



## St. Leonard's C.E. (VC) First School

### English Policy

#### 1 Aims and objectives

**1.1** The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Confidence in English enables children 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.

The Governing Body believes that all children, regardless of ability and behaviour, are valued equally at St Leonard's First School. Children with SEND are not viewed as a separate entity, but are part of the whole school approach, and different children's needs are recognized and met through varied and flexible provision throughout the curriculum.

In order to meet the needs of all of our children, we are actively working towards 'Dyslexia Friendly School Status'. We believe that this will not only benefit children with dyslexic tendencies, but will also have a significant impact on other pupils whose literacy skills are not appropriate to their age, as strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

**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** At our school we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended by the Primary Strategy. 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 word-banks to support their work. We also hear individual readers regularly and send books and spelling lists home so that parents are involved in their child's reading. The children work their way through a carefully thought out selection of books at a level appropriate to their individual needs. The books are mainly from the Oxford Reading Scheme, although we also draw from other schemes. In the classrooms teachers have access to a catalogue of these books which are listed at different stages. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning such as in drafting their work. They also use 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 and ages in all classes at our school. We recognize 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 this is done 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 National Curriculum 2014 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). Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.
- 3.3** Our medium-term plans, 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, taking into account the needs of mixed-age classes. We rotate our resources carefully to avoid repetition as many children spend two years in a class.
- 3.4** Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives 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 Headteacher may look at them on a weekly basis.

## **4 The Foundation Stage**

- 4.1** As the reception class is part of the foundation stage, we teach to the development matters and early learning goals within the early years foundation stage curriculum. This underpins curriculum planning for children from birth to the end of the reception year. The prime area of learning 'Communication and Language' and the specific area of learning 'Literacy' together form the basis of our planning in this subject. 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.

## **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 piece of work such as a simple class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. Programs are used throughout the age-range to help with learning spellings and we have many CD-ROMs to complement the reading books we use in school. 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 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 visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views. In particular we have regular circle time sessions to encourage children to talk over problems they may be having in the classroom.

### **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 educational needs**

- 6.1** At our school 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. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against age related expectations.
- 6.2** When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.
- 6.3** Intervention through a graduated response may lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English.
- 6.4** As a dyslexia friendly school we work to understand dyslexic strengths and weaknesses. We provide good inclusive practice for children supported without SEN provision and have access to specialist expertise to help when problems are more severe.
- 6.5** We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a theatre trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.
- 6.6** 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.

## **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 to the teaching objectives. Medium-term assessments are used to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help plan for the next unit of work. They use a class record of the key objectives as the recording format for this. Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these

## English Policy

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 plus the optional GL computer based tests at the end of Years 3 and 4. All test results are kept on the school computer and passed on to the child's next school along with other records of achievement. Teachers also make termly assessments using Classroom Monitor.

- 7.3 The Key Stage 2 teacher liaises with the teachers at the middle school to ensure a successful transfer at the end of Year 4.
- 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. Samples are also kept of the literacy SATs tests.

## 8 Resources

- 8.1 There is a wide range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus such as phonic fans and puzzles. Each classroom has a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts that are readily accessible to all the children and has a writing area. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computers. The classrooms and resource room also 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 co-ordinator. The work of the co-ordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, managing literacy resources, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a lead and direction for the subject in the school. Our school has a named governor with special responsibility for English. Governors and the Headteacher to observe English sessions and offer feedback to class teachers. The English co-ordinator discusses with the Headteacher any specific issues arising in the subject.

**Reviewed:** October 2016

**Date of next Review:** October 2018