



## 1. Intent

Our intention is to build the children's confidence and competence in their ability to communicate both orally and in writing and to develop a life-long love of reading. We place a high value on the teaching and understanding of vocabulary as we view knowing and loving words as the key to unlocking understanding, knowledge, reading and ultimately achievement.

Our curriculum is brought to life through the 'High Quality Text' approach. Pupils are immersed in a High Quality class text and through reading and exploring this they learn about: character, comprehension, authorial intent, grammar, spelling, punctuation and the power of the vocabulary used. Children draw on strengths of these texts in their own writing and use them and their topic to expose them to different genre, writing styles and sentence types.

As according to cognitive scientists nothing has been learnt until it is in your long term memory we focus on ensuring learning sticks. We understand through research, including with our children, what aids long term memory and include these strategies in all our teaching sequences. A focus on key knowledge for every topic and a clear assessment, away from the point of learning, demonstrates the effective implementation and impact of our curriculum.

## 2. Aims

The overarching aim for English, in the national curriculum and at Priory, is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims 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
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for understanding, reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary 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 competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

## 3. Teaching and learning

We use the National Curriculum, identifying 6 main strands in developing Literacy skills:

1. Spoken language
2. Word reading
3. Comprehension
4. Transcriptional writing (spelling and handwriting)
5. Compositional writing (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
6. Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation within writing

At Priory, we aim to use each strand to enhance the teaching and learning in the other strands. Many of the texts we study in lessons are directly linked to our topics, and we endeavour to ensure that our lessons are as creative and as "child-friendly" as possible.

### Spoken language

The ability to communicate orally is fundamental to the English Curriculum. Pupils are therefore taught and encouraged to:

### Priory CE Primary School: Policy on English

- Express themselves confidently and articulately in a range of situations
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates

Some lessons are taught with a specific spoken language focus, in line with the National Curriculum guidance. Drama is often used to deepen understanding of a text within the pre-writing phase of learning. Typical opportunities to promote spoken language skills include: paired- talk, class discussions, circle time, presentations, formal debates, collaborative group work, class or year group productions and drama workshops to develop understand of character e.g. hot seating or freeze frame.

### Reading: Word reading and comprehension

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. Phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

In December 2018 the school purchased the Accelerated Reader program which is used from Year 3 onwards and allows children to access texts which have an accompanying 'quiz' which is based on their comprehension of the book.

All children participate in the following activities:

- **Focussed reading sessions** – two English sessions per week focus on the development of reading skills using a variety of different teaching strategies and approaches. These sessions are linked to the 'High Quality Text' approach.
- **Shared reading** – children read and discuss a text as a class, led by the teacher. The text chosen is of a specific genre, and forms part of the immersion activities in a unit of work.
- **Accelerated Reader time** – fifteen to twenty minutes of dedicated reading time each day to allow pupils to read their AR book and complete relevant comprehension 'quizzes'.
- **Silent reading** – children are encouraged to keep their books on their desks at all times, ready for the occasional reading opportunity.
- **Class book** – children are read to by the class teacher for pure enjoyment value, and to nurture a passion for reading. Sometimes children may be invited to read too, if there are multiple copies of the book.
- **Library sessions** – children are allowed to select a book to take home, from the school library. Over the last few years we have re-designed our school library to accommodate more books and make the environment more "special" by providing comfy places to sit and opportunities for pupils to respond to the texts that they are reading.

### Priory CE Primary School: Policy on English

- **Visual Literacy** – using high quality picture / multi-modal books to challenge the children's thinking and to encourage the children to think more deeply about the text and illustrations.

To help enhance a love of reading and books, we participate in local and national events e.g. Little Library Van, Stoke 100 Reads and World Book Day, which encourages children to participate in a range of reading activities.

### **Writing: transcriptional, compositional and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation**

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 consist of:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

Writing teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

From January 2019 the differentiated text approach has evolved into the 'High Quality Text' approach and is used across Key Stage 1 and 2. This approach is based on using one high quality class text which is then differentiated as necessary to allow all pupils to access it based on their ability. This text is read, deconstructed, dramatized and lots of comprehension activities take place to allow the pupils to fully understand and internalise the text. Strong links between reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling are made and the children explore activities such as re-punctuating sentences and paragraphs within their differentiated level of text. These activities all help the children to read like a writer and then go on to write for themselves.

