrate World Book Day and National Poetry Day. We have visiting theatre groups and authors and also visit theatres. We use Petts Wood library and promote the Summer Reading Challenge and The Petts Wood Library Book Club. We use Reading Passports in KS2 to recommend and extend reading material and sell books at our book fairs. There are regular opportunities for independent reading and there are a wide range of quality reading materials in classes where we provide challenging texts. Children also make books to share. Class teachers read aloud to classes and use story props and puppets for retelling stories. We recognise the value of adults reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers. It is a chance for teachers to expose their children to a range of material that children would not always be able to access themselves. Each class has Key Authors. We use book tokens as prizes and classroom book corners demonstrate our love of books with interactive book displays promoting authors. We have a wealth of parent and community readers.

### **Writing**

The key purpose of writing is to communicate meaning and therefore all writing tasks have an identified and clear purpose. At St James' we develop both transcription and composition. The writing process includes forming, articulating and communicating ideas and we use The Power of Reading and The Literacy Tree texts as starting points. The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Teachers model the planning, composing, revising, re-editing and redrafting and children use these strategies increasingly independently as they become more experienced writers.

Shared Writing provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate writing, including the thought processes that are required. Teachers make explicit references to genre features, as well as word and sentence level work within the context of writing. Pupils contribute to the class composition by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups or using individual white boards. This is also the time when children are given the opportunity to discuss, verbalise and refine ideas before committing to print. With knowledge of text type from guided reading sessions, children are able to generate a list of features that they would expect to use in any writing genre about which they have learned.

Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, Children are ability grouped and given the opportunity to write an independent text with the support of an adult and their group. The group work together to begin a piece of writing and then continue independently while the teacher moves around the group and supports with individual needs as they arise. These sessions are used with the range of abilities represented across the classroom and planned carefully according to children's targets to promote progression in writing skills for all children.

Children are also given the opportunity to write at length in extended independent writing sessions. These tasks will have an identified audience and a clear purpose.

Children are given the opportunity to self-assess and peer-assess writing, based on success criteria linked to the learning objective and developed by the class as a whole as part of the

teaching sequence. Time to review pupil and teacher comments is built into future lessons to allow children to learn from them.

### **Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation**

In planning for these we use the statutory appendices in The National Curriculum Document, 2013.

### **Handwriting**

We use the Fully Cursive Handwriting “Letter Join” Scheme to help children to develop fluent, legible and speedy handwriting. Children move on to using a pen in Year 3; this encourages them to take pride in their work.

### **English as an Additional Language**

Teachers ensure that the curriculum offered is accessible to all pupils and we recognise the importance of supporting a child’s first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

### **Planning**

Teachers use the school’s medium term and weekly planning sheets to show clearly what the literacy objectives and learning activities are. For each unit teachers also include detail on phonics, spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation. On the weekly plans learning activities are differentiated.

### **Cross-curricular opportunities**

Teachers plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. This supports the use of reading and writing for real purposes and increases time for children to explore and deepen their understanding of their topics.

### **Resources**

Resources for the delivery of the Literacy curriculum are stored both centrally and in classrooms. The Literacy Subject leader is responsible for ordering and maintaining resources after consultation with staff.

### **Computing**

We recognise the important role computers have to play in the development of Literacy and it is used on a daily basis to enhance the teaching. Every class has an interactive whiteboard. These can be used to support Literacy teaching in a multitude of ways by displaying shared texts for reading and editing, providing a more interactive shared writing experience, offering rich visual and audio stimuli for writing and accessing internet programmes and resources.

### **Assessment**

We understand the importance of purposeful assessment and see it as an essential part of the teaching and learning process, allowing the teacher to match activities to the needs of the children. Children are continually assessed by observing them as they learn, questioning them, listening to their discussions and marking completed work. Please refer to both the Assessment and Marking Policy for further detail. Internal and external Moderation takes place annually. Writing portfolios of moderated work are kept by the Literacy Subject Leader. External assessment including The Phonic Screening and SATs take place in accordance with government guidelines. We administer Suffolk Reading Tests annually.

### **Reporting and Targets**

Teachers meet with parents On Goal Sharing Day and Parents' Evening to discuss their child's progress and to set new targets for the child's development and progression. At the end of the academic year, parents receive a written report on which there is a summary of their child's effort and progress over the year. The child's current level of performance is also indicated and parents are informed of the meaning of this in terms of national expectations. Targets are set annually. These are discussed with parents and children at Goal Sharing and children use these in conjunction with self-assessment. SATs results are published in accordance with Government legislation. The Governors receive regular reports on the progress of English provision.

### **Most Able and Talented children are identified and suitably challenged.**

Please refer to the Most Able and Talented Policy

### **Inclusion**

We aim to fully include all pupils with SEND. Where necessary teachers will, in consultation with the SENCO, draw up provision maps for a child. When planning, teachers take these into consideration and differentiate tasks. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment and close the gap. Provision is made for children who require extra support through quality first teaching, differentiated class teaching and intervention programmes such as Phonic catch up sessions, fluency reading, precision teaching, Write Away, targeted writing groups and FLS.

### **Homework**

As well as weekly spellings to learn at home and reading, written pieces of homework may also be set in line with the Homework Policy.

### **Display**

In line with the Display Policy we recognise the importance of interactive displays with appropriate questions, and every class displays recent work celebrating a variety of children's writing.

### **Equal Opportunities**

At St James' we are committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. We aim to consider cultural background, gender, any protected characteristics, circumstance and SEN in the published materials we use with our pupils.

### **The role of the Literacy Subject leader**

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- monitoring and evaluating Literacy
- pupil progress
- provision of Literacy
- the quality of the Learning Environment,
- taking the lead in policy development,
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD,
- purchasing and organising resources,
- keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments

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

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment, Planning and Recording Policy
- Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Display Policy
- Most able and talented Policy
- Homework Policy

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance.

It was last reviewed in: summer 2022

It will next be reviewed in: summer 2025

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Head teacher)