



English Policy

Philosophy

The teaching of English at Priestsic Primary School aims to equip pupils with the life skills needed to become fully functioning, active members of society in the twenty-first century. We believe that communication is the key to educational progress, to social interaction and to personal development and happiness. We aim to equip our children with the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to give them the very best chance to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Aims

At Priestsic Primary School, we aim to develop in all children:

- ❖ The ability to communicate clearly and appropriately in speech and writing.
- ❖ The confidence, desire and ability to express their own views and opinions.
- ❖ The ability to read fluently, accurately and with understanding to support learning across the curriculum.
- ❖ The recognition of the value of books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play, fostering a life-long love of reading.
- ❖ The competence to produce written work of a high quality in all subjects, through the application of skills taught in English.
- ❖ Competence in the 'basic skills' – spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting, to allow creativity to flourish.
- ❖ Persistence and stamina and a desire to do their best.

Curriculum planning

The 2014 National Curriculum underpins much of our short and medium term planning across Key Stage One and Two, with teachers taking this and adapting, rewriting and planning learning according to what their children need to make good progress. English is taught daily. In Key Stage One, the organisation and structure of English lessons are flexible according to the needs of the children/learning outcomes desired. In Key Stage Two, pupils receive separate daily reading and writing sessions as well as short, focused spelling, grammar and handwriting sessions.

Teaching and learning is structured over a sequence of lessons using a high quality core text to drive the learning. Where possible, we aim to offer our children exciting, creative first-hand learning experiences to stimulate, enthuse and drive learning. We ensure that end of unit outcomes are the most appropriate to demonstrate the learning that has taken place over the unit of work.

As well as being taught explicitly, language and literacy skills are developed throughout the curriculum. There are opportunities for the children to consolidate, use and apply skills through engaging in the wider curriculum. This supports the children in the transference of the skills they are developing in English across the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

English is delivered through exploration of a high quality core text. This is further enhanced by opportunities appropriate to the intended learning. For example, technology, drama, role play and creative, first-hand and practical experiences are used to stimulate, enhance, support and record learning.

Underpinning the delivery of a unit of work are the teaching techniques of teacher modelling, scaffolding of learning, 'slow write' techniques, discussion, questioning, scribing to support pupils throughout the learning process. Children are given the opportunity to work individually, independently, collaboratively, in groups, pairs and as a whole class.

Speaking and Listening

Developing oracy is a particular focus at Priestsic Primary School. Analysis of our current and historical cohorts, through formal assessment and also through informal observations, has highlighted this as an area which requires on-going support.

We give children a wide range of opportunities to engage in and develop their skills in speaking and listening.

As adults in school, we strive to provide good models of oracy for children to emulate. We endeavour to speak with grammatical accuracy. We expect children to learn to do this also and correct children when they do not. We place great emphasis on talk and communication in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One particularly, where the curriculum is structured to promote modelling, supporting, practising and developing talk. Classroom environments reflect this. In their continuous provision, teachers provide opportunities daily in classrooms up to and including Year 2, that children can access to practise their speaking and listening skills and social interactions.

Developing skills in speaking and listening (and therefore, reading and writing) underpins much of the English curriculum in the earlier years at Priestsic. It forms a key element in the teaching sequence and is incorporated into the teaching phases.

Reading

In Key Stage One, the teaching of reading takes place in English lessons as part of the units of work, as set out in the current National Curriculum. Other opportunities include during Letters and Sounds activities and during learning in other subjects. Here, teachers build in opportunities for pupils to apply their developing reading skills when researching. Teachers explicitly model the skills needed to become competent and confident readers and further model, support and develop this good practice during whole class or individual reading sessions. These can be within the main English lesson or at another time.

In the early years, blending is taught as the prime approach to reading. This is taught in the English lesson, in daily Letters and Sounds sessions and in one to one reading. Much support is given to ensuring our children make a good start on the road to reading. As well as whole class reading, one to one reading is a high priority, particularly in the earlier years. Here,

children benefit from regular individual reading sessions with adults in school. Children who are finding it challenging to make a good start to reading benefit from daily reading sessions on our Reading Project.

