



English Policy

Person(s) responsible for this policy		Head of English Prep	
Last review by	K Belshaw	Review date	September 2024
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Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English in Streatham and Clapham Prep School.

What is English?

English is the acquisition, appreciation and use of the English language in spoken and written form.

Our aims in teaching English are to develop:

- A positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening; this enables the girls to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others effectively. It offers a means of finding out about the world and supports the development of information skills, enabling students to study independently.
- Pupils will be exposed to a rich and varied vocabulary, through an appreciation of good literature, where creative writing can also excel.
- The ability to write in different genres.
- To gain an understanding of the main rules and conventions of written and spoken English.
- The ability to plan, draft and edit their writing.
- The ability to access accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling rules.
- The ability to form and later join their letters in handwriting.
- Perseverance; the ability to rise to challenges and so gain a sense of achievement.
- A basis on which build as the girls move through to the Senior School.

It is a fundamental component of the whole Primary curriculum and is taught both as a subject in its own right and as part of the Creative Curriculum.

The Curriculum

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. The Literacy Tree and Read, Write, Inc is used by the Prep staff to support their delivery of English lessons across the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (2012), the National Curriculum programmes of study for English (2013) is used to guide the teaching of English and communication

skills. The EYFS Curriculum provides guidance for the development of Language Communication and Literacy for Nursery and Reception classes and the Literacy Framework provides a detailed basis for implementing the programmes of study for speaking, listening, reading and writing in Upper School and Lower School.

The English Curriculum is organised on a subject basis wherein:

- English is taught as a continuous programme with each area of the subject studied each year.
- English is taught every term during the year.
- Literacy skills can be taught through other subject contents – ie cross-curricular for a minimum of five hours a week.

The predominant modes of working in written English lessons are individual work, whole class teaching and co-operative group work. English lessons are taught both in form groups and in fluid ability groups, dependent on the activity and the teacher's continuous assessment. Extension and support are provided through both differentiated work in class and through extension and support groups, where appropriate.

Planning

All long term and medium term planning documentation is available on Teams filed in the relevant curriculum folder. Short term planning (weekly/ daily) is filed on Teams in the weekly planning folder and a copy should be shared with all adults supporting the lessons in advance. An up-dated planning template (2023) is in the English Team on Teams for easy access.

Teaching

Exemplar units of work based around a text are adapted for the specific needs of each class. We do not specifically follow a 'literacy hour' but use key strategies such as shared, guided and independent work in teaching reading and writing. Appropriate use of technology is made to enhance pupils' learning.

We use Read, Write, Inc as the key resources for teaching phonics and the reading scheme has books such as from the Oxford Reading Tree Scheme and Collins Big Cat, colour banded into increasingly complex levels of difficulty in EYFS and the LS. The school has developed a Phonics approach based on Read, Write, Inc for a coordinated whole school approach.

Read, Write, Inc materials, in addition to the Statutory Word Lists for each phase are used as the basis of the spelling scheme for the Upper School.

The Prep school uses the Letter-join Handwriting scheme, and a school style is taught; however, if a child joins at a later stage with another handwriting style they are not expected to change and as pupils get older, it is recognised they will start to develop their own style. All girls will receive a pen licence in the Upper School.

The Literacy Tree scheme has been introduced into the Prep school. Teachers are using the book-based approach which identifies clear grammatical targets for each lesson to raise engagement and standards in writing. In the midpoint of Year 5 and the Autumn Term of Year 6, girls begin to prepare for the ISEB English as part of their Senior School exam. They are taught the skills of multiple-choice comprehension and SPAG in addition to revising the different text types and genres.

Speaking and listening skills are developed in English lessons. Cross-curricular opportunities are embedded within the curriculum and in Years 3-6, separate drama lessons are provided.

Support from TA's in the classroom:

- Learning Support Assistants can be used in English lessons to assist in the classroom by supporting group activities.
- They can also provide other help, such as support for children with ALN or SEN.

Resources

There is a range of resources available including books, audio visual, ICT, online resources and other equipment. If staff have recommendations for purchases or can suggest useful websites, they should talk to the coordinator and /or note it in their subject evaluations or up-coming planning. School broadcasts on television and radio are sometimes used to support the curriculum objectives.

Formative and Summative Assessment

We recognise that assessment activity should inform the next steps to learning and is an essential part of the teaching and learning cycle. Learning goals for each lesson are shared with pupils and children are helped to recognise the standards for which they are aiming through individual target setting. Teacher feedback is prompt, specific to the learning goals and may be oral or written dependent on task and time available. Teachers use highlighters: pink to help identify a strong piece of sentence construction or word choice etc (tickled pink) and blue to identify something which needs improving (needs warming up).

Pupils take part in summative assessments at key points some of which are reported to the GDST. These include the Foundation Stage profile and GL assessments in Year 1- Year 6 pupils. In the Lower and Upper School, Progress Tests (to assess pupils' decoding, comprehension skills and SPAG) are taken in September again in May/June in Years 1-6. In addition, girls will have regular independent writing opportunities in English. In writing, girls are continually tracked using their independent writing books and targets set. At the start of each academic year, girls are baselined against the objectives from the end of the previous year. Any girls who have 'dipped' over the summer are highlighted in yellow.

