

# GREAT SANKEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ENGLISH POLICY

*'Together We Learn and Grow'*

## **Introduction**

At Great Sankey Primary School, we recognise the importance of English, as a subject in its own right, and as the most cohesive area of learning. Gaining and using skills in language not only affects the child's progress in school, but also has a profound influence upon the course of his or her whole life. We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

### **The general aims of this policy are:**

- To promote a positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- To develop children's ability to become confident users of language, both oral and written.
- To provide children with the necessary literacy skills which will enable them to become competent and successful in their later lives
- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative English curriculum and that it is delivered in an engaging and meaningful way in order to motivate all learners.

### **Statutory Requirements:**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out per year group in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024).

### **Staff Structure:**

English Leads (Reading, Writing, SPaG) – Tom Gawne & Lisa Wilding

Phonics & Early Reading Lead: Stephanie Bani

### **Role of the English Leaders:**

The Subject Leaders are responsible for driving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating:
  - Work scrutiny, pupil voice, data tracking, learning walks
  - Pupil progress discussions at termly data meetings
  - Provision and impact of current English practice across school
  - The quality of the learning environment to support independence
- Taking the lead in policy development and practice
- Delivering in-house CPD to colleagues as well as arranging external support and development
- Auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent developments in the English curriculum, feeding this back to staff and adapting our practice accordingly.

### **Subject Organisation:**

The English curriculum is driven by the use of high quality texts, picture books or animations and these are used to inspire high quality writing. The 'Pathways to Write' scheme of work provides a progressive framework for each phase to follow and supports teachers with the planning of punctuation and grammar requirements as set out in the National Curriculum. SLT, Teachers, The GSP English team ensure that these plans are followed across the year. More detailed short term planning, based upon our long term plan uses the school planning format as agreed by staff and is planned in response to the needs of children within each class on a weekly basis.

The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum.

## **Phonics**

The teaching of 'Phonics' to young children is a gateway into the world of learning to read and write competently. At Great Sankey Primary, we aim to teach our children to recognise the sounds of the alphabet and learn to blend those sounds together to read and write words.

Phonics is a daily practice in Key Stage 1 and Reception, and the children are taught in small ability groups. The school follows the 'Read, Write, Inc' scheme which is designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers. Each Read, Write, Inc. programme meets the higher expectations of the curriculum and uses effective assessment to accelerate every child's progress.

Phonics is taught at a rapid pace: children are introduced to 1 phoneme per day throughout the first term. The teaching of this is multi-sensory and active using the wider school environment such as the Early Years outdoor area to ensure purposeful learning is taking place. Letter sounds are sent home as they are introduced in class to consolidate learning and to keep parents/carers up to date on the progress being made in school. Tricky words are introduced gradually as 'red words' for the children to learn at home and in school. Children are continually assessed during and at the end of this period and if secure move onto set 2 and 3 sounds as appropriate. Intervention activities will be in place for those children who are not secure with the set 1 sounds to target any gaps in phonic knowledge so far. Children will continue to follow the programme into Year 1. This will be a focused, daily session. In Year 1 the teaching and learning will focus on building on the skills learnt in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continual formative assessment will help target any gaps in phonic knowledge. This will be addressed in class through intervention programmes and supported individual or group work.

## **Writing**

At Great Sankey Primary, we aim to promote a love of writing through a broad and purposeful curriculum filled with a variety of stimuli, opportunities and inspirations. Our school overview and long term plan for writing is based upon the Literacy Company's 'Pathways to Write' and ensures coverage of fiction, non-fiction and poetry across a year, including the use of different picture books and animation videos to inspire and spark children's imagination.

We teach modeled, shared and independent writing in daily English lessons across the school, and also aim to apply these writing skills across the whole curriculum where appropriate. Children move through a process when writing. They begin with the immersion into the text type or stimulus, then onto the gathering of rich and relevant vocabulary, moving into the teaching and learning of appropriate grammar and sentence structures, through to the planning and writing. The final stage is the editing, improving, publishing and / or performance of the end piece. Each child receives feedback in-line with our feedback and marking policy and is given opportunities to respond and improve.

