

## English Policy



Contact Details  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School,  
Chedworth Drive,  
Warndon,  
Worcester,  
WR4 9PG

Telephone: 01905 452772  
Email: office@st-josephs-pri.worcs.sch.uk  
Date: May 2021  
Review Date: May 2023

All staff at St Joseph's, recognise the central importance of English, as a subject in its own right, and as the most cohesive area of learning. Gaining and using the skills of language not only affects the child's progress in school, but also has a profound influence upon the course of his/her life. It is our main aim to give them opportunities to develop pupils' abilities in

speaking and listening, reading and writing. This will happen through the pupils being given opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding through a broad and balanced curriculum.

### **Aims for our Policy**

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To develop in pupils a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment and enrich their lives.
- To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts.
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To teach the basics – spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation – well so children have all the necessary tools;  
☞ To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.

- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

### **Objectives**

Pupils at St Joseph's will leave Year 6

- Express their thoughts and ideas with confidence in a manner appropriate to the situation;
- Listen to the ideas of others and respond thoughtfully and appropriately;
- Perform to small and large groups in a variety of ways;
- Have an interest in words and their meaning and a growing vocabulary;
- Read and write with enjoyment, confidence, fluency and understanding;
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonetic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes;
- Be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences;
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately;
- Have fluent, legible, cursive handwriting;
- Understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry;
- Understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot;
- Understand, use and be able to write a range of non-fiction texts;
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their writing;
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;
- Through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.

### **Inclusion Statement**

Every child is given the opportunity to be included in all aspects of school life and in all areas of the curriculum. Teaching and learning in the school ensures that all children are set challenges that are suitable to their needs. A range of teaching styles are adopted to respond to the diverse needs of the pupils at St Joseph's. We endeavour to make every effort to overcome any barriers for learning or assessment for the individual needs of all children. We aim to nurture and develop the child as a whole through ideal learning environments.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We have high expectations for all children. Our aim as a school is to ensure that all children have equal access to a rich and rewarding curriculum for English, and that they experience this curriculum in ways that are appropriate for their needs, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or any other determining factors. Our school is actively promoting equal opportunities by tracking groups causing concern. Consequently, we make use of a suitable range of learning activities, teaching strategies, educational materials and ICT aids to meet the needs of every individual learner. Every effort will be made to ensure that the methods and materials used are free from prejudice or bias against any particular group. Resources will actively promote an awareness of the diverse nature of the world around us. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported in their use of English and will be given opportunities to make use of their home language to assist their learning and to add to the resources of the classroom.

### **SEND**

Situations may arise in which individuals need to work at a level above or below that of the rest of their peers, or may need special assistance to accomplish particular tasks. This will become apparent through teachers' use of an on-going observation and assessment or assessment prior to a child coming to our school. Where children are thought to need additional help, teachers go through a referral procedure consistent with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Parents are informed of any decisions made. Children with EHCPs for learning are supported as instructed by their individual statements. It is for class teachers to decide how to best target their support in liaison with the SENCO.

### **Reading**

At St Joseph's, we are passionate about empowering children to become lifelong readers and therefore, the learning and teaching of reading is embedded in every area of the curriculum. Our curriculum allows the children to have opportunities to apply and continue to develop English skills in a fun, engaging and meaningful manner. Reading skills, such as decoding, word recognition and phonological awareness, are explored explicitly during daily phonics lessons in the Early Years and Key Stage One and continue to be built upon during Key Stage Two. Children are encouraged to practise a range of reading strategies to develop phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, grammar, attitude and motivation. Shared reading sessions focus upon explaining vocabulary, retrieving key information and interpreting the meaning of texts. High quality texts are used to develop comprehension, inference, deduction and prediction skills. Children explore a wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, exposing them to a broad and balanced range of text. They are given opportunities to discuss the purpose of texts that they explore as well as consider both the texts' themes and audience.

## **Phonics**

At St Joseph's, we follow RWI. We also utilise Phase 4 and 6 of Letters and Sounds. Our aim is to deliver daily, high-quality phonics sessions to enable our children to blend and segment words with confidence, as well as ensuring phonics is part of a broad and rich language curriculum. In Early Years and Key Stage One, phonics is taught every morning and is embedded throughout our curriculum. During each session, we revisit and review previous sounds through fun and creative investigative activities. We then teach, practise and apply new skills to ensure the children are confident, independent learners. The children benefit from the RWI patters to help them remember new sounds. We involve our parents throughout the year through a variety of activities, including parent workshops, family learning, stay and share sessions and fun phonics mornings.

In KS2 phonics is used as an intervention for those children who have been identified as needing additional support with phonics- these children are identified through teacher's formative assessment and through the use of the online tracking system. Children who do not reach the required standard in the phonics screening in Year 1 or Year 2 continue to receive phonic provision in Year 3.