- **Prewriting** – reading, observing and deconstructing a core text which is differentiated to allow access for all. This supports children to understand the thought processes involved in composition and the key features of the text.
- **Guided / scaffolded writing in workshops** – in focus groups, where specific Steps to Success are developed. The teacher may intervene at different stages of their writing, e.g. at the beginning / planning stage, initial composition, or evaluating / re-drafting. Basic, advancing and deep groups are sometimes taught separately to ensure that the taught skills are relevant for their particular stage of achievement against the year group expectations.
- **Polishing** – by using 'fix its' and Steps to Success, the pupils edit and polish their work in readiness for publishing.
- **Publishing** – where pupils publish a piece of writing which includes all the corrections and edits that they have made along with any extra additions or improvements.

### **Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary**

The 2 statutory appendices in the National Curriculum – on spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation – give an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study in each phase, year group expectations are broken down further and are assessed by teachers of each year.

Each day the children are taught and explore a 'Word of the Day'. This links to either the Learning Challenge topic which is being covered, our high quality class text or may be a word which the children have encountered during their learning. To improve their knowledge and understanding of the word, pupils learn what the word means, how it is spelt and its etymology and its morphology. Each word is placed on the '**Ninja Knowledge**

**and Vocabulary'** board and builds up through the year. This is assessed with short quizzes away from the point of teaching to allow us to evaluate the long term 'stickiness' of the knowledge. In addition to this we maximise opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary as they arise naturally. As vocabulary increases, teachers at Priory show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.

Pupils are also taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They are taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language'

#### 4. English curriculum planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key genre and objectives in literacy that we teach to each year. A whole school picture is collated by The English subject leader, teachers also have a copy in their online 'English progression file' to ensure consistency and progression across the school.

Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the National Curriculum, give details of the main teaching objectives. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Each term, or half term, is based around one High Quality Text. This plan also contains the key vocabulary to be taught linked to the topic knowledge learning. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English, including reading and GPS/Phonics. These lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps paper copies of these individual plans. An electronic version of weekly planning is sent to the English subject leader and SLT each week for monitoring.

#### 5. Using the Challenge Curriculum to help develop children's writing skills

Following the immersion in the class text and a piece of written work on fiction, the High Quality Text approach extends into the wider curriculum. Staff plan and deliver high quality non-fiction work which links to their topic and results in clear, purposeful writing linked to a non-fiction genre.

**Computing** and the use of **film, digital cameras, blogging, green screen technology, music, art and picture books** are encouraged, to stimulate our children's interest in reading and writing. The Interactive Whiteboards are used to enhance the teaching and learning; children use the IWB and class laptops and iPads to experiment with font styles, images, sizes and shapes to develop their skills in writing for different purposes. Other practices, designed to appeal to children's different learning styles in English are also encouraged. Examples include:

- The use of film to develop awareness of settings, emotions and character work, as well as discuss camera angles and the use of "panning" and "Zooming".
- Computing, which have helped to inspire children's writing, as have visual literacy work.
- The use of Drama within lessons, to deepen and challenge their thinking.
- The inclusion of games and thinking skills to stimulate ideas.
- The inclusion of "Warm-up" activities to focus on a particular spelling, punctuation and grammar (GPS) next steps for learning.
- Visual Literacy to encourage them to write in a variety of genres, and to take more ownership of their ideas and writing.

## Presentation

- **Handwriting:** children are taught how to join their writing, using a cursive style, supported by Dyslexia Friendly Programme. Handwriting sessions are timetabled into the school day and some terms have a 'Handwriting Boost' where the number of sessions are increased to encourage a whole school focus on improving handwriting.
- **Computing:** children use the computer to help draft / re-draft their work, experiment with font sizes and styles and images, re-size their writing, research appropriate information from the internet.

