

**The Saints' Federation**

**St. Augustine's C.E. (C) First School**



**ENGLISH**

**POLICY DOCUMENT**

January 2017



## ENGLISH POLICY

St. Augustine's C.E. (C) First School



### Contents

1. Introduction
2. Key Statements about English
3. Aims of the 'Teaching of English'
4. Contexts for the 'Teaching and Learning of English'
5. English in the EYFS
6. English in Key Stage 1
7. English in Key Stage 2
8. Phonics and Spelling
9. Grammar & Punctuation
10. Handwriting
11. Spoken Language
12. Marking, Assessment & Feedback
13. Differentiation
14. Equal Opportunities
15. Monitoring and Evaluation
16. Impact and Expectations
17. Appendices

### 1. Introduction

At St. Augustine's, we view the acquisition of language skills to be of the utmost importance and so the teaching of all aspects of English is given high priority. Writing is integral to our children's whole language experience; it is a crucial part of thinking and learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the teaching of English at St. Augustine's School. It states how we deliver the reading, writing and spoken language elements of the Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure that our children develop as confident, capable and enthusiastic readers and writers. .

This policy will take note of the school's approach to inclusion and will recognise both the content and the purpose of the policies on Dyslexia and Special Educational Needs in all practice. All children will have their individual learning needs recognised in the implementation of this policy.

### 2. Key Statements about English

The following statements are central to our view of writing development. At St. Augustine's we believe that:

- Speaking and listening with confidence are significant factors in developing effective writing.

- Reading and writing are closely connected and mutually supportive; we read as writers and write as readers.
- Writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences.
- Writing tasks should be prepared through preliminary talk and teachers should model writing for their pupils when appropriate.
- Children should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other children both to compose and to revise their writing,
- Writing skills can be improved through reflection.
- Children should be closely involved in assessing their own development as writers.
- More effective writing is dependent upon increasingly informed grammatical and linguistic choices.
- The teacher's response to the child's composition is crucial in developing confidence and motivation.
- The skills of transcription (i.e. handwriting, punctuation and spelling) must be thoroughly planned for and taught.

### **3. Aims of the 'Teaching of English'**

In our teaching of English, we aim for all children:

- To develop their self-confidence as skilled communicators, to make relevant contributions and learn how to listen attentively to others.
- To adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands.
- To develop their interest and pleasure in reading, so that they can read independently, understand the meaning of texts and express preferences about their reading.
- To read with fluency, accuracy and understanding across a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- To enjoy writing and to see the value of it.
- To be provided with stimulating opportunities to be creative writers of text and to express themselves, in writing, with confidence.
- To become independent writers of texts, which are accurately spelled, punctuated correctly and which communicate meaning in narrative and non-narrative forms.
- To develop their understanding that writing is essential to thinking and learning across all curriculum areas.
- To use the planning, drafting and editing processes to improve their written work and sustain their writing of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- To develop legible joined handwriting with increasing fluency and speed.
- To use non-fiction and non-literary texts in order to access information for themselves, including IT based information texts.
- To be able to use IT as an effective means of communication and an effective tool for learning.
- To be set suitable and ambitious learning challenges.
- To have their diverse learning needs responded to effectively.

### **4. Contexts for the 'Teaching and Learning of English'**

English is taught and learnt in specific, meaningful and effective contexts. These include:

- Shared and guided reading
- Independent reading for pleasure

- Library
- Home/School reading
- Complementary sentence and word-level activities
- Modelled and shared writing
- Guided writing
- Independent or paired writing
- Sharing and reflecting on their writing
- Cross-curricular writing tasks e.g. in project work or science

*See Appendix 1 for a detailed overview of our 'Reading Strategies'.*

To support children in the acquisition of reading and writing skills we will:

- Provide frequent, stimulating and meaningful opportunities to read and write.
- Promote an awareness of adults writing in a variety of contexts for many purposes.
- Provide regular high-quality demonstrations of the writing process.
- Model, draft and discuss many aspects of writing with children.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on and the writing process.
- Give children time to refine and improve their writing through editing and revising.
- Provide children with opportunities to share and celebrate their reading and writing.
- Set individual targets for writing and assist children in reviewing their targets (and setting personal ones where appropriate).
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own reading and writing development and progress.
- Surround children with a print-rich environment and a stimulating reading scheme.
- Reward and celebrate children's efforts and achievements in English.
- Teach computing skills that support effective and efficient electronic communication.