Targets in English are provided for each child at the end of every piece of writing. They also have their long-term targets, based on their initial assessments, which are stuck into their independent and purple books. These targets are discussed with the child, one-on-one and will be reviewed each half term/term. Wishes, blue highlighter marks and marking codes are used in marking to encourage girls to revisit their work and amend/alter/add to their learning as directed by the teacher.

Self-assessment – Girls should set their own targets for their development. Opportunities should be given for children to assess the work of their peers in a rewarding and positive way.

Children with learning support/high ability

Children with Learning Support/High ability may receive extra support with a lesson through differentiated work, differentiated groups (where ability grouping exists) and through specialist teaching by a class teacher or LSA. Such pupils will include:

- Girls who have some areas of weakness but have not necessarily been diagnosed with a specific learning disability.

- Girls who have been diagnosed with a specific learning disability in Literacy who receive individual learning support.
- Girls who struggle to engage with reading will be offered a place at Library Club
- Girls with particular ability and flair for Literacy who understand concepts readily and are extended through the use of supplementary materials and extension groupings. The Debating Club will also target these able pupils.

Recording

Teachers need to keep clear records which are regularly updated that will inform their teaching and track pupil progress; this will vary across year groups. Baseline Assessment data/results, tracking and future targets are all located and up-dated, where appropriate, on the system. Pupil achievement and progress are monitored formally at the beginning of a new academic year and then at regular intervals thereafter. This is tracked by class teachers.

Reporting

Written reports are sent to parents at the end of every term. These include details as to whether the children are working at, below or above the expected level (for the school). Michaelmas and Lent reports include a brief pastoral comment; the Summer report comments on progress, achievement and targets for future learning.

Teachers meet parents formally twice a year but are encouraged to speak to parents informally at the end of the day or another convenient point. Teachers should be proactive in keeping parents informed of pupil progress and of how they might support their child at home, and deal with any concerns promptly.

Time Allocation

Literacy skills are taught on a daily basis through an English lesson. Additional opportunities for Literacy work may take place in other areas of the curriculum.

The Foundation Stage

The amount of time spent on specific teaching increases with the maturity of the children but will be sufficient to meet the objectives.

Lower School

Around 25% of curriculum time is allocated to Literacy with additional time for story time.

Upper School

Around 23% of curriculum time (around 5 hours per week) is allocated to Literacy.

Inclusion

We have children from a variety of different backgrounds and of differing abilities. In accordance with the school inclusion policy work is differentiated to ensure all children achieve their full potential. Due care is taken to provide resources which reflect different cultural backgrounds. We recognise that in literature pupils may encounter stereotypes and views which need to be challenged. We will do this sensitively and according to the age of the pupils.

Homework

Homework is used regularly to support reading, writing, listening and speaking through tasks such as:

- In the Foundation Stage and Lower School children are expected to share books at home or read their individual book on a daily basis. In addition, Lower School children have one literacy task each week.
- Upper School children are expected to read their individual reading book for at least 20 minutes each day, learn their spellings by adopting the preferred method undertaken in class and by having at least one other literacy tasks each week that will often support the work covered in class that day/week.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Staff Development

The purpose is to identify areas for improvement in: planning, resources, expectations, teaching, marking, assessment and performance and progress. Pupils' motivation and interest in English is also evaluated. This will enable realistic targets to be set for individual pupils and cohorts to identify staff development needs and tie in to school development planning.

Teachers and LSAs will be observed and feedback given to improve teaching and learning. There are a number of staff INSET days. Staff meetings are held every week. A number of courses are provided by Trust.

The Learning Environment and The Library

The learning environment should reflect the learning that is being carried out in the class through bright, eye-catching displays, learning walls where appropriate and clear, well-ordered and accessible resources/equipment. Safety is of prime concern; there should be easy access in and around the class. Risk assessments are up-dated annually.

The library houses books used in all aspects of English where girls are encouraged to use research skills and develop their reading experiences accordingly. The library is also used for specific lessons with the support of the Senior School librarian.

Each class has a library with a range of age-related fiction to aid decoding and appreciation of literature.

Events and Extra-Curricular Activities

- Regular author visits are arranged to enable the children to meet and talk to real authors and be inspired in their own creative endeavours or reading choices.
- Year 6 girls contribute reviews of shortlisted books and also attend the final of the Phoenix Book Awards, held in Lambeth.
- A Debating Team meets weekly to encourage the girls to share opinions and learn the rules/structures of debating.
- Whole school activities such as 'Inspirational Women' in 2015, provide a focus for the girls to discuss and write on a variety of unusual topics or issues as part of the Prep School's Literacy focus.
- The girls enter the GDST Creative Writing competition and Laurie Magnus poetry, with notable success in 2023 (Y2 Runner-up and Y4 overall winner).

Health and Safety

All staff are jointly responsible for exercising due care for all members of the school community and must undertake risk assessments for activities for which they are responsible and contribute as needed to any other risk assessments. The school risk register details risk assessments for the different areas in school and the regular activities. These are reviewed regularly. All staff must remain aware of health and safety issues and take action to minimise risks.

