

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

# English Policy

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**"Be responsible, be fair, stay positive and care"**

## **English at John Ruskin Primary School**

The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of 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. In addition, the skills of English are a key part of participating fully in society.

### **Principles and Purposes**

The development of English is the responsibility of the English Coordinator and overseen as a cross curricular subject by the Senior Leadership Team.

This policy aims to give an overview of policy and practice in the English Curriculum at John Ruskin School.

At John Ruskin we aim to encourage a love of language throughout the school through a rich and diverse experience, quality first teaching and the use of appropriate resources and quality literature.

We believe that children need to talk, listen, read and write to a high standard in order to gain full access to the whole primary curriculum. It is for this reason that speaking and listening, reading and writing are seen as integral to all areas of the curriculum.

We aim to involve parents as closely as possible in supporting and extending children's development in English through a good liaison with the school.

We believe that all children should be set high standards regardless of race, gender, home language or previous experiences.

We view positively the skills all children have in English, regardless of accent, dialect or home language.

### **Practices**

English is taught in the following ways:

- Daily English lessons, including drama
- Guided/Shared Writing
- Extended Writing
- Guided Reading and Independent Reading
- English Skills lessons
- Daily/ embedded phonics teaching (EYFS and KS1)
- Handwriting
- GPS lessons
- Opportunities for talk throughout the curriculum

- Reading aloud in small groups, to the class and to the wider school in assemblies
- Use of the school library
- Use of local library visits
- PACT scheme: home/school reading activity booklets in KS1 & LKS2; Reading Journals in UKS2
- Reading schemes
- Visiting professionals – e.g. poets, writers, storytellers, drama workshops.
- Other planned and unplanned opportunities as they arise

### **Daily English lesson**

Each class in Key Stage 1 and 2 have a daily English lesson. Teachers use the John Ruskin School medium term plans, the English Curriculum and themed resources to plan daily lessons for English. The medium term plans use the objectives from the National Curriculum (2014) Programme of Study for English for each year group but teachers are free to adapt these plans by tracking objectives backwards and forwards to ensure the relevant teaching of English objectives are meeting the children's needs.

The objectives on the medium term plans should feed into the planning for daily lessons. Over the course of each unit, there should be a balance between reading and writing objectives.

Planning should include:

- An engaging starting point of a high-quality children's text at the beginning of each unit.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar objectives and activities.
- Quality texts and children's literature to be looked at.
- Explicit teaching of core/key vocabulary as well as wider vocabulary development
- Reading objectives and activities.
- A progression from reading into writing across the unit.
- Writing objectives and activities.
- Clear links between teacher modelling and children practicing and using those skills.
- Clear cross curricular links made where possible, indicated on yearly maps.
- Extended writing clearly identified.
- Regular opportunities for speaking, listening and drama

English in the Early Years is covered in two strands of the EYFS curriculum: Communication and Language; and Literacy. Handwriting is covered in the Physical Development strand and includes daily Finger Gym activities.

### **Extended Writing**

Extended writing plays an important role in the English curriculum, giving the children an opportunity to write independently for a sustained period of time.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, extended writing should take place every week in the timetabled slot. Where possible, the extended writing should be linked to the English unit being taught at the time. Teachers should also regularly plan for extended writing opportunities as part of their wider curriculum every two weeks. For example, writing under pictures that have been sequenced in an RE lesson, writing a letter from or to a historical character, writing instructions on how to make something in DT, etc.

Extended writing should always be led by English objectives, even when the writing is cross curricular. Handwriting expectations remain high across all subjects. All extended writing should be completed in English or topic books and taught in English sets in Key Stage 2.

### **Guided Reading and Independent Reading**

Guided reading is an approach to the teaching of reading that supports pupils' development as active and independent readers.

Guided reading should be taught daily in the timetabled slots and will, in some instances, include whole class teaching and skill development. Groups for guided reading should be set according to the current needs of the children with each guided reading session being carefully planned to meet the needs for that group.

Objectives for each group should be taken from the '*STAR assessment framework for reading (2017)*' which can be found in the 'Staff Server' under 'Guided Reading Records.' These record sheets provide a breakdown of the standards expected by each Year group and teachers should use the breakdown as a guide for planning guided reading for each group.

The teacher should work with a different group each day, tailoring the teaching to meet the needs of the group. The text chosen should be 90% accessible for the level of reading in the group.