## **Home Reading**

It is essential that pupils choose their own book to promote reading for pleasure. In Key Stage One, Children progress in their reading through the coloured "book band" system. A range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books are available for the children to choose from. These are selected primarily from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. According to their individual reading needs, children may also be put onto the Accelerated Reader scheme at an appropriate level. This enables them to consolidate their comprehension skills through follow-up quizzes and other activities. There are also a range of picture books for children who are new to English and a range of RWI books to match children's phonetic ability.

Children continue to progress in their reading through the coloured "book band" system in KS2. The Accelerated Reader scheme is also used by pupils to consolidate their comprehension skills through follow-up quizzes and other activities. Children in KS2 change their books in the library where they can select from a wide range of books and other texts. They are supported and encouraged in their selection by all school staff, the school librarian and KS2 pupil librarians.

## **Writing**

All writing at St Joseph's is for a purpose and is at the core of each of our cross-curricular topics. We find this not only motivates pupils, but also gives them a recognisable audience which leads to higher standards of work. Our writing model is taught through a specific writing journey, beginning with sharing a high-quality model text with the children. This text could be an extract from a book or one written by the teacher. We look at what makes the text effective, pull out key features and examine the language. This is then followed by giving the children an opportunity to plan their writing. To begin with, children are provided with planning templates to choose from. Explicit teaching of skills is then incorporated into the next few lessons in which the children will produce the specific genre. A slow writing technique is employed to help give children a structure but also to produce high quality work on a daily basis. Within this sequence, the teacher models writing similar texts. By the end of the teaching sequence the children will have written their version of the text which shows evidence that they have applied all of their newly acquired skills. Editing and redrafting time is later given so that their piece of writing is ready to be shared with the audience

## **Writing in the Early Years**

It all begins by making our mark! We encourage the children to make marks in all kinds of different environments: mud, sand, paint and on chalk boards. We then focus on applying our phonics knowledge, thinking about the correct way to form letters. When we are ready to write, we start by hearing and writing the initial sound in words, then move on to writing CVC words and ending the year with the target of writing simple sentences. When writing sentences, it is important that we remember to start with a capital letter, separate our words with finger spaces, put our letters on the line and remember a full stop at the end. When supporting the children to write, we encourage them to write all of the sounds that they can hear and use a sound mat if they can't remember what the sound looks like when it is written. We also teach 'tricky words' which are words that cannot be sounded out.

## **Spelling**

The ability to write clearly and with accurate spelling is a particularly important skill that children need to acquire and, as such, it is important to help and encourage children to develop as confident, competent spellers. At St Joseph's it is our aim to promote the development of confident writers who can use their spelling skills competently in all areas of the curriculum.

- Children in Year 1 and beyond will be given spellings to learn and practice at home.
- A weekly spelling test will be carried out by the class teacher.
- Spelling lessons and activities are incorporated into the weekly timetable.
- Handwriting sessions should always reinforce spelling and phonic teaching.
- Mnemonics to be taught for trickier spellings.

#### Assessment of Spelling:

- Pupils will be given their score following their weekly spelling test.
- Teachers will test the children on their year band's statutory word list/common exception words. Teachers then record each child's score on a tracking document, where they also highlight the children, they are going to target for spelling interventions.

#### The Learning Environment

- Dependent on the key stage, dictionaries, phonics mats and word mats will always be made available.
- English working walls will be purposeful for the children to utilise in their lessons.
- Alan Peat sentence types and Kung Fu punctuation posters are available for the children on the English working wall.
- Reading books are accessible for all children.

#### Handwriting

At St Joseph's we recognise that handwriting is an important skill and children's ability to write fluently for the rest of their lives depends on a good foundation of taught handwriting in the early years of their education. We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practicing speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. This is an entitlement that needs skilful teaching if each individual is to reach their full potential at our school. However, it is essential that handwriting is an intrinsic part of every phonics/spelling/writing/maths/curriculum subject lesson.

#### Expectations:

- That we are consistent in the way in which we join letters i.e. it must be remembered that some letters never join: All capital letters and x and z; g,j and y are joined into, but not out of .
- Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important.
- Some children who may need extra support with handwriting, may receive extra interventions to support them with their writing development. For children who may need extra support with developing their hand writing skills, may receive a motor skills intervention program to address gaps within their hand writing skills.
- The pen or pencil should be gripped comfortably between forefinger and thumb with the second finger below to steady it. If you pick up a pen which is lying on the table in front of you with its nib towards you in line with your forearm, you instinctively pick it up in the correct grip.
- Children should be encouraged to sit up straight with their feet on the floor. The non-writing hand must be used to steady the book or paper.

#### Monitoring and Assessment

- The monitoring of the teaching of handwriting is carried out by Class teachers and the English coordinator.
- Assessment of handwriting is an on-going process and will take place formally and informally, during the regular, focused handwriting sessions and across other curricular areas. This will provide evidence of children's progress and attainment, will serve to inform the children's future learning targets and provide information when reporting to parents.