



## St Bartholomew's C of E Primary English Policy

### Our Christian Vision

**Believe Achieve Respect Together Succeed**

**B** – We **believe** we will flourish in God's family.

**A** – We know that everyone in St Bart's can **achieve**.

**R** – We **respect** everyone in our family.

**T** – **Together** we support and help each other.

**S** – As part of God's family we support everybody to **succeed**.

### Safeguarding

St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils. We believe all staff and visitors have an important and unique role to play in the protection of children.

In this respect, our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children and young people
- To bring the educational attainments of our children and young people who are looked after nearer to those of their peers if there is a gap

### Our English curriculum intent

At St Bartholomew's C of E Primary, we follow the National Curriculum, in ensuring all pupils:

- 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.
- 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.

This policy describes our practice in the teaching of English: oracy, reading, and writing (including grammar and punctuation). It is defined by: the 2014 National Curriculum, current national guidance on best practice, local authority training, staff discussion and professional judgement. Our approach to teaching of English is multi-faceted, incorporating oracy, drama, real-life contexts and high-quality literature.

Our priority is to create fluent readers and writers with all the skills and knowledge they need to be confidently literate in life. We want all children to leave St Bartholomew's with a life-long reading habit and a love of books because reading will improve their vocabulary, inspire them creatively and improve their ability to write well.

### How English is implemented in our school:

Reading and writing are directly linked by having a high-quality text focus to dissect at first through reading, then use as a model text to aid writing. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry with an emphasis on whole texts rather than extracts and worksheets. Editorial skills needed for writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting) are taught within real contexts and teachers plan creative and relevant experiences within their class topics as a stimulus for writing.

Teachers plan sequences of lessons to build towards a longer writing outcome that is directly linked to oracy, reading, grammar and other shorter writing tasks.

### Oracy – learning to talk and learning through talk:

At St Bartholomew'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.



### **What does oracy look like at St. Bartholomew's?**

Across the school:

- Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs.
- Use of sentence-stems to scaffold oral responses in class.
- Questioning across the curriculum.
- Reciting and reading aloud.
- Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's learning.
- Re-telling and role-play.
- Opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing.
- Debating.
- Collaborative work and reporting back following group work.
- Presenting in front of an audience.

### **Reading**

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling 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 (see Phonics Policy). 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 literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature. Texts are chosen specifically to link to topics and lexiles are checked to ensure they are appropriate for the year group. Children throughout the school are read to everyday throughout the curriculum, plus specific time-tabled slots dedicated to whole class reading.

### **What does reading look like at St. Bartholomew's?**

#### **The teaching of technical reading:**

- The teaching of early reading skills begins in the Nursery through daily story, rhyme and song time alongside weekly individual reading of books children have to take home.
- Teachers and teaching assistants read in groups (of no more than 4) or on an individual basis with children as necessary: how often and who is based on assessment of progress.
- The minimum expectation is that every child reads at least twice per week.
- If a child is identified as significantly below reading expectation they should read every day.
- A wide selection of early reading books are available and these are organised into the correct phonic phase so they can be matched to sounds being taught in class. These books provide a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Once children progress from phonics based books they use the 'Bug Club' scheme.
- When using both schemes children are able to choose their own books, with the teacher ensuring a balance between fiction and non-fiction.
- Teachers and teaching assistants continue to monitor children's reading progress through a combination of individual, where needed, modelled and shared reading.
- Children's progress should be recorded in their individual 'Reading Assessment Tracker' and progression of pages read and official reading data in the Teacher Reading Record.
- Home Reading Records/Planners are used to encourage reading at home and for parents to record their comments.
- Reading at home is being encouraged and rewarded with 'Track it' points.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants assess children's progression in reading regularly using the 'St Bart's Reading Assessment Tracker' to indicate whether the child is secure at that level and thus ready to move up.
- Opportunities for independent reading are provided to encourage children to develop reading stamina and reading for pleasure.
- In key stage 2 children and adults share their text choices and recommend books to others.
- 'Reader Leaders' from Year 5 and 6 read twice a week to the younger classes to provide the pupils with reading role models. This is also an opportunity to build the confidence of targeted children in Years 5 and 6.

#### **The teaching of reading comprehension:**

- To ensure shared access to high-level texts and discussion, teachers use the whole-class reading approach. They use the strategy 'Read Aloud, Think Aloud'. This text is used throughout the week/unit.
- Weekly vocabulary blasts are taught where words are selected from the text either by the teacher or children and explored to develop meaning and conceptual understanding. Children use text marking strategies to identify meanings of unfamiliar words.
- There is also a reading strategy focus to the sessions, such as visualisation or background knowledge.



- In further lessons there is a focus on discrete teaching of a comprehension domains (VIPER). This also includes: how to identify question domain; how to answer question domain etc. Using the consistent approach outlined in the comprehension handbook.
- The same text is used throughout each week to ensure high exposure and understanding.
- Where appropriate pre-reading is done to allow more exposure to a text and aid understanding.
- Cold tasks should be used at appropriate times to assess progress.