## 6. Inclusion

### SEND

We teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Pupil Passports. Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- Using a High Quality Text approach where a version of the text or the questions asked, could be differentiated;
- Making reasonable adjustments to allow pupils to access learning opportunities;
- Running a dyslexia friendly classroom to reduce anxiety/stress for dyslexia learners
- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- providing scaffolds for learning and support materials e.g. phonic mats or key vocabulary for a genre;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- using translators.

### Equal Opportunities

Teachers aim to ensure that all children work to their full potential, that they are provided with equal access to the curriculum and resources, and have equal opportunities to reflect on and discuss their work. The resources and units of work reflect the diverse cultures and traditions of our school and the wider community.

### Additional English Support

Children who are underachieving are given support in the form of "Booster Groups", which are planned for by the teachers and delivered by teachers or support staff. These take the form of: additional Writing sessions, punctuation, grammar and spelling (GPS) skills, phonics boosters and Better Reading Programme (BRP), amongst others, which help develop the children's confidence and enable them to work on specific next steps for learning to further develop their skills.

### Extension Opportunities

Children who show particular aptitude in English are given opportunities to deepen and extend their learning. Lessons are often planned with a view to challenge our **Higher Attainers** in their skills in speaking, reading and writing. Children's questions are differentiated, staff using higher order questions to enable our HAs children to think more deeply about subjects. They are often given the opportunity to feed back to the class, thus encouraging and enthusing others to think and respond in greater depth.

## 7. Assessment and recording

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that as part of

### Priory CE Primary School: Policy on English

every lesson, help teachers to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives and evaluate pupil progress on their planning.

Teachers assess on Classroom Monitor towards the end of year expectations for the year group, and they use these to track and assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these teachers assessments, the Senior Leadership team (SLT) are able to support staff to set targets for the next school year and summarise the progress of each child before the teacher send Record of Achievements (ROAs) and discuss the stage with the child's parents – Basic, Advancing or Deep against the year group expectations. The next teacher also uses these long-term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, plus NfER assessments each half term.

Moderation of the stages awarded for both reading and writing take place regularly in a number of ways: parallel teacher, within phase – planned into PPA time, cross phase e.g. Y2 + Y3 or Y4 + Y5, standardisation activities as a whole staff in a PDM e.g. this is what an on track in Y3 looks like ad within the CLT – between schools. These moderation activities quality assure the accuracy of stages awarded based on a full range of evidence.

English and Curriculum leads regularly assess the 'stickiness' of taught knowledge and vocabulary away from the point of teaching through quizzes and pupil interviews.

## 8. Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus and an age appropriate selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

## Learning environments

The classroom environment should support pupils independent learning skills (C3B4ME) and as such have:

- An **English Learning Journey** board – which shows the writing journey from the reading and pre-write phase to the end published piece of writing showing genre specific GPS/phonic skills, drafting and polishing along the way.
- A **'Nina Knowledge' and Vocabulary** board to display the 'Word of the Day' linked to the key knowledge learning to ensure that 'learning sticks'
- **Support materials** – VCOP/Phonic/GPS prompts, appropriate for the level of the pupils.
- **A themed topic area**- which contains books, relevant technology and artefacts which link to the topic and help to fuel the children's desire to find out more.
- **A small selection of books**- which are stored in an appealing and accessible manner. These books should be of a high quality, age appropriate and regularly changed.

## 9. Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of 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 current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The subject leader reports to the SLT after all monitoring opportunities and indicates areas for further improvement and necessary actions. The leader has specially-allocated regular leadership time in order to enable him/her to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school.

### **Priory CE Primary School: Policy on English**

The English link Governor is invited to visit the school to talk with the English Leader, teachers, children and when possible, take part in some daily English lessons. The English link governor reports back to the full governors on a regular basis.

The Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body are responsible for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if necessary.

#### **10. Links to Other Policies**

- Phonics
- Assessment
- Presentation and Handwriting
- Marking and Feedback
- Homework
- Early Years Foundation Stage
- SEND

Policy Author: Emma Wooliscroft

Policy Approved By: Sarah Morris (Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee and Link Governor)

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