High quality resources to support the acquisition of the skills of early reading are in place. Carefully selected book-banded book resources are in place for both guided and individual reading to ensure children make good progress. Children are encouraged to take their reading books and a library book home to share throughout school. We aim to make our pupils lifelong readers and, in order to do this, have compiled a list of the 50 best books to read. These are called our 'Recommended Reads'. These are promoted in school and pupils are encouraged to take them home to share. To further reinforce the importance home plays in the development of a child's reading skills, Key Stage One hold twice weekly parents' reading sessions where parents and carers are invited into school to read together.

As pupils move towards and into Key Stage Two, the emphasis shifts from learning to read through blending and developing the strategies and skills to decode, to supporting and developing understanding and deepening meaning. Daily whole class reading sessions are vital to this, where the quality of teacher's questioning is paramount. Teachers plan and teach using the reading VIPERS from Year Two onwards. These cover the reading domains of the National Curriculum and include the skills of; Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrievals and Sequencing (KS1)/ Summarising (KS2). Resources and materials are carefully selected to deliver the specific objective but also to ensure that the texts capture and engage the children. In KS2, texts are genre and year group specific. Home reading books continue to be book banded up to Black Book Band, to ensure challenge and consistency. However, pupils are also encouraged to select books according to their specific interests and author preferences. From Foundation One onwards, we have an author focus where the pupils engage with and enjoy the works of a range of authors - both new and well established.

All classrooms have a wide variety of reading material to engage and enthuse readers. Book corners are well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction texts that children freely access.

To further develop reading skills and foster a life-long love of reading, teachers plan in opportunities for the skills to be transferred and used across the curriculum in order to learn in other subjects.

We endeavour to read stories to our children on a daily basis. We aim to foster a love of books, authors and reading which stays with our pupils into adulthood.

Phonics, Spelling and Grammar

Grammar is taught explicitly through regular short, focused Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar lessons. It is incorporated into all English sessions. Using grammatical accuracy has a high priority. Grammatical errors are addressed when they occur, in all lessons.

Foundation One to Year Two follow the Letters and Sounds programme where phonics is taught explicitly every day. Up to Year One, a daily session is given over to phonics teaching

and word recognition skills. The knowledge and skills taught are applied in English sessions when reading and writing. Opportunities to further develop and consolidate these skills are provided throughout the day in both the classroom through continuous provision and the outdoor learning environments.

From Year Two to Year Six, we teach the objectives from the National Curriculum 2014. Schemes such as Support for Spelling are used, as well as Letter and Sounds for those children still at the earlier phases for spelling. Through this, our children become more proficient in their ability to decode when reading. With older pupils, we explicitly teach spelling rules and strategies to support them in becoming competent spellers.

To further support home/school links we set weekly spelling activities from Foundation Two onwards. These link directly to the teaching objectives in class.

Writing

We focus on developing our children's ability to write accurately, to allow them to be as creative and imaginative as possible. Compositional and transcriptional skills are taught, alongside the creative aspects of writing. We plan in opportunities for children to experience, read, talk, plan and prepare before writing to make them the 'experts' wherever possible to give them the best opportunities to succeed.

Children write regularly throughout the phases of an English unit from Foundation Two onwards. This is because we recognise that, in order for our pupils to make the best possible progress in writing, they need regular, opportunities to practise, develop and apply their writing skills. These opportunities are delivered in a variety of ways - in planned writing activities throughout a unit, in guided groups where a specific focus is addressed, in one to one sessions, independently and through incidental writing opportunities either planned or evolving, as the teaching sequence progresses. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, opportunities to write are also provided through continuous provision; in role play areas, writing tables, activity tables, small world play, tactile areas etc where children can explore and develop their marking making and apply their early writing skills. Again, we endeavour to provide a wealth of opportunities - both adult supported and independent, child led experiences for our pupils to develop these important skills.

Throughout school we have opportunities to produce meaningful and creative pieces of writing across the curriculum. These allow our pupils to apply their skills in writing when they are learning in all subjects. These opportunities are planned and delivered in a range of subjects. We endeavour to ensure that the writing produced is of the same standard and quality as the work produced in English.

Handwriting

Handwriting and letter formation are explicitly taught throughout school. We aim to teach our children to write clearly, fluently and quickly so the physical act of writing does not hinder progress. The Charles Cripps Handwriting Guidance is followed throughout school.

