

*'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'*  
Matthew 7:12



## English Policy

### Our School Vision

*"There is more treasure to be found in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."*  
- Walt Disney

At St Mark's Primary School, we want our children to fully discover and nurture their potential through developing their speaking, reading and writing skills in order to achieve their dreams and aspirations throughout life. We wish them to leave primary school with the skills necessary to converse clearly and effectively with those that they meet and to have a passionate and embedded love for both reading and writing, which continues to open doors for them throughout their lives.

### Purpose of Study

A high-quality and inspiring education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, other are able to communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils will have the opportunity to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We recognise that high-quality literature, especially plays a key role in such development. Reading enables pupils to both acquire knowledge but also to build upon and develop deeper understanding of existing information. We believe that **all** the skills of literacy are key in order to participate fully and effectively as a member of society.

### 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 suitable learning challenges. A broad range of teaching styles are adopted in response to diverse learning needs. We make every effort to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and for groups of children. We aim for St Mark's Primary School to be an ideal learning environment for nurturing and developing the whole child.

## Aims

## Intent

At St Marks Primary School, it is our intent to nurture and develop the whole child. We strive for all pupils (regardless of background or circumstance) to become confident in their use of a wide range of literacy-based skills. The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding,
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, knowing that reading is a wonderful relaxation tool and enhances mental health, as well as developing knowledge,
- acquire a broad vocabulary, a comprehensive understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions and strategies for reading, writing and spoken language,
- appreciate our rich and varied literacy heritage,
- 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 confident in the arts of speaking and listening, making and delivering formal presentations and participating effectively in debates.

## Implementation

The English Curriculum is taught using a variety of resources to engage children and enhance learning opportunities across the school- the most important of these being high quality, challenging texts that link with other curriculum areas in order to develop continuity and a purpose for learning. The curriculum is constantly evolving and so too are the needs of the children therefore the Subject Leader and school staff constantly look for fresh and exciting texts to support the curriculum and development of skills. We prioritise time daily to read to children in order to further develop their love for reading and model reading for pleasure and enjoyment, developing vocabulary and helping to feed and encourage pupils' imaginations. We are very proud of our school library which is also an incredible source of literature that allows the children to experience a whole-host of authors, subjects and genres. To embed skills, links are made to other areas of the curriculum through cross-curricular writing, performance poetry, debate, multi-media projects and the use of computing to write, publish and communicate in different ways.

## **Impact**

The impact of our cross-curricular approach to the teaching of English throughout the school is evident in the fluent oracy skills of our pupils, their passion for reading and the wide-range of writing styles and genres that are produced across the school.

## **Planning for the Curriculum**

At St Marks Primary School, we follow the statutory guidance for the teaching of English, as set out in the National Curriculum 2014 documentation. We aim to develop the English skills children will need in order to equip them for everyday life in an ever-changing society. We strive to create an engaging, language rich environment, where children can learn and develop skills in a purposeful manner, making strong links with other curriculum areas where appropriate.

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Primary National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)

## **EYFS**

**In the Foundation Stage (Reception and Nursery),** Communication and language development involves providing children with many opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Literacy Development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters in order to begin reading and writing. Children are given a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, rhymes and other materials) to ignite their initial interest. Children in Reception work within the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework towards the Early Learning Goals. The children experience activities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through the seven areas of learning, including the prime area of Communication and Language and the supporting area of Literacy.

The Communication and Language element encourages children to listen, respond and engage in activities with others and to express themselves effectively.

Literacy encompasses reading and writing using the phonic knowledge to decode words and reading and writing simple sentences. Children in reception follow a structured, synthetic phonics program, 'essential letters and sounds', taught using multisensory, engaging activities and resources, both discreetly and within continuous provision activities. Each session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practice together and apply what they have learned.

