



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, re-writing 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 daily separate English lessons and Whole class guided reading sessions as well as short, focused spelling and handwriting sessions. The spelling scheme 'Spelling Shed' is used in Key Stage two and Little Wandle is used as a phonics intervention for those children

who need extra support. The English lessons include listening, reading and writing and there will generally be reading opportunities as part of these lessons. Grammar lessons are taught in the context of the writing that is taking place wherever possible. eg The active and passive rules would be taught in the context of writing a newspaper report.

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.

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.

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 Little Wandle 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. 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.

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.

Daily Guided Reading - A whole class approach

These lessons:

- Are built around the teacher reading high-quality and challenging texts, which are dissected by the class through high-level questioning and discussion.
- Include a range of activities - not all of which must have a written outcome - that enable pupils to develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Do not always require teachers to group pupils by ability.

Why is this better than guided reading?

- Pupils are regularly immersed in high-quality children's literature.
- Pupils can improve speaking and listening skills, as well as developing comprehension skills.
- More time is given to modelling skills rather than just assessing ability.
- Reduced workload as teachers do not need to plan and resource a carousel of guided reading activities.

Behaviour for learning is improved as all pupils are engaged in the lesson.

How it works

1. The teacher selects a high-quality piece of children's literature or non-fiction text that will challenge all pupils. It should be at a level beyond that at which they can read independently, as specified in the English National Curriculum. The text can be linked to a relevant topic and used to benefit other subjects, e.g., humanities and science.
2. The learning objective for the session is the same for all pupils. Pupils will have access to the same activities and levels of questioning but with differing levels of support provided depending on pupil needs.
3. The teacher reads the text to the class, modelling fluency, intonation and comprehension, and pupils follow the text with their own copy.
4. The teacher uses skilful questioning and discussion to help pupils get to grips with new vocabulary and develop their understanding of the text.
5. Pupils work on activities that help them to develop their comprehension of the text. Depending on the activity, pupils may work in mixed-ability groups, pairs or by themselves. Activities do not always need a written outcome, for example you may use drama to help children explore a character through role play, debates or freeze frames.
6. The teacher makes assessments at the end of the lesson to inform planning of future sessions.

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.

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 interventions such as:

- Little Wandle '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 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.