During the guided session, the teacher should be developing skills through careful modelling of strategies and a range of question types, both oral and written. Vocabulary development is paramount to developing comprehension fluency and, as such, is a key focus.

During guided reading time, all children should be engaged in a reading/writing task or be given opportunities to browse and read in the class book corner or library, for pleasure and information. These activities should be planned by the teacher.

Guided reading texts can be found in the library and have been book banded to ensure teachers choose books that are correctly matched to each group. The teacher should choose the text and should have read it in order to ensure that it meets the needs of the children. Key questions (linked to the Reading Skills Pawsome Gang) should be planned for each guided reading session and then followed up with a planned follow up activity for the following day.

The children should be given an opportunity each week to choose a book from the class book corner and/or library in order to read independently.

## English Skills

Each class timetable has an allocated time slot for teaching English skills. This session should be used alternately for reading comprehension, GPS skills and writing skills.

### Reading comprehension

Use for:

- Timed practice
- Opportunities to explicitly teach 'Pawsome Gang' reading skills
- Opportunities to go through answers and identify where the answer was found in the text, including evidence for reasoning questions
- Guided comprehension tasks

Resources:

- Reading Eggs
- Rising Stars comprehension assessments
- Badger comprehension books
- Collins comprehension books
- Past papers
- Kent comprehension papers

### English skills lessons

Use for:

- Development of sentence construction skills
- Speaking and listening tasks
- Spelling activities and tasks
- Opportunities for individual/group conferencing
- Addressing weaknesses from current medium term plans

Resources:

- Espresso – audio/visual and interactive content
- Grammar for Writing
- Developing Early Writing
- Collins Activity books
- Spelling logs
- Websites such as Phonics Play, Bug Club, Reading Eggs/Eggspres
- Whiteboards
- Spelling Banks
- Pie Corbett signs and books

## Daily phonics teaching

John Ruskin School use the Letters and Sounds document produced by the Primary Strategy to ensure systematic teaching of phonics. Letters and Sounds is designed to help teachers teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling by fostering children's speaking and listening skills and teaching high quality systematic phonic work at the point they judge children should begin the programme.

The teaching of phonics takes place every day.

## **Handwriting**

Handwriting is taught according to the Nelson handwriting scheme. Copies of the teachers manual and pupil books are available in each classroom. Support materials can be found in the library and interactive resources on the Desktop: Nelson Handwriting.

Teachers and other adults should attempt to provide a good model of the handwriting scheme in children's books and on boards.

The teaching of handwriting should take place twice a week during English lessons.

Please see the Handwriting Policy for further guidance.

## **Opportunities for talk throughout the curriculum**

At John Ruskin we understand that speaking and listening is the bedrock of English development and as such, place great importance on speaking and listening throughout the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to include talk partners in every lesson, thus giving children an opportunity to speak in context on several occasions every day.

## **Reading aloud to the class**

Teachers should match the children's interests, age and class topic to a range of books, including poetry, throughout the year.

All children in Key Stage 2 should be reading a novel in class, which could be used to provide extracts for explicit teaching within the daily English lesson.

## **Use of the school library - see appendix**

The library is organised using the Primary School Dewey System and Reading Cloud, a digitised system for storing, organising and scanning books. A card system is being phased out. These systems are maintained by the Business Manager and an appointed TA to work in the Library one half day/week.

All children should be allowed access to the resources of the library throughout the year. An adult should always be present in the library when children are using it.

The library books are regularly audited to ensure that they:  
reflect the multicultural world that the children have experienced;  
have good curriculum coverage and  
include high quality children's literature for a range of reading ages, interests and abilities.

In Key Stage 1, children also have the opportunity to visit a local community library as a class, once a month, to develop their own reading interests (to resume following the lifting of current Covid restrictions).

Please see the Library Policy for further guidance.

### **Reading scheme**

Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) is the core reading scheme used at John Ruskin Primary School. Children begin the scheme in Reception with a progression of phonically decodable books linked to Letters and Sounds. In KS1 children continue to access reading books linked to their current level of decoding ability through to the end of Phase 6. For children who continue to require access to Letters and Sounds decodable books in LKS2 and beyond, Big Cat Collins books are used for the earlier stages to practice and consolidate early decoding before continuing with ORT. They then continue to work their way through the stages of the scheme through to Key Stage 2. The books are given out each week to the children and recorded in their PACT books.

