A close-up of a school

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**English Policy**

# Policy Statement

We aim to develop a love for the English language in its written and spoken forms. We encourage children to develop skills to communicate effectively in speech and writing and to listen with understanding, to be responsive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers. We recognise English as a core subject in the National Curriculum and as a pre-requisite for educational and social progress empowering children to communicate creatively and imaginatively. We aim to provide an environment for language development, which is stimulating and is characterised by high expectations of success so that the fullest potential of each individual may be realised.

Alongside this, we also follow the Curious City curriculum, which is centred around ‘states of being’. These ask the children to work at ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’. In the context of English, this means that we are being ‘author-writers’ and ‘author-readers’. Pupils make strong links to authors and writers and ‘real-life’ reasons for writing and reading.



**According to Curious City:**

**Authors and writers...** read a lot and use what they have read to help them write what is inside their heads. This means other people can read what they have written to help them understand something, entertain them or make life better. When talking about English, we use our **states of being** to describe us. So when writing, we are ‘Author Writers’ and when reading we are ‘Author Readers’.

# Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at St George’s Primary school.

# Aims

To provide children with access to an integral programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing and to strive for excellence in all areas.

At St George’s Primary school we work towards every child becoming literate.

By the age of 11 we aim for a child to be able to:

* Read with confidence, fluency, enjoyment and understanding by providing a wealth of reading material with access to a range of text covering a balance of fiction and non-fiction
* Use a range of independent strategies to; self-monitor and correct, retrieve information and evaluate what has been read
* Use higher order reading skills including deduction and inference through the use of text referral, assessment of author’s intentions, justification of their opinions and judgements in the pursuit of critical awareness
* Write with confidence, imagination and enthusiasm with an awareness of purpose and audience
* Use grammar and punctuation correctly to attain high levels of English writing
* Understand and use technical vocabulary when discussing their reading and writing
* Write to a high standard in a range of genres, in the style of different authors and structure their writing in narrative and non-narrative styles
* Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately
* Communicate effectively, speak with confidence and structure their talk in ways, which are coherent and understandable
* Listen carefully with good concentration so they are able to respond thoughtfully and appropriately
* Ask and answer questions to demonstrate and clarify their understanding
* Write with fluent, legible joined handwriting and take pride in the presentation of all their work

# Curriculum Management and School Organisation

National Curriculum English is predominantly taught through the National Curriculum objectives with all children having a minimum of one hour English teaching every day.

The objectives of the curriculum are being followed in classes from year one upwards. In Reception the elements of the curriculum are covered during the school day, but not necessarily as a designated hour.

All children are taught English in mixed classes where they will work in flexible groupings, sometimes with a similar ability and sometimes as mixed ability.

Independent tasks are an integral part of our English curriculum and work is differentiated according to ability groups.

English time may also be used for assessment purposes.

We provide our children with regular opportunities for completing extended writing and cross-curricular writing.

# Planning

Teachers base their planning on National Curriculum objectives. Teachers follow a clear Long-Term plan which provides writing objectives and states writing genres to be covered.

The English Subject Leader regularly monitors English planning within the school. All teachers are responsible for completing a Medium Term plan and can plan their weekly lessons in whichever format they would prefer.

Teachers plan on a weekly basis providing a balance between fiction and non-fiction.

# Assessment

Children’s progress is assessed termly and a formally at the end of each Key Stage via optional Year 2 SATs and end of KS2 Year 6 SATs tests. Throughout the year we use Rising Stars New Pira Primary tests, twice a year to assess reading progress. Writing is assessed via a rigorous moderation process using assessment forms. Writing is moderated within school, across schools and with our North Dorset Hub schools to ensure accurate assessments. The results are then added to our assessment platform, Insight. Children who are not on the Special Needs register but are identified as needing some extra support are given the opportunity to follow government initiatives to help them reach the same standard as their peers.

# SEN Provision

See SEND policy.

The SENCO ensures that support plan targets are being implemented by reviewing regularly.

