



# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

English Policy

September 2008

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School we embrace a world of knowledge and learning through the medium of the English language. It is through this that we live out our Mission Statement which is:

“to live, love and learn by the example of Jesus”.

In our learning of the English language we contribute to the 'Every Child Matters'

philosophy, particularly;

- ✚ Enjoying and achieving
- ✚ Participating in society
- ✚ Make a positive contribution

## 1 Rationale

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of the study of English at St. Joseph's are:

- ✚ to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- ✚ to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- ✚ to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;

- ✚ to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- ✚ to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- ✚ to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- ✚ to help children enjoy writing and recognize its value;
- ✚ to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in fiction and non-fiction;
- ✚ to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.
- ✚ to create an atmosphere where children wish to learn, so that they come to enjoy English because they are active participants.

## 2 Teaching and Learning Styles

At St. Joseph's School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended in the Revised Primary Framework. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through a daily Literacy hour that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. During these lessons children experience a whole-class shared reading or writing activity and a guided group or independent activity with a whole-class plenary session to review progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses, Essential Text Literacy resources (fiction and non-fiction) and a variety of software. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

As with all schools, there are children of differing ability in all classes at St. Joseph's School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

In addition to the Literacy Hour, each class has a timetabled slot to visit the School Library and further Literacy skills are developed in this period. Children are actively encouraged to use the Library in their own free time to further enhance their reading ability.

### 3 English Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Literacy Strategy in conjunction with the Revised Primary Framework 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 Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.

Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. 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. This 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. These plans include learning objectives and success criteria for each lesson along with the differentiated activities planned for each lesson and the opportunity for ongoing AFL throughout the week. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

### 4 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of Mathematics in our school. Children are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the Mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

#### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. The children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. They use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

#### Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health education (PSCHE) and Foundation Studies.

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship. We encourage children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. The children research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views. These activities take place as part of designated PSCHE weeks whereby Literacy is delivered through various themed topics throughout the school

#### Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results. Religious education has an important role at St. Joseph's school and this provides many opportunities to share with others orally and in written work.

At St. Joseph's School 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 Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- ✚ using texts that children can read and understand
- ✚ using visual and written materials in different formats
- ✚ using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials
- ✚ using alternative communication such as signs and symbols

## 6 Assessment and Recording

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help teachers to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives.

Medium-term assessments are used to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help teachers to plan for the next unit of work. They use a class record of the key objectives as the recording format for this.

Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and summarize the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher also uses these long-term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 6, plus the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress using the level descriptions of the National Curriculum. Teachers indicate targets on almost all written activities in the children's books.

The subject leader conducts regular book scrutinies of each year groups 'higher, middle and lower' ability children. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by various agencies.

In addition to the above, the children in Years 2-6 are also tested twice a year using the Suffolk Reading Tests. These tests are carried out on-line and provide teachers with detailed feedback on individual progress as well as identifying various trends within the class/school.

### Assessment Manager 7

The school has recently adopted the Assessment Manager 7 tracking software developed by the local authority. This enables teachers to set targets based on previous achievement/levels and assess progress on a regular basis. A mid-year review allows teachers to focus on those children who may not be making the anticipated/expected progress and provides them with the opportunity to address the issues appropriately. Completion of end of year levels based on test scores and teacher assessment provide the receiving teacher with vital information on each individual and the cohort in general as they embark on a new academic year.

## 7 Resources

There are a wide range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. The school library provides an excellent resource for the children with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction material, story sacks, big books and other research material.

There is a vast array of software available for all teachers to access via the school network, including *Easiteach*, *KnowledgeBox*, *WindowBox* and a host of 2Simple software. In addition to this, different classes have specific software for their year group including *Heinemann Literacy World* and *Achieve English*.

Children have access to the Internet in the ICT Suite, the Cyber Cafe and via laptops.

Each year group has a selection of Guided Reading books, set at the level of the classes. These books are stored in a central part for both classes to easily access.

## 8 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 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 gives the Head Teacher an annual summary report in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The leader has specially-allocated regular management 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. Mr Quinn, the named governor responsible for literacy, meets regularly with the Subject Leader in order to review progress.

Tony Gorton (Subject Leader)

Review Date : March 2009