#### **Developing a love of reading:**

- All class teachers read a class book/ novel daily. Much thought goes into the selection of texts to ensure exposure to high-level vocabulary and exciting plotlines.
- We have a dedicated book area in each classroom that is organised clearly and is inviting for the children. These are organised into reading genres/authors/topics. Current theme books are displayed to encourage children to independently widen their understanding.
- We always celebrate World Book day and have exciting opportunities in school, which include various activities and visitors that change each year.
- Opportunities for reading are provided across the curriculum: The purchase of topic books, newspapers, blogs, magazines etc. provides children with a range of reading opportunities.
- We have regular visits from story tellers and authors.
- Throughout school there are times available during the day for children to read a book of their choice from home or school.
- Teachers also promote reading competitions and challenges.
- In the playground we have a Reading Bus that children can access at break and lunchtime where they can relax and read for pleasure. Classes also have timetabled slots to visit the bus, where they can enjoy story time with an adult or read independently.
- School are currently developing a library. This will be a warm and inviting space for children to come and read. It is sourced with a wide range of high quality books to provide children with a wider choice of reading materials and thus promote a love of reading.
- The school works in partnership with parents to provide a positive reading culture for children through:
  - Sharing information on school website
  - Reading breakfasts
  - Virtual library
  - Oxford Owl at home
  - Reading Rucksacks to take home
  - Workshops

#### **Writing**

We strive to create an environment that promotes both reading and writing and highlights the links between the two. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers we encourage children to write creatively whilst teaching key writing skills. Appropriate grammar and punctuation to the writing task is taught through class models and explicitly, where necessary.

Teachers plan sequences of lessons to build towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. Wherever possible, writing is linked to the termly class topic and, therefore, the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry with an emphasis on whole texts rather than extracts and worksheets.

#### **What does writing look like at St. Bartholomew's?**

Across the school:

- Writing is, in the main, linked to class topics and real life experiences to promote engagement.
- We provide stimulating first hand experiences, e.g. trips, storytellers and visits.
- A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset.
- Writing is taught as a carefully sequenced activity and directly links with reading.
- High quality writing models are written with children to guide them.
- We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write independently and for extended periods.
- Editing and reviewing of writing is done regularly by children with guidance from teacher – with age-appropriate strategies for green-pen response marking used across the school.
- Peer marking is encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing, which is done in purple pen.
- Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking (See marking policy).
- Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to marking and feedback.
- We ensure progression in complexity of tasks and expectations year on year.
- Writing is displayed and celebrated in all classrooms.



**Phonics** Please see Phonics and Early Reading Policy.

### **Spelling**

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spelling plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school. We use the 2014 National Curriculum as a guideline as to which spellings should be taught in which year group alongside the Emile Spelling App that the school has partnered with. Emile Spelling was developed in conjunction with Manchester University and was designed to provide a high-quality spelling scheme alongside games and interactive activities to engage children in spelling.

#### **What does phonics and spelling look like at St. Bartholomew's?**

The teaching of spelling in Years 2-6:

- Our spelling lessons (from the year 2023-24) follows the Emile spelling scheme. Children's homework is online and set by the teacher to reflect the spelling rule of the week. Children use the Powerpoints and activities from the app during their spelling sessions.
- In Year 2 this begins with a pacey recap of phonics.
- During a week, spelling is taught as an explicit 30 min lesson. In Year 2 and Lower Key Stage 2, children are taught spelling 3 times a week to introduce a spelling rule, apply and assess their understanding of the rule. Teachers use their assessment to inform future planning and if a rule needs to re-visited. In Upper Key Stage 2, children are taught spelling 2 times a week with the rule and assessment at the end of the week.
- From Year 2, children are introduced to various spelling strategies that can aid their understanding of certain rules e.g omitting vowels, pyramid words, ascender and descender boxes. Children are encouraged to copy their spellings with these strategies along with rules and placing spellings into sentences to aid understanding and implementation of that word.
- Key word banks, high frequency words, dictionaries and word pattern visuals scaffold children as necessary.
- When writing, children are encouraged to 'wobble' underline words or use dictionaries to check the spelling of words they are unsure of.
- Spellings are identified by adults using the marking code and children practise spelling corrections in their literacy books as part of their response to marked work.
- Where additional spelling support is needed, children work in small groups with an adult to re-inforce spelling patterns, alongside their whole-class word lists.
- Spellings are taken home weekly to be learnt. These include the spelling rule they are learning, specific year group words set out in the National Curriculum and key words they need to learn for topics covered. KS1 children are given no more than 8. KS2 children are set homework on the Emile app reflecting the learning in the classroom that week.
- Phonics is still taught to those pupils in KS2 who scored 34 marks or below in their phonics screening check in Year 1 and 2, or when it is identified that there is a gap in a child's GPC knowledge. This can be part of Rapid Phonics intervention and/or differentiated work in spelling lesson, after initial input.

### **Handwriting**

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years, there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct cursive letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters.