The close relationship between writing and reading needs to be exploited. We will provide a wide variety of texts which cater for children's diverse interests and needs, and act as a stimulus to their own writing.

### **5. English in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Early Years English is delivered through the EYFS Profile, where children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and celebrated. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected and evident in their reading and writing. In line with this, their knowledge of high-frequency and phonetically decodable words is supported and developed through planned activities, including adult-led and child-initiated experiences.

A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in reading and writing activities. Amongst these are:

- Guided writing
- Role-play
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Captions

- Writing letters
- Menus

Through engaging in these meaningful activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English.

A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of the fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include playdough, cutting, threading and tracing to promote these motor skills and the correct pencil grip and formation of letters. All children at St. Augustine's are now taught letter formation and handwriting in the pre-cursive style starting in the EYFS, this will lead onto a joined cursive style, in line with our handwriting policy (see Appendix 2), as the children are physically ready and able.

## **6. English in Key Stage 1**

### **a) Shared Writing**

Through shared writing the teacher demonstrates specific writing skills, sometimes acting as scribe. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated and modelled, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing. The teacher may also demonstrate writing in a particular genre, tone or for a particular purpose.

Shared writing will teach children how to:

- Generate imaginative and informative ideas through discussion and questioning, and recording these ideas in notes/ plans/ drafts.
- Structure ideas in writing through the use of appropriate language, sentence structure, punctuation, sequencing and lay-out.
- Develop specific word level skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Refine writing to make it clearer and better suited to its audience and purpose.
- Develop technical terms and vocabulary for understanding and discussing writing.
- Publish and present written texts for others to read and use.

### **b) Guided Writing**

Guided writing sessions are used flexibly to provide a bridge between shared and independent work. During these sessions the teacher will support specific children or groups to write independently through a range of teaching strategies. They may focus on:

- Planning a piece of writing
- Supporting work in progress
- Evaluating and improving writing

### **c) Independent Writing**

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing will be transferred into their own writing. Since accurate, fluent and independent writing is dependent on a secure grasp of phonics, a high priority is placed throughout EYFS and KS1 on daily systematic phonics teaching (based on the 'Letters and Sounds' programme). This gives children the strong and essential foundation upon which all their future development as writers will be built.

*See Appendix 1 for a detailed overview of our 'Reading Strategies'.*

## **7. English in Key Stage 2**

### **a) Shared Writing**

Through shared writing the teacher will model the writing process with the children. This may include:

- Demonstrating planning strategies (e.g. mind mapping, concept webs, writing frames).
- Using a familiar text as a starting point and stimulus for writing.
- Teaching the structural characteristics of a particular text type or genre.
- Teaching the purpose and use of punctuation.
- Playing with language and exploring different language and literary device choices.
- Modelling higher level sentence structures.
- Drafting
- Demonstrating revision strategies (e.g. checking for meaning, reordering to improve structure, rewriting to improve clarity or to enrich language)
- Demonstrating editing strategies (e.g. checking spelling, punctuation and grammar, using writing targets).

At times, there may be extended shared writing sessions, exploring the composition process together in some detail. However, it will often be most effective if shared writing is broken up into chunks and interspersed with opportunities for the children to apply the lessons immediately in their own writing. Sometimes modelling just a sentence or two will be sufficient. This approach can maximise learning opportunities, allow teachers to respond to children's misconceptions or difficulties, and avoid the risk of 'over-loading' the children.

### **b) Guided Writing**

During guided writing the teacher as the 'expert' guides learners at an appropriate level by:

- Giving feedback on previously composed independent writing
- Modelling how to use individual writing targets or comment constructively on another writer's work
- Demonstrating a specific stage in the writing process
- Developing or reinforcing skills taught in shared writing

Teachers will plan guided writing sessions flexibly, where they feel they will best meet the needs of their class. At other times, teachers may instead support children individually during their independent writing.