## **KS1**

**At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2)**, children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They are encouraged to begin reading and writing independently using scaffolded teaching approaches. They should use descriptive language to explore their own experiences as well as those of imagination. In key stage one, children experience a range of text genres aimed at broadening their knowledge of text types and engaging them in literature. Children are taught skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing encompassing phonic knowledge, drama, spelling, grammar, comprehension, composition and handwriting. Children in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, if necessary, follow a structured synthetic phonics program (ELS). They are taught using multisensory, engaging activities and resources, both discreetly and within continuous provision settings if appropriate for the age group. Each session gives an opportunity for children to revisit their previous experience, be taught new skills, practice together and apply what they have learnt. We encourage reading for pleasure and teach reading through a variety of phonetically decodable books which link to the sounds they know.

## **KS2**

**At Key Stage Two (years 3-6)**, children are taught to change the way that they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They are taught to read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning within them. Additionally, they are supported in their exploration of the uses of language and literary devices in order to fully appreciate how the structure of language works. Children experience a range of text genres aimed at broadening their knowledge of text types and engaging them in literature. Children are taught skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing encompassing phonic knowledge, drama, spelling, grammar and punctuation, comprehension, composition and handwriting.

**Within Lower Key Stage Two (years 3-4)**, pupils should be able to read books written at an age-appropriate interest level and as their decoding skills become increasingly secure, teaching is directed more towards developing their vocabulary and the breadth and depth of the reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. They should be developing their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently. They should also be developing their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing in the more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures from which they can draw to express their ideas. Joined handwriting should become the norm and pupils should spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling, such as morphology and etymology.

**Within Upper Key Stage Two (5-6)**, pupils should be able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age appropriate level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They should be able to read most words effortlessly and be capable of working out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity. Additionally, pupils' spelling of statutory year group words should be mostly accurate and the ability to decode and comprehend unfamiliar language should be based upon contextual clues, morphology and etymology. Grammar and punctuation should be broadly accurate and used effectively to convey meaning and description. By the end of Year Six, they should be able to reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar and their confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language is further extended through public speaking performance and debate.

### **Speaking and Listening**

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum as spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

Opportunities to develop these skills include: talk partners, storytelling, role-play and debating within lessons across the curriculum, class work share assemblies, School Council representatives and school productions. Children who require extra support in speaking and listening are referred to a Speech and Language therapist to further assess their needs.

We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect or other language is of prime importance. All staff members are role models who promote Standard English and take care to sensitively correct children's misconceptions with language.

### **Reading**

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop their own reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading time. From Foundation Stage up to Year 6, children have the opportunity to read with an adult regularly; with there being a particular focus on questioning to promote an in-depth understanding of the text. Questions progress from literal to inferential as the children move up through the school.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, e.g. 'World Book Day'- where children are immersed in storytelling, author quizzes, book discussions and the opportunity to dress up as a book character and share their favourite books. Other opportunities include library visits-



where the children are encouraged to take books out, author visits, drama sessions and individual class reading challenges to promote the love of reading.

Each child has a book bag and a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents/Carers are encouraged to read with their child thrice a week and weekly reading entries are recorded and certificates used to recognise those reading regularly.

Annual workshops are provided and run by teaching staff across the school to encourage and coach parents in the correct strategies to support reading fluency, comprehension skills and Phonics at home.

## **Writing**

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well-structured, detailed and creative writing where the content is adapted based on a wide range of audiences and purposes. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Our approach to teaching writing stems from engaging pupils in appropriately engaging and challenging literature, which forms a basis for their own writing. Teachers model effective writing skills and strategies through shared and talk for writing sessions. Guided sessions are also used to target specific needs and working walls are used across the school to support pupils in the build-up to the writing phase. Children are provided with various opportunities to write at length and independently through short writing tasks, cross-curricular activities and an end-of-unit unsupported piece of writing.