#### **What does handwriting look like at St. Bartholomew's?**

- We use the National Curriculum and the Letter Join scheme as the basis for our teaching. Teachers often link handwriting to common spelling patterns. However, handwriting- how to form and join letters- should be explicitly taught and modelled to children.
- Reception children print their letters.
- In Year 1 children move onto the use of pre cursive script. Children are encouraged to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly from Year 2.
- Following the NC children in Year 1 should be taught to:
  1. Sit correctly holding pencil correctly
  2. Form lower case letters using cursive style (if appropriate) starting and finishing letters in the correct place
  3. Form capital letters correctly
  4. Form numbers 0-9 correctly
  5. Letter familiesHandwriting is taught daily within the phonics session.



- Following the NC children in Year 2 should be taught to:
  1. Form all lower case letters, capitals and digits
  2. Form letters of the correct size and orientation relative to one another in the pre cursive style.
  3. Use appropriate spacing between wordsHandwriting is taught within a 30 minute phonics/spelling lesson.
- Following the NC children in Years 3&4 should be taught to:
  1. Use cursive style to join letters, these joins should be taught discretely building on letter families and using Letter Join scheme to sequence
  2. Understand which letter, when adjacent, are best left unjoined
  3. Increase legibility, consistency and quality of handwritingHandwriting should be taught little and often – at least 3 X 10 minutes
- Following the NC children in Years 5&6 should be taught to:
  1. Continue points addressed in Y3 & 4 (if needed) This could be done as a whole class or intervention depending on number of children that require it
  2. Develop own style and increase speedExtra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school where additional handwriting support is needed.

### **Inclusion, including SEND and EAL**

All pupils are taught in a mixed attainment class and children are grouped effectively to support their learning. Where appropriate, pupils are taught from the correct year group's curriculum. However, we understand that some pupils, especially those with high level SEND or pupils that have English as an additional language may require some extra support. At St Bart's, staff are expected to provide appropriate adapted work for pupils, so that tasks match their ability and provide appropriate challenge.

Pupils working significantly below where they should be are tracked using B Squared assessments. These allow teachers to track their needs in small and manageable steps, enabling them to make appropriate progress. Staff are also used flexibly in classrooms to support all identified groups. This means that SEND and EAL pupils access group work facilitated by a mixture of their teacher, teaching assistants and some independent tasks. Support staff are also used to provide same day interventions to pupils who require extra support.

### **How we measure the impact:**

**Assessment** (Please see Assessment Policy for more information.)

We firmly believe in the power of immediate, personalised feedback, so much marking is done 'pen-in-hand' by teachers during lessons. Being next to a child and having a conversation in the moment about their work has far more impact than lengthy written feedback in many instances, so adults create classrooms where this dialogue is possible and powerful.

Pupils in EYFS are tracked using the monthly bands in the 'EYFS Development Matters framework'. To assess writing pupils in Years 1 – 6 assess against the key performance indicators on the school's Sonar assessment system. These link to the curriculum objectives of the relevant year group and show working towards, at and exceeding year group expectations. Writing moderations are also carried out across year groups, phases and within our family of schools to ensure fairness and consistency. To assess reading we use a combination of our 'Reading Assessment Tracker', work completed in reading lessons and results from comprehension tests. An assessment level is then agreed on, which we input and report on Sonar. These allows children's progress to be tracked and monitored throughout school. From these assessments teachers adapt planning and Phase Leaders/class teachers organise interventions for identified pupils.

### **Interventions**

We strongly believe that quality first teaching is the key to children's literate success at St Bart's, but we are also realistic and understand that sometimes, pupils need to be taught concepts discretely, or in a bit more detail. Across school, teachers, our speech and language therapist and support staff are used to provide quality and high impact interventions.

### **Monitoring**

The Senior Leadership Team and English Leaders are involved in the monitoring of English across school. This involves a yearly lesson observation, as well as more informal learning walks and visits to classrooms. During these visit and observations, pupils are spoken to and all English related books are looked at. This is then generated into a report, which helps identify strengths in teaching and learning, as well as actions for the development.



## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Subject leaders:**

- Ensure curriculum is cohesive and coherent.
- Ensure policies are created and adhered to.
- Support teachers in planning and teaching of English.
- Lead by example in the way they teach English.
- Prepare, organise and lead training.
- Support SLT in the monitoring of English.
- Attend and disseminate training and updates about English teaching and learning.
- Have an understanding of how assessment feeds into future actions.
- Be accountable for resources and resource management in school.

### **Teachers:**

- To plan effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to become fluent in reading and writing, consistent with National Curriculum and outlined in this policy.
- To deliver a daily English lesson, including both reading and writing aspects, which is engaging for all pupils.
- To teach technical reading at least twice a week to every pupil.
- To differentiate to support a wide range of abilities appropriately.
- To assess pupils effectively to identify next steps.
- To inform parents of children's strengths and areas for development.
- Ensure effective teaching and learning.

### **Pupils:**

- Try their best in English and develop their own confidence in the subject.
- Be engaged in all their lessons.
- Behave appropriately to support their own learning.
- To complete work to an appropriate standard.
- To ask for help when needed.

### **Parents:**

- To support the learning of English by taking an interest in their child's progress.
- To provide encouragement to support with any spelling homework they receive.
- To read with their child at home each week.
- To sustain good relationships with the class teacher to improve educational outcomes for pupils.

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