# Cross Curricular Links

The English lessons will be used as an opportunity to teach skills required for reading, writing and speaking and listening in the full range of curriculum areas. Children are frequently required to write within their wider curriculum lessons and apply new skills learned within their English lessons.

# Role of Governors

There is a designated English governor who meets with the English lead on a regular basis, observing lessons and looking at planning and subject monitoring. This link governor then reports back to the governors on her findings.

A person in a wheelchair holding a stack of books

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**Handwriting**

See Handwriting policy.

# Spelling (See also Phonics and Early Reading Policy)

We follow Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics. Once pupils have graduated from RWI, they progress onto our school spelling programme. Children in Reception - Year 2 are taught Phonics, where they learn alphabetical letter knowledge, order, phonetic spelling, sounds and blends. Once graduated from RWI, they follow a spelling scheme which teaches children how to apply their phonics knowledge to spelling. Crucially, the scheme also teaches Morphology, to help children understand where words originate from, by being able to understand the relationship between root words, suffixes and prefixes etc. children begin to understand the complexities of the English language and apply their learning to their spellings.

# Reading

# Guidance from Read Write Inc to Whole Class Reading

When children graduate from RWI, they are able to read anything. But they are not finished with reading instruction.

Children are unlikely to be reading at 90 words per minute in Year 1, and so not able to read with fluency and comprehension – yet. Continued reading instruction in Year 2 is therefore crucial in order to teach fluency and enable children to become readers for life.

We use our judgement about which books suit our children best:

* We encourage our children to become lifelong readers, by ensuring they are not reading books which are too difficult and therefore not engaging.
* We pride ourselves on being able to find a book for each child
* We regularly check children’s reading progress to ensure they are reading a book which is matched to their reading ability.

Once graduated from RWI, children in Year 1 and 2 join a comprehension group. Here they practiced improving reading fluency but also begin to answer increasingly complex questions about the text. Children will practice a range of skills during these lessons.

For example:

* reading, decoding, vocabulary check, phonics links
* reading for fluency with expression, responding to simple questions.
* echo reading and timed reads to promote prosody and intonation and to improve fluency.
* modelling the answering of comprehension questions-focusing on a range of reading skills each week.
* responding to questions linked to the reading skill/answering a range of questions

Within KS2, children have a whole class reading lesson every day for around 30 minutes. In these lessons, they explore a range of extracts aimed at challenging them. As with Year 1 and 2, children answer increasingly complex questions about the text. They are encouraged to use their inference skills to ‘dig deeper’ into a text and consider hidden meanings. Children will practice a wide range of skills during these lessons, such as:

* reading, decoding, vocabulary checks
* reading for fluency with expression – this can be individual or choral reading.
* responding to questions – these could be quick fire recall or more complex.
* echo reading and timed reads to promote prosody and intonation and to improve fluency.
* modelling the answering of comprehension questions-focusing on a range of reading skills each week. This could include: Vocabulary focuses questions, inference questions, predicting by using clues in the text, explanation questions, thinking about the ‘why’, retrieval questions, where children have to find an answer from what they have read and summarising questions, where children have to be able to sequence or summarise from the whole text.

During whole class reading lessons, children may be reading about topics which relate to their Curious City enquiry, or reading from a range of texts – fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Reading aloud forms a core part of our reading curriculum as we recognise it’s importance in children gaining fluency.

**We recognise that reading aloud is crucial for all children.**

*As* [*Siedenburg*](https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/14894648-language-at-the-speed-of-sight) *says in his book Language at the Speed of Sight:*

*“For those pupils who lack reading fluency and skill to begin with, silent reading is less likely to be profitable”.*

*He goes on to say:*

*“Children who struggle when reading texts aloud do not become good readers if left to read silently; their dysfluency merely becomes inaudible.”*

For whole class reading, the children are taught as a whole class with identified children being provided with additional support as needed. Where there is a SEND need children may work in a smaller ability group to ensure they are able to access the text and where needed, the text will be adapted to meet their needs. Children are given challenging texts which contain Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, through which they are taught specific skills and strategies. Children work together to practice skills, then have an opportunity to practice their skills independently.