### **c) Independent Writing**

During independent writing the children compose without direct teacher support. As children move through lower KS2, they will be expected to write regularly and at increasingly greater length, developing crucial writing stamina alongside other skills. Independent writing, both within English lessons and across the curriculum will involve:

- Using the imagination and expressing ideas
- Applying skills learned in shared writing and guided writing
- Focusing on individual writing targets

- Revising work in the light of feedback from teachers or peers
- Commenting constructively on other children's writing
- Editing and proof-reading to improve transcriptional features
- Preparing work for presentation

*See Appendix 1 for a detailed overview of our 'Reading Strategies'.*

## **8. Phonics and Spelling**

Underpinning reading and writing throughout school are the phonics and spelling sessions. Letters and Sounds, No Nonsense Spelling and Support for Spelling are followed along with the statutory curriculum objectives. Consolidation and extension activities are used where required. This approach gives the children the skills and the confidence to read and write fluently, empowering them to become independent learners.

Through the carefully planned and progressive teaching of spelling, we aim:

- To encourage children to become confident and competent spellers
- To teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage
- To help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learnt

Through regular, focused teaching of spelling, children will be taught to:

- Identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
- Recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/ grapheme correspondence)
- Blend phonemes into words for reading
- Segment words into phonemes for spelling
- Acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words
- Identify onsets and rimes as an aid to spelling
- Investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules
- Attempt a spelling before checking with the teacher
- Identify mis-spelt words in their own writing, keep individual lists and learn to spell these words
- Develop and use independent spelling strategies
- Use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record final and medial sounds.

Throughout the EYFS and KS1, systematic daily phonics teaching takes place to ensure that children develop a secure grounding in phonics knowledge upon which their future progress in spelling will be based. This teaching is based on the 'Letters and Sounds' programme and may be supplemented by other small group or 1-1 interventions for children who require additional support.

In KS2, whilst many children will have acquired strong phonics skills, others will need continued, intensive 1-1 phonics support. Interventions are vital to ensuring that all children acquire these crucial building blocks and do not have their writing progress held back.

For all Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children, the 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme is utilised to build on and enhance 'Letters and Sounds'. This new programme focuses on spelling rules and grammatical conventions within the English language and teaches the children engaging strategies to learn spellings and motivates them to apply these rules in all of their writing.

## **9. Grammar and Punctuation**

Many aspects of grammar and punctuation are best taught in the context of real reading and writing activities, rather than through isolated exercises. This gives children the opportunity to see the relevance of sentence-level work and how real writers make such choices to help them communicate clearly. Sentence-level teaching is most effective when it is short, sharp and frequent, incorporated perhaps as a lesson starter, part of the 'No Nonsense Spelling sessions' or in the context of shared writing. Word and sentence games encourage children to enjoy playing with language and to experiment with different constructions that they may then apply in their independent writing.

Accuracy in basic punctuation (capital letters and full stops) is given a high priority throughout the school, until it becomes completely automatic. Explicit teaching may be needed, even for older children, on what a sentence is and how to punctuate it accurately. Teaching approaches may include:

- Asking children to read out a sentence or paragraph with the punctuation verbalised so that others begin to see where it should go.
- Focused punctuation exercises where full stops and capital letters need to be added.
- Using a plenary for children to re-read and correct missing capital letters or full stops.

Until basic punctuation becomes totally secure, children in KS2 will have this included as part of their individual writing targets. Teachers may also want to avoid teaching higher level forms of punctuation until the basics are secure, to allow the children to focus their attention on this crucial skill.

When children become more mature writers, a key focus will need to be on developing their understanding and use of commas. To make comma 'rules' easy to remember, we teach explicitly the key contexts in which they are used:

- in a list
- after an opener
- with a conjunction
- around a 'subordinate' phrase/clause ('The boy, who was really short, couldn't reach.')
- with an 'ing' clause ('The boy jumped up, trying to reach the top shelf.')

Once again, this is best practised through regular short sentence-building activities (oral and written), and then applied in the children's own independent writing.



## **10. Handwriting**

Teaching pupils to use a legible cursive style of handwriting and making them aware of the importance of clear, neat presentation in order to communicate effectively. This is practiced on a daily basis. Children will receive a pen when they are deemed ready in Year 4.