Handwriting is taught through the development of gross and fine motor skills in regular practical activities in the early years. These activities use a range of media and tools and encompass both indoor and outdoor learning experiences. Specific letter formation is taught explicitly throughout Foundation and Key Stage One on a daily basis. Children regularly write on lined whiteboards with appropriately fine-tipped pens to allow teachers and support staff to model, guide, support and correct letter formation and handwriting at the point of writing. This support extends into writing opportunities where guided sessions are also used to support handwriting and presentation skills. Formal handwriting sessions are taught weekly in lined books to support the younger pupils to gain control of the size, shape and orientation of letters.

Teaching Assistants provide support for small groups of children or in one to one sessions for pupils in Key Stage 1 who are having difficulties gaining control of their handwriting. These interventions are short term and assessed before and at the end of the intervention to ensure progress is made.

In Key Stage Two, formal handwriting sessions are taught weekly, focusing on developing the fluency of children's handwriting. Children are taught to write with both pens and pencil. Use of a joined style is encouraged and is expected by the end of Year Three. Pupils are taught to use an appropriate speed and style of handwriting in relation to the task. Presentation skills are explicitly taught to give our pupils a range of options to choose from when considering how they would like to present their learning.

Feedback

Feedback is a vital teaching tool to which we give a high priority at Priestsic. Teachers carry out whole class feedback sessions regularly in order to support all our pupils to make good progress.

Please see the school's Feedback Policy for further guidance.

Please see the Presentation Guidelines for further guidance.

Please see the Handwriting Policy for further guidance.

Inclusion

We work hard to plan opportunities that engage all our pupils, focusing on delivering learning that challenges but also supports those with specific learning needs. We aim to ensure our most able pupils are challenged and motivated and our children with barriers to learning, are supported and enabled to make good progress.

We tailor our curriculum to support the particular needs of our pupils. We aim to embrace the culture, beliefs and values of all our pupils and provide them with opportunities, through English, to widen their understanding and celebrate the beliefs and cultures of others.

Underpinning our curriculum and, within this, our English programme, is the development of our pupils moral, spiritual, emotional and social skills. We work hard to foster respect for

other people's work and ideas, and create an environment where the contribution of all pupils is valued, and where all pupils feel secure and included.

Intervention

- Additional support is offered through a variety of intervention programmes such as: Nessy Phonics, the Reading Project and Toe - by -Toe to support reading.
- The Narrative programme and Speaking and Listening interventions are delivered to support children with speech and language needs and children with English as an Additional Language.
- Letters and Sounds 'catch up' support for pupils who did not reach the required standard in the Year 1 Phonic Screening Check.
- Pupils identified in pupil progress meetings as not good progress are then targeted by the class teacher and support staff. This could take the form of one to one support, or by the child accessing small group intervention, to accelerate progress.
- In class, intervention programmes change regularly depending on the needs of specific cohorts. Assessment is regularly analysed to identify needs. At Priestsic, we strive to find the best way to support children in their learning and try a variety of strategies and interventions to find the most suitable to overcome barriers to learning. We monitor results of these closely to ensure value for money and the effectiveness of the support. Programmes which do not yield results after an appropriate length of time are abandoned and another approach is considered.

See SEN Policy for further guidance.

Assessment and recording

Teachers will:

- ❖ Use a variety of tools and techniques to continually assess progress in reading, writing, phonics, spelling and oracy. This is carried out on a daily basis through observation, marking and feedback to identify misconceptions and next steps in the learning cycle.
- ❖ Use Key Assessment Criteria to assess whether pupils are 'on track' to be working at the end of year expectations. .
- ❖ Use NFER tests in Key Stage Two to track progress.
- ❖ Use statutory end of Key Stage Two test materials.
- ❖ Use teacher assessment and the statutory test materials to formally assess at the end of Key Stage One.
- ❖ Monitor and assess progress in writing against success criteria in extended writing.
- ❖ Formally assess reading regularly using age/ability appropriate assessment tools and techniques every term.
- ❖ In Foundation Stage we formally observe children and assess against the Early Learning Goals.

See Assessment Policy for further information.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of English is undertaken according to the priorities of the School's Improvement Plan and according to the monitoring timetable. Senior leaders carry out regular monitoring activities to support and improve teaching and learning throughout school.

