

English Policy

This policy outlines the aims of teaching and learning of English at St Michael's First School. At St Michael's, we recognise that English is a core subject at the heart of enabling our pupils to flourish, living 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

Aims and purpose of the policy

- To develop a positive attitude writing and speaking and listening.
- To promote a love of reading, ensuring children are able to read a range of texts fluently and with understanding.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all children to develop their skills in English.
- To seek to ensure that all children achieve their full potential in all aspects of English by the time they move from First to Middle education.
- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative English curriculum.
- To provide clear and consistent teaching throughout the school.
- To provide guidance for teaching staff, parents and governors on agreed practice within our school.

Our School Vision for English

At St Michael's we aim to enable all children to become literate; to be able to read and write with confidence, fluency, comprehension and pleasure. We aspire for all our pupils to be able to use the English word to express themselves imaginatively and clearly, and know how to listen attentively to others. Children at St Michael's will use their English skills to communicate and work effectively with others, to develop as independent learners. We hope that through their literacy skills, they will be able to flourish in society beyond the school community.

Speaking and Listening

At St Michael's, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and encourage opportunities for meaningful conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment. Through oracy, children learn how other people make sense of the world, how language is used to reason, how emotions and identities are expressed, and how to work together to solve problems. We value a language-rich environment where adults talk with children throughout the day. The more children take part in conversation, the more they will understand once they can read and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have to draw on when they can write.

Talk for writing strategies are used frequently both within English lessons and across the curriculum. The methods for speaking and listening activities include but are not limited to: listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs, reciting and reading aloud, drama - including retelling and role-play, debating, collaborative work and presenting to an audience.

Reading

At St Michael's our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and developing the love of reading, to enable our children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies, e.g. whole word recognition, rhyme and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality texts that engage and motivate our children are the key to instilling a love of literature.

A selection of Year 4 pupils take on the role as Reading Ambassadors. They lead two lunchtime library clubs to ensure that all children across the school have the opportunity to enjoy the library and choose a pleasure book. These children also support the running of the outdoor reading area where children have an opportunity each day at lunchtime to enjoy some quiet time reading a book of their choice. At St Michael's we understand the power of children promoting texts. Therefore, children across the school can complete a book recommendation to share with others. The Reading Ambassadors update the recommended reads each month using the children's book recommendations.

The teaching of early reading skills begins in Nursery through daily story, rhyme and song time and phonics lessons. We use the guidance given in the 'Twinkl Phonics' programme to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1; enabling children to decode effectively. Upon starting Nursery, children are assessed by Nursey staff using development matters and subsequently grouped to ensure children are taught with others who are at the same stage of their learning. These groups are fluid as children progress at different stages through the phonics phases. Children begin with Phase 1 and initial sounds in phase 2 where they segment and blend words for reading and writing. In Reception, children progress through to Phase 2, 3 and 4; they revisit and consolidate these during the year. In Year 1, Phase 4 is revisited and children progress into Phase 5, where alternative sounds are introduced. At the end of Year 1, children will complete their phonics screening. (See Assessment and Feedback policy) In Year 2, Phase 5 is revisited and children progress through to Phase 6. We follow the four-part model for teaching phonics: revisit and review, teach, practise and apply. The teaching of phonics is extended to those in Key Stage 2 depending on need.

We use a Whole Class Reading approach in our teaching of reading. We have developed reading journeys across each year so that every class are exposed to quality texts covering a range of genres. We believe that whole class reading ensures that all children regardless of their ability are being exposed to a high quality text. They are exposed to quality vocabulary in each session and these words are transferred and embedded across the curriculum. The sequence of Whole Class Reading will begin with the teacher

introducing the text. This is an opportunity to embed features of different genres and for children to use their prediction skills. The teacher will model read, followed by choral and echo reading, and finally paired reading. This develops the children fluency skills and embeds key vocabulary. There are also lots of opportunities here for children to complete lots of book talk about a text. During paired reading time, adults will listen to the children read and ask key questions to tease out the children's understanding and assess their fluency. The next step in the sequence of learning, is teaching other comprehension reading skills. We value our children making a swift start to their reading journey and therefore have developed Whole Class Reading in the Early Years. The reading skills that we start to develop in Nursery are: Prediction, Sequence, Retrieve, Vocabulary and Question. These continue to develop in Reception. We ensure that each of the skills are progressive as children move on in their reading journey and have developed a breakdown of the skills which can be found in the English section on our school website.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well phonic books. Upon entering Reception, children are assessed using development matters and phonic assessments then placed on a levelled book which meets their phonological need. All children are regularly assessed using formative assessment strategies (See Assessment and Feedback policy) to monitor progression and to ensure children are reading within the correct band.

In KS1, children take home a phonics book which is appropriate to their level of ability. Children choose their books from a wide selection of schemes and real books. In Key Stage 2, children take home a banded book which is appropriate to their level of ability also but are expected to progress to a 'free reader' status so they are able to read any book from their classroom or school library.