Aims of Handwriting:

- To understand that each letter has only one correct formation and orientation
- To develop a sense of pride, pleasure and enjoyment in their handwriting
- To adopt fluent, legible and joined handwriting
- To adapt lettering styles for different purposes

Children will need guidance as to the best way to orientate the paper on which they will be writing, particularly if they are left-handed. Left-handed children should sit on the left or beside another left-handed child when paired. In addition they may benefit from the use of a pencil grip.

## **11. Spoken Language**

Speaking and Listening is developed through:

- Story telling
- Describing and listening to events and experiences
- Speaking and listening appropriately to different audiences including peers, teachers and other adults
- Speaking and listening appropriately in a variety of contexts across the curriculum
- Group discussion and interaction
- Drama and role-play activities
- Reading aloud
- Debate and presentation
- Worship and music
- Performance poetry

Work in Spoken Language, Reading and Writing is integrated throughout English and through all other curriculum areas and the links between these are made explicit to the pupils. English and the skills of Literacy are seen as the media through which pupils learn and they are drawn on extensively in other subject areas. Homework is also used to support the English Curriculum through home-school links.

## **12. Marking, Assessment & Feedback**

From Reception upwards, children complete regular pieces of independent writing, which are then assessed against the EYFS Profile or Focus Statements. We believe feedback and marking should provide constructive feedback to every child, focusing on success and improvement needs against learning objectives; enabling children to become reflective learners and helping them to close the gap between current and desired attainment.

Marking and feedback should:

- Be manageable for teachers.
- Relate to learning intentions, which need to be shared with the children.

- Involve all adults working with children in the classroom.
- Give opportunities to become aware of and reflect on their learning needs.
- Give recognition and appropriate praise for achievement.
- Give clear strategies for improvement.
- Allow specific time for children to read, reflect and respond to marking.
- Respond to individual learning needs, marking face to face with some and at a distance for others.
- Inform future planning and individual target setting.
- Be accessible to children.
- Use consistent systems throughout school.
- Ultimately be seen by children as positive in improving their learning.
- Encourage children to self mark, edit and improve their work frequently.

a) Summative feedback and marking:

This is usually associated with closed tasks and exercises and recognises correct and incorrect responses.

b) Formative feedback and marking:

Oral feedback, in the course of a lesson, teachers' comments should focus firstly on issues related to the learning intention and secondly on other features.

Not all pieces of work will be 'quality marked'. Teachers will decide whether work will be simply acknowledged or given detailed attention. The emphasis in marking should be both success against the learning objective and improvement needs against it. Focused comment should help the child in 'closing the gap' between what they have achieved, what they have the potential to achieve and what they can now strive to achieve.

c) Secretarial features:

Spelling, punctuation, grammar etc need not be corrected at every level. This will mean that some aspects of writing are unmarked but will be over time. Feedback and marking will focus on what was asked of the children.

We use a clear and simple strategy for marking. Positive comments are marked in blue and constructive feedback in green. This largely follows the PEN rules that some settings implement - Praise, Evidence and Need. It is important that the 'E' element is made clear and children know specifically what they have done well as well as clear development comments.

d) Self marking:

Children should have the opportunity to self evaluate, edit and improve their work regularly and with purpose. They should be encouraged to identify their own achievements through the use of success criteria at appropriate times (e.g. at the end of a unit of work or after an independent write). The use of the 'purple pen' clearly evidences the children's editing and improvement of their own work. Children should respond to inaccuracies identified by the teacher, such as; spelling

errors, missing or incorrect punctuation and grammatical mistakes. They should also be encouraged to independently proof-read and edit their own work against the learning objectives and success criteria.

### **13. Differentiation**

We offer every child access to the English curriculum at the appropriate level. Differentiation in spoken language, reading and writing can occur by outcome (the quality of the piece produced), by task or by support (either from an adult or through resources, such as sentence prompts, writing frames or images as stimuli). Children's individual writing targets also provide a key source of differentiation, allowing children to focus on their own key next steps as developing readers and writers.

We ensure that children who experience difficulties with any aspect of reading or writing are identified quickly and additional support provided. If necessary, they will be placed on the SEN register and an IEP will be written containing specific targets. Exceeding children will be identified and challenged to progress at a level appropriate to their ability.