We place a great emphasis on developing independent writers at our school and promote this in our classroom environment. The working wall plays a part in our journey to true independence and improving writing outcomes, and children are encouraged to access the relevant resources from it. Word mats, dictionaries and thesaurus (where appropriate) are available on tables or around the classroom for the children to access.

Teachers are expected to explicitly model the writing process to the children and the use of visualisers is expected across school to support with this. Often, the EEF recommended 'I do, We Do, You Do' approach can be seen to lead to increased independence within writing lessons.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, children receive regular grammar teaching through core skills and English lessons. As much as possible, grammar is linked to the writing unit in the English lesson so that children are able to apply the skills taught. The Pathways to Write Scheme of learning also supports teachers in their planning of punctuation and grammar elements for each phase / year group.

Children are encouraged to write from Foundation Stage using an appropriate posture and pencil grip. From Year 1, we follow the 'Letter Join' handwriting scheme and display examples of lettering in all EYFS and KS1 classrooms. KS1 children have regular handwriting lessons; handwriting continues to be taught into LKS2 with intervention, where needed, in UKS2. Children are expected to use their handwriting skills across the curriculum and our class teachers ensure that our presentation policy is followed by children in all lessons. Staff also aim to model this handwriting style.

Work is adapted in all year groups and targeted support / intervention given where required. Children work in flexible target groups according to need and are identified by each class teacher. Intervention groups take place in all year groups to support children who may be struggling or to boost and challenge children further.

## **Reading**

As reading is at the core of accessing all areas of the curriculum it is essential that at Great Sankey Primary there is focused and dedicated time given to the teaching of the mechanics of reading. We strive to create a text-rich environment for all of our children which appeals to their interests and helps to create a love of reading.

All children from reception to Y6 will be given the opportunity to take part in daily reading sessions each week. In KS1, children complete a carousel of Guided Reading sessions and in KS2, this continues up to Autumn 2 / Spring Term In Year 3. From then onwards, Year 3 children complete whole class reading sessions with a focus on developing skills across the different reading content domains throughout the week. The teacher ensures the child develops their understanding of the text by providing a range of literal, inference and deductive questions. Text level activities are also taught during English lessons and vocabulary is pre-taught at the beginning of each new text / extract. Reading lessons are planned in line with recommendations from The Reading Framework (2024) and adapted sessions are planned for those pupils who may need a more bespoke approach.

Children will also have chance to read independently or to read with an adult as part of a weekly 'Book Club' lesson. Their independent reading books will be appropriate for the age and ability of the individual child. We believe it is key that parents play a big part in their child's reading process and encourage them to listen to their child read regularly at home.

The teaching of reading will include:

- The teaching of phonic awareness.
- Questioning about character/ story/ events/ structure/ plot.
- Awareness of layout / features.
- Awareness of punctuation.
- Prediction of the story
- Developing decoding skills of unfamiliar words
- Awareness of the reading and spelling of common exception words/ tricky words
- Deduce meaning from context, syntax and previous experience.
- Scanning text for information and to support comprehension.
- Discussing the effectiveness of chosen language.
- Encouraging talk and discussion in groups.
- Encouraging clear speaking and expression when reading texts aloud
- Allowing opportunities for children to read for sustained lengths of time

In Key stage 1 and 2, the children have a home reading book which they can choose themselves from a selection within their own reading level. Independent reading books are introduced in the reception classes once the children are ready. Books are brought into school daily and a reading record is sent home. These reading records are an important way for teachers to communicate the child's progress in reading to parents. Children are expected to read at least three times per week. The parents and children are encouraged to comment in the reading record book.

