

# English Policy

Thomas Jolyffe Primary School

To be the best we can be!



**Approved by:** Ben Phipps

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# English Policy

## Aims and objectives

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so 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, reading and writing across a range of different situations.

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 as well as fluency and prosody
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- To help children enjoy writing and recognise 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.
- To develop the mechanical aspects of handwriting, grammar and spelling, which are necessary for clear, paced, communication.

## Teaching and learning style

At Thomas Jolyffe Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. 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, writing or visual literacy stimulus. Focused word or sentence activities, or a guided group or independent activity. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, visual stimulus and poetry and use a range of

resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and small whiteboards to support their work. Children are given the opportunity to engage in research on computers and experience drama activities. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum. Literacy is a basic skill and is the key to creativity, imagination and critical thinking. We want our pupils to find learning exciting, compelling and intrinsically worthwhile. Homework linked to spellings and reading is used to support and consolidate work carried out in class.

We recognise that all classes have children with widely differing abilities, 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, ensuring work is scaffolded to allow children to experience success. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work. We use classroom assistants to support in closing learning gaps, which enables work to be matched to the needs of individuals. In addition to this, we may pre-teach children to support their understanding in lessons or provide them with further guided practice following on from the lesson.

### **English curriculum planning**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. Writing lessons are timetabled weekly to suit the circumstances of the class. These are completed alongside grammar sessions and phonic sessions in KS1. A termly reading and writing assessment is carried out and each child's progress is tracked half termly.

Medium-term plans are designed to ensure solid curriculum links as well as to develop secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum skills and expectations. The plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. They give details of the main teaching objectives and focus for each term. The English subject leader is responsible for reviewing these plans regularly.

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives, outcomes and achievement 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, any support given and how this will be assessed. The subject leader has access to copies of these weekly plans through the staff shared drive, the class teachers and teaching assistants discuss them in the weekly planning meeting. These plans are monitored regularly by the subject leader and Head Teacher. Book Trawls enable the subject leader to match the planning with work completed by the children.

### **EYFS – Communication and Language**

Communication and Language is one of the three Prime Areas of Learning in the statutory framework for the EYFS (2021)

The prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The two Early Learning Goal aspects of Communication and Language in the EYFS are:

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

The statutory framework for the EYFS states that **educational programmes** must involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

## Communication and Language – Educational Programme

'The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.'

Communication and language skills are central to children's development. When working with young children, it is essential to consistently support their language development and communication skills. Below are some examples of the techniques used at Thomas Jolyffe to support our early years children when interacting, playing and exploring, to develop language acquisition and understanding.

At Thomas Jolyffe we:

- **provide a language-rich environment** - in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other.
- **opportunities to learn new words** - hands-on experiences encourage learning and provide a context for new words to be explored. E.g, we know it's easier for children to learn vegetable names when they are touching or tasting them.
- **create an environment for conversation** - helping us to create the best possible language opportunities for our children.
- **get to know the child** - being understood, helps children to develop confidence as communicators. Our experienced early years staff recognise that with our youngest children, it's much easier to make sense of what they are saying and respond meaningfully if we have some background knowledge of their lives – finding out about each child's experiences, their home language, interests and recent life events. We ensure that parents/carers have a strong and respectful partnership with staff in the early years - which enables children to thrive.
- **model listening** - listening is an integral part of conversation, and the ability to listen is every bit as important as the ability to speak. Staff show children how to listen by listening carefully ourselves.
- **consistently share songs and rhymes** – these offer fun ways to explore the sounds and patterns of words. Poems with actions and repetition help children listen to the structure of spoken language and explore new words.
- **read daily stories aloud and share books** - supports children to develop language and understand new concepts. Encouraging children to notice pictures and understand words, will strengthen their language skills and widen their vocabulary.
- **have readily available and share non-fiction and high-quality texts** – encourages children to make sense of the world around them using language. Encouraging talk when sharing books is an excellent way to support communication and language.
- **understand children extend their language through imaginative and role play** - through our daily observations and interactions of children we add enhancements into our provision by offering props and ideas which deepen the learning. This may include small world resources or open-ended materials such as blocks or loose parts.

Children's language skills are connected to their overall development and can predict their educational success. **As speaking and listening develops, children build foundations for literacy**, for making sense of visual and verbal signs and ultimately for reading and writing.

## **Teaching English to children with Special Educational Needs**

At Thomas Jolyffe Primary School we teach English to all children of different abilities. English forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of the children with learning difficulties, which enable all pupils to make progress.

The following areas identify pupils with special needs in English,

- The lack of ability to communicate with peers and adults
- Knowledge of sounds, word recognition, simple comprehension and reading assessments using running reading records and phonic checks
- Handwriting; Poor letter recognition, orientation and formation
- Writing assessment; mark making and simple writing is assessed half termly and progress tracked
- Assessment of oral performance; Speaking and Listening skills

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;
- Using alternative communication, such as signs and symbols

### **Assessment and recording**

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments teachers make as part of every lesson help to adjust weekly planning if necessary. These are recorded as summative assessments on Insight. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives, outcomes and individual targets.

Medium-term assessments measure progress against the key objectives, and help plan for the next unit of work or reinforce and revisit work that is not secure. Writing is assessed weekly and, formally, every half term using the KPI statements. We also carry out formative comprehension assessments each term during the year as well as reading fluency assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Years 2 (optional) and 6.

The English leader keeps samples of children's writing. This demonstrates what the expected standard of achievement are when using the KPI statements. Teachers also moderate individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the STA.

The English leader monitors progress and attends moderation meetings. Reading and writing assessment is reviewed half-termly and children not making the required progress are monitored and tracked carefully, with support put in place to ensure they make the required progress and meet their expected standards.

Regular progress review meetings between class teachers and the subject lead take place to monitor progress. Any children progressing slowly and not meeting targets are discussed and intervention strategies are put in place.

Summative assessments for reading are done termly based on an unseen test and there are national tests at the end of Year 6. Teacher assessment in writing especially determines children's standards together with a wealth of evidence to clarify judgements. Long-term projected targets for reading and writing are set to ensure the academy is able to maintain outstanding standards in English.

The English leader assesses presentation, handwriting and marking during book trawls. We follow a cursive handwriting policy from year 2 and all children are taught the cursive, lead in and strategies for joining using this. Handwriting expectations are clearly modelled by all staff and children practise handwriting skills weekly.

## **Resources**

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school.

- All classrooms have dictionaries, thesauruses and age-appropriate small apparatus.
- All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Children have access to the internet through their classroom ipads, on the class interactive white boards, visualisers and ipad sessions
- The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research and reading development
- All classrooms also have in class libraries to encourage a love of independent reading
- Role play areas in EYFS and KS1 to develop language and drama
- Writing frames and writing criteria check lists enable accurate writing structure.
- Weekly spellings and keywords support our children as independent writers

## **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader and Head Teacher. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject and to also be aware of areas for further improvement which contributes to the School Improvement Plan. The subject leader reviews samples of the children's work and undertakes coaching and lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The Governor responsible for English meets with the subject leader in order to review progress being made.