### **14. Equal Opportunities**

At St. Augustine's, we celebrate diversity through recognising our children's skills and knowledge and by the study of material from a variety of cultures. Texts used will represent all cultures in a positive light and will show both genders in a range of roles.

The interests of both boys and girls will be taken into account when selecting materials to support the development of writing. Language games, explicit feedback and clear target setting can all help boys in particular to make good progress in reading and writing.

### **15. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Executive Head teacher and the English Co-ordinators monitor English. Having identified priorities, the SMT and English Co-ordinator construct an action plan that forms part of the School Development Plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored. English co-ordinators from each school meet half termly and carry out book scrutinies with an agreed focus, results are then fed back to staff. Year group teachers across the three schools also meet half termly to moderate levels. Moderation for writing also takes place across the pyramid.

### **16. Impact and Expectations**

Reading and writing are essential life skills, both for children's future progress in school and for their ability to fulfil their ambitions and potential in adult life. We aim that children leaving St. Augustine's, should have received a firm foundation in the essentials of spoken language, reading and writing. They will have gone on to develop fluency and individual style whenever possible, together with enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction in their achievements as readers and writers.

## 17. Appendix 1



# St. Augustine's C.E. (C) First School



## Overview of Reading Strategies and Opportunities

### Aims

- We aim to enable our pupils to read confidently, fluently and accurately.
- We aim to employ a full range of reading cues.
- We aim to foster an interest in words and their meanings and gain an appreciation of books from a variety of genres.
- We aim to enable the children to read with enjoyment and to evaluate and justify their preferences.
- We aim to develop reading skills in conjunction with writing skills so that individuals may function in society as literate adults and readers for life.
- We aim to create reading opportunities across all areas of the curriculum.

### Strategies

Reading is taught alongside Letters and Sounds. This initiative promotes strong and systematic emphasis on the teaching of phonics to aid the teaching and learning of reading.

Reading is taught through shared reading sessions, guided reading sessions and opportunities to practise and consolidate skills through independent reading and reading to adults and peers. A range of strategies will be used including:

- Modelling and discussing the features of written texts through the shared reading of texts.
- Questioning to probe pupils' understanding.
- Providing a range of experiences to cater for preferred learning styles.
- Providing reading tasks and books appropriately matched to individual abilities and needs.

### Opportunities for reading

#### Shared reading:

The whole class shares a text which is beyond their reading levels. Shared reading provides a context for teacher modelling and teaching and applying reading skills at word, sentence and text level.

### Guided reading:

Guided reading takes place in a small group with a teacher and focuses on children's ability to become independent readers, thinkers and learners. The children are grouped by ability and read individual copies of the same text, which matches the reading level of the group. During the session pupils' progress is assessed and recorded. See attached sheets.

### Independent reading time:

Children read their own reading scheme book, books that interest them, library books or topic related books. During this time the teacher often hears individuals read or pupils may be directed to read with a partner.

### Story time:

The texts are chosen to support the planned curriculum and allow time for the teacher to assess comprehension by asking literal and inferential questions and increase pupils' vocabulary.

### Library:

Children access the library for research purposes and to select books for pleasure to read at home and in school. It is currently manned twice per week.

### Home / school reading:

All children, once ready to read, take home a reading book from a range of schemes which are banded. They progress through the schemes until they are competent, fluent, independent readers and can then select their own books from the library. Children are set a challenge to read 4 x per week and this is tracked in school. Those children who do this are rewarded with a gift of a book at the end of each term.

### Reading buddies:

Children who have difficulty with reading can, at times, read with a partner during quiet reading sessions.

### Special Educational Needs:

Pupils with special educational needs with regard to reading are supported individually by the SENCo and benefit from precision teaching as identified in their Individual Education Plan.

### Recording and reporting:

Each child is individually assessed in guided reading sessions and at the end of Years 2, 3 and 4 tests are administered to give a National Curriculum level.

These results are tracked in school by the class teachers and the head teacher. Whole school targets are set and shared with governors.

A written report is provided for parents each year.

17. Appendix 2



St. Augustine's C.E. (C) First School



Handwriting Policy

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj

Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo

Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt

Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy

Zz