Every class will have access to a stimulating and inviting reading area that encourages children to come and read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts reflecting genres, cultures, gender and race. A respect for books will be fostered and modelled by all staff and children. Every class will have a 'class book' – a quality novel / story that is read daily for the enjoyment of 'listening'. Parents are invited into school regularly to read with the children. Parents are also invited to Stay and Read sessions where they have the opportunity to observe the teaching and learning of reading in practice in their child's classroom.

## **Spelling**

Spelling is an integral part of our English curriculum at Great Sankey Primary and it is taught discretely alongside writing, reading, grammar and punctuation. As a school, we follow the strategies and teaching structures set out through the Pathways to spelling scheme and supplement this with resources from the No Nonsense scheme and other resource websites. In KS1, Pupils are exposed to up to three lessons a week from Year 2 and this follows suit into Key Stage 2. Weekly spelling rules or patterns are taught in short 20-minute sessions, and previous rules or patterns are recapped as the year progresses. In the scheme, these are defined as either a 'Review' or 'Mastery Focus'. In UKS2, from the Spring Term, children will also work on past Spelling Test papers to ensure revision of previous spelling rules and patterns prepare them effectively for the end of KS2 assessments.

## **Three of The Week**

In each classroom, the classroom teacher selects three spellings each week from either the statutory curriculum spelling lists or from the common exception word lists for children to practise each week. Where possible, these are linked to topics or themes that children may be learning about to try and encourage them to use these within their independent writing. Opportunity is given throughout the week for children to practise these in their spelling journals with their weekly spellings.

## **Spelling Journals + Have a Go Pads**

Spelling Journals are used in each classroom by pupils through school from Year 2. The purpose of the spelling journal is to encourage children to try out different strategies when practicing their spellings as opposed to just learning them by rote. In addition to these, classroom tables all have 'Have a Go Pads' for children to access, which act as a personal dictionary for children to use when completing their independent writing and practicing more tricky or complex spellings. Providing children with opportunities like these to practice their spellings ultimately encourages them to become more independent learners and play around with more ambitious vocabulary within their writing.

## **Spelling Tests**

Spelling tests are completed weekly in each classroom and these scores are recorded through Spelling frame. Word lists are sent home with children on a weekly basis and any misspelt words or words that require further practise are highlighted for further revision through the children's own Spelling Frame accounts.

## **Assessment:**

Children are assessed in writing three times a year using independent pieces to moderate against. The information gathered from this is recorded on the school's writing moderation sheets. This highlights where there are gaps in the teaching and learning of writing and these are addressed in future planning. The results from the writing moderation sheets are recorded on the school's data tracking sheets at the end of each term for discussion at pupil progress meetings. Writing outcomes are validated internally and externally via local cluster and TCAT schools. Writing can be externally moderated by the Local Authority in Year 2 and Year 6 and are supported by LA moderators who are appointed by STA and work within the school / trust.

There are planned assessments using NFER tests (KS2) for reading and for EGPS (KS2 only) that take place twice a year. The results from these inform the teacher judgements at the end of each term and again are discussed at pupil progress meetings where necessary interventions are talked about and planned for.

### **Inclusion:**

We aim to provide for all children so that they can make good progress from their own starting point in English. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment and maximize their progress. Higher attaining children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided. Lower attaining pupils are supported through adaptations to their learning that may take the form of scaffolding, modelling or modified outcomes. A record of children with IEPs is kept by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

### **Monitoring and Review:**

The English Leaders and Senior Leadership Team regularly perform work scrutiny and learning walks for English and across other subjects to ensure that the consistency of teaching and learning of English skills is applied across the curriculum. These monitoring exercises are quality assured by members of the school's trust and Primary English Hub.

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision. Governors meet with the English Leaders to review progress and receive a commentary which reports on:

- recent development work
- performance analysis in relation to the School Improvement Plan
- pupil outcomes in relation to key priorities and their impact upon teaching and learning
- future developments in accordance with the School Improvement Plan

Governors are also invited to monitor the effectiveness of the school through a variety of other activities including learning walks and participation during work scrutiny.

T. Gawne  
Deputy Headteacher



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