## **Approaches to Grammar and Spelling**

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of The National Curriculum (2014). Our expectations are outlined in the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Policy. It details the expectations for the teaching of grammar and the terminology (from the NC glossary) which must be used by each year group. It offers a guide for identifying the key objectives and skills which must be taught each year. Grammar and punctuation skills are to be taught discretely and then embedded and referred to throughout teaching of English. In KS1 specific sessions each week are dedicated to the teaching of grammar.

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's creativity. We aim to

use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins, structure and meaning of words.

### **Differentiation (including more able)**

At St Marks Primary School, we aim to provide the best teaching for all children in order for them to reach their maximum potential in English according to their individual abilities. We identify pupils or groups of pupils that may need additional support and take steps to improve their attainment or deepen their learning. Staff also use precision teaching in order to focus on particular groups of children and timely intervention strategies for identified children to support marking and feedback within lessons. More able children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided in line with greater depth challenges to assist them to achieve and gain a deeper understanding and mastery of their learning. We identify that a more able child is any child who is attaining beyond their 'age-related expectations', which means they are achieving at a higher standard within their own year group expectations. Higher attaining pupils will be predominantly supported by the class teachers and given activities that allow them to gain further mastery of the learning by applying it in different ways.

### **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. This school is actively promoting equal opportunities by tracking groups who may be a cause for concern. Consequently, we make use of a suitable range of learning activities, teaching strategies, educational materials and digital aids to meet the needs of every individual learner. Every effort is 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.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Situations may arise in which individuals need to work at a level above or below that of the rest of their peer group, 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 statements and/or My Plans 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.

### **Assessment and Reporting Progress**

Children are assessed according to the learning outcomes outlined within the National Curriculum and Lancashire KLIPS (Key Learning Indicators of Performance) are used to track the progress of reading and writing. Teachers will use a combination of summative and on-going formative assessment to make judgements about whether a child is **Emerging**, **Developing** or **Secure** within the year group learning outcomes. This data is recorded and reported to the English Subject Leader who is then able to suggest targets or strategies in order to further promote progress. Termly reports are also used to liaise with parents in order to keep them up-to-date with their child's performance.

Throughout the school, individual target sheets for writing are kept within the front of their English books so that they are aware of what they need to work on and how to further improve their writing. This also helps to track the progress the child has made and is used as a way of celebrating the individual achievements of each child.

At the end of EYFS, children are assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals. In year one, children take a statutory phonics check to test their decoding skills and in Years 2 and 6, children will take statutory assessments for reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Teacher assessment is used to determine the level children are working at in relation to writing.

Assessment tests or tasks are used at the end of each half-term in order to track and monitor the progress of each child. These are

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in English is the responsibility of the English Subject Leader. The work of the Subject Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about the current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. Additionally, the named governor responsible for Literacy meets regularly with the Subject Leader in order to review progress and report any specific resource needs or requirements.



## **Staff Development Opportunities**

At St Mark's Primary School, staff development is undertaken as regularly as possible in order to maintain the high-standards of teaching and to incorporate new and fresh concepts or strategies to be used within the classroom. Development is provided in the following ways:

- areas identified for development during Performance Management Reviews,
- the school improvement plan,
- by discussion with the Head Teacher and/or Co-ordinator,
- by making staff aware of relevant training courses,
- through observations and feedback,
- during whole-school INSET days,
- local area cluster meetings,
- by visits to leading or outstanding literacy teachers.

## **Parental Support**

We recognise that the relationship between school and home is incredibly valuable and important in terms of developing children's literacy skills. We therefore encourage parents to be as involved in their child's learning as possible by:

- Involving parents in the school's reading programme from the moment their child starts school.
- Updating the guidance for parents as their children move through school so that they can continue to offer appropriate support.
- Giving parents termly outlines of the curriculum areas in English that each year group will be studying.
- Welcoming offers of help from parents to assist in school by listening to children read.

## **Monitoring and Reviewing of this Policy**

This policy was written and adapted through the consensus and agreement of all teaching staff as a result of collaborative discussion. Policy is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with practices of the school.

**Reviewed: To be reviewed September 2025**