Class teachers are responsible for maintaining the scheme including securing costs for lost books in conjunction with the Business manager.

### **PACT scheme / Reading Journals**

All children will be given a PACT [Parents and Children Together] book to record the books they take home and read. Each week, children in Years R-4 take home a book chosen by the teacher (ORT) and a free choice book. Teachers should ensure that children select books that are wide ranging and of an appropriate level. In Nursery and Years 5 and 6, children should choose a book from the class book corner and/or one from the library.

PACT books should be kept in book bags, brought in every day and kept in a specified place within the classroom. Teachers should check PACT books at least once a fortnight to ensure that children are reading and changing their books and offering support and advice to parents, if required.

Books should be changed a minimum of once a week in Nursery and Years 5 and 6. From Reception to Year 4, books should be changed twice a week if they have been read and the PACT book has been signed.

### **Visiting professionals**

Children are given the opportunity throughout each academic year to work with visiting professionals, whenever possible. This may take the form of story tellers coming in and 'telling a story' or performing drama with a Key Stage, for example, or working with individual classes in writing workshops. It could also involve a class working with a poet or author in a workshop situation.

## **Equalities**

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities celebrating the diversity that gender, ethnicity, disability and home backgrounds offer. Work is differentiated to meet children's individual needs and specialist equipment or extra adult support provided for children with disabilities, where needed.

### **The Language Unit**

Children with a diagnosis of Specific Language Impairment (SLI) and a Statement of Special Education Needs are referred to the Language Unit. The Language Unit follows the English National Curriculum (2014) in the same way as the main school, but work is planned taking into account each child's language needs and IEP.

Guidelines for the teaching, learning and assessment of English in the Language Unit are available in the Language Unit Language and Literacy Policy.

### **Children with EAL**

Dual language books that represent a wide range of cultures are available in the library if teachers' class stocks need to be supplemented.

EAL teaching is supported by Claire Davis. Guidelines of assessment and teaching is available in the EAL and EMAG policy.

### **The Classroom Environment**

All classrooms should have a book corner which should provide a stimulating reading environment for children. The Pawsome Guide reading skills should be clearly displayed.

Throughout the school, teachers should be using some or all of the following as appropriate to the needs of their class:

- Examples of shared writing from the teaching displayed on the working wall or washing lines to support progression
- Lists of key words and vocabulary appropriate to the current text type. These may be displayed on a 'Working Wall.'
- Writing types
- High frequency and/or common exception words
- Spelling rules and patterns and examples of these
- Descriptions of text types
- Poems
- Book posters
- A book corner which conforms to the school's agreed book corner guidelines



## Assessment

The methods used for assessing children in English are as follows:

- Discussion with children in and out of lessons
- Salford (September baseline) and NFER reading tests – December and June.
- Marking children's work in direct relation to the WALT throughout and following the lesson, providing opportunities to extend children's skills and thinking.
- Sharing of good work examples and identifying key misconceptions in follow-up lessons to allow children to develop metacognitive skills for checking their own work and editing where necessary. (see marking policy for further guidance). Children are given time in English lessons at least once a week to respond to this marking.
- Through opportunities for moderation across year groups.
- Guided reading folders, assessing group work against National expectations for each Year group (STAR assessments).
- Teacher assessment of reading and writing from Year 1–6 (referencing).
- National tests in years 2 and 6.
- Optional tests in Reading and GPS years 3, 4 and 5, once a year.
- Pupil self and peer assessment.

## Communication and Language in the Foundation Stage

Communication and language development in EYFS at John Ruskin involves giving children 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.

**Listening and attention:** children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

**Understanding:** children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

**Speaking:** children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Within the EYFS, the English curriculum is covered by two strands: Communication and Language; and Literacy. Handwriting falls under the Physical Development strand of the EYFS curriculum and includes daily Finger Gym activities.

The EYFS curriculum is delivered through positive relationships and enabling environments and is taught in a variety of different ways, including:

→ Small group activities – differentiated by WALT and activity as appropriate.

- Independent Provision – activities set out by staff to support progress through Development Matters age bands.
- Whole Class Teaching – In nursery, a daily phonics session using stories, songs and games to develop skills. In Reception, daily phonics plus a shared reading or writing activity.