All children take home an individual reading record which is at an appropriate level for their reading skills. Whilst on the RWI phonics scheme, the reading record is used to record reading scheme books read by the child and encourages parents’ comments. Class teachers will monitor how regularly pupils are reading and how often books are changed.

Once pupils have graduated from RWI, they are encouraged to use the school library, or their own class libraries. Children are taught where to find the books which are suitable for them and they choose books freely. Children are able to take as many books from the library as they would like.

# Writing

The National Curriculum framework objectives for writing composition are followed in both key stages ensuring continuing and progression.

A white circle with black text and yellow dots

Description automatically generatedAt St George’s Primary School, we have adopted ‘Drawing Club’ in Reception and ‘Curious Quests’ in Year 1 and 2. Drawing Club allows us to open up the magic world of tales and story to children whilst at the same time enriching their language and vocabulary, developing their fine motor skills, and building upon their application of phonics. Drawing Club is a highly creative approach that immerses children into a world full of imagination where anything can happen and often does!   
  
Drawing Club is a true adventure. It is based on a perfect mixture of picture books, tales, and animations. The approach involves time together as a whole class, followed by time spent with children exploring their own ideas and creativity. Drawing Club puts us, the creative teachers, back at the centre of our teaching, allowing us to have the freedom to adventure and effectively bring the world of stories to life. To support the transition from Early Years to Key Stage One, we have adopted ‘The Curious Quests‘ as our approach for teaching writing to year 1 and 2. This approach builds on ‘Drawing Club’ by giving opportunities for children to learn the mechanics of writing through explicit vocabulary teaching, giving children a purpose for writing, igniting their imagination and supporting the development of writing through small group work with the teacher.

The children will also have independent access to carefully resourced continuous provision. Through this approach, we aim to create children who are creative and excited about writing, while being able to apply the relevant skills and knowledge so that they are competent writers too.

A book cover with a floral frame

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Through this approach, we aim to create children who are creative and excited about writing, while being able to apply the relevant skills and knowledge so that they are competent writers too.

In KS2, we provide children with a mixed diet of teaching. In Year’s 3 and 4 we have adopted ‘The Write Stuff’ approach to our teaching and learning of English writing, to ensure clarity to the mechanics of writing. Following a method called ‘Sentence Stacking’, the approach places emphasis on sentences being ‘stacked together’ chronologically and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing. Within each genre studied by the children, they will learn to sentence stack, focusing on the style of the author and impact of words and sentences most appropriate for that particular genre. In Year’s 5 and 6 we start the year using the structure of the Write Stuff before moving to a more independent style of writing in the Summer Term – units of work are taken from the Literacy Shed plus to support teachers in their planning.

All genres covered within writing sessions are those as taken from the English Overview document. At the start of each writing lesson, there will be a question or two based upon the various strands of spelling, punctuation and grammar. These questions are taught for retrieval practice and to ensure that children remember important terminology throughout their writing journeys.

Within each writing lesson, pupils learning is ‘chunked’ into three distinct parts for a writing sequence; “Engage, Immerse, Independence”. The engage stage is a time to inspire: through the use of a stimulus, pupils are immersed in a rich language discussion and activities to provide a wealth of vocabulary to aid their writing. The Immerse stage is the chunk whereby the teacher demonstrates the thoughts and processes of a writer and articulates writing choices, this is taught according to the structures which are woven into The Write Stuff and Literacy Shed plus teaching sequences. The Independent stage comes at the end of a unit of work and this is where children have to opportunity to showcase their learning in a piece of independent writing.

# Speaking and Listening

Opportunities for Speaking and Listening are provided across the curriculum. Within our Curious City Curriculum, pupils have opportunities to present their work, within a final challenge, as an oral presentation. For example, in Foxes Class recently, a final challenge was to present their learning as a green-screen documentary, which was recorded and shared with parents.

Written by Kelly McCall (English Lead)

Date: November 2024 (reviewed April 2025)

To be reviewed in 2 years (November 2026)