Each child has a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily. Information is given on how to support their child in reading on the school website, curriculum letters, parent workshops and parents' evenings, and a key stage cards is sent home at the start of the year which outlines key questions that are useful to ask. As children progress through the school, they become more independent in recording what they have read in their reading records.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, such as: 'World Book Day'- where children are immersed in storytelling, authors, book discussions and the opportunity to dress up and share their recommended book. Children across the school also have the opportunity termly to visit Penkridge library where they can choose an additional pleasure book.

We also take part in Story Telling week each year. This is where we invite parents in to school to share their chosen story with their child's class.

At the start of each academic year the children across the school take part in learning activities linked with an author or an exciting text. This forms parts of their transition as they move up to a new year group. The work begins with their new teacher in the Summer

term and continues in the Autumn term with their new teacher. The unit of work can be built around an author's life and work. Children will read and explore books written by the author and have an opportunity to share their learning with their peers across the school.

Every classroom has a mini library. This is a place for children to browse the best books and revisit the ones that their teacher has read to them. These mini-libraries reflect the children's reading journey throughout the year.

A core set of poems are part of the reading journey for each year group. These consist of classic and modern poems. Through enjoying rhymes, poems and songs, and reciting poems or parts of longer poems together as a class, we believe we can build children's strong emotional connection to language. We believe poetry in language-rich classrooms builds shared memories for all children. The predictability of rhymes in poems and songs also helps children to memorise and re-use newly acquired words and phrases.

Writing

At St Michael's we follow a long-term plan with carefully mapped out quality texts to enhance the learning that, where possible, are linked to the current learning in foundation subjects. From these, children will write every day being exposed to a variety of different genres.

We strive for our children to be enthusiastic writers and see purpose in what they produce, therefore, our teachers begin a unit of work with a 'hook' into that genre of writing. Often this then forms the purpose of the outcome of the children's writing and maintains the children's focus. Teachers will continue to refer to the learning outcome and what this will look like as children progress through their writing.

Teachers will share an effective model of the text (WAGOLL) with the children to ensure the children are confident with the features of that genre. Immersion into a genre of writing may also be covered in other curriculum areas or Whole Class Reading lessons.

Collaboratively, the teacher and children will create a writers' checklist which lists the key areas that the children are expected to include in their writing. Teachers will then model the writing to the children with a focus on the year group's spelling and grammar expectations, and any other areas as listed in the writers' checklist.

At the earliest opportunity in Year 1, children will edit and improve their writing with a green editing pen. (Please see Marking and Feedback Policy) Within the classroom are independent correction aids so that children are empowered to improve their own writing. These independent aids are, but are not limited to: spelling rules, dictionaries, thesaurus', sound families and talking tins.

Writing portfolios are introduced in Reception and are carried through each year of the child's journey at St Michael's. These showcase their best pieces of writing. Children will publish final pieces of writing chosen from the different genres of writing they have produced through a unit of work. Teachers carefully plan out genres of writing to ensure

that children are exposed to a breadth of writing over the course of the year. The published pieces of writing in their portfolios will also reflect a range of genres.

Spelling

From Year 2, Spellings lessons are taught 3 times each week. Spellings are taught progressively across Years 2-4 as outlined in the National Curriculum. We use spelling backtrack to identify gaps in children's knowledge to ensure that gaps can be closed swiftly and effectively in quality first teaching and catch up interventions. We also follow the four-part spelling model in our spelling lessons. We embed phonics in the teaching of spelling and ensure that teaching and learning consists of children exploring and developing an understanding of the morphology and etymology of words. Our staff deploy a range of strategies to ensure that teaching and learning of spelling maximises opportunities for our children to be spelling champions. Accurate spelling is a high priority at St Michael's and we ensure that any teaching opportunity is exploited in every lesson to embed key spelling rules.

Leadership and Management

The subject leader's role is to empower colleagues to teach English to a high standard and support staff in the following ways:

- By keeping up to date on current issues; disseminating relevant information and providing training for staff members (either directly or through other professionals).
- Leading by example by modelling lessons or styles of teaching.
- Having a knowledge of the quality of reading and writing provision across the school and using this to provide a coaching and mentoring role.
- Identifying and acting on development needs of staff members.
- Monitoring expectations, provision and attainment across the school and providing feedback to develop practice further in order to raise standards.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored as part of the appraisal process through lesson observations and through the progress and attainment documents. In addition, continuity and progression across the school is monitored by the Subject Leader as is the implementation and impact of Assessment for Learning. The subject action plan and the Schools Improvement Plan identify actions intended to raise standards. The English Subject Leader will also provide a termly update to the English Link Governor, Rachel James, and this will be shared with all governors at the termly Governing Board Meeting.

Communication with Parents

In September parents are invited to attend a meet the teacher meeting where they are informed of year group overviews, including year group expectation of reading, writing and spelling. Parents are informed on how they can help child at home by attending English workshops throughout the year, including a phonic workshop in Early Years. During

Parents' Consultations, in the Autumn and Spring term, writing targets are shared, and a written report is completed annually in the Summer Term.

The policy is reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was adopted by the Governing body on:

Review date: 2027

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)

