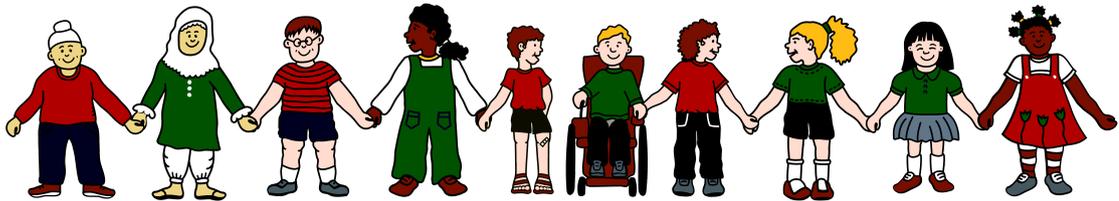


**THE GILES  
NURSERY  
AND  
INFANTS' SCHOOL**



**English Policy**

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## English Policy

### **Rationale**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we encourage our pupils to become lifelong learners. We want to give pupils an education of the highest standard. We aim for excellence in all our school activities and encourage all pupils, whatever their prior attainment, to achieve the best they possibly can. We believe that providing pupils with a well-balanced, enriching and engaging English curriculum will aid them in developing into self-assured communicators.

The Giles Nursery and Infants' School works to ensure that all pupils develop the ability to communicate effectively and that any barriers to learning are swiftly identified and steps taken to remove them. Our English policy will ensure that all pupils become confident speakers, listeners, readers and writers, preparing them for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Aims**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we aim for pupils to:

- Develop a life-long love of books and stories.
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and develop a growing vocabulary.
- Be able to and enjoy communicating effectively in a range of contexts and develop a positive attitude to themselves as communicators.
- Be able to use their reading skills to read and respond to an extensive range of texts (including literature from different times and cultures, information and reference texts, media texts and online social and collaborative communications), thinking critically and creatively.
- Become increasingly fluent and accurate in expressing their thoughts and emotions, imagination and creativity, orally and in writing.
- Understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- Be able to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Have the knowledge of, and ability to use, the main conventions of language.
- Be reflective learners, who are always looking for ways to build-on and improve their literacy skills.
- Be collaborative learners, who are able to offer constructive feedback and criticism to their peers.

### **Approach**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we believe that our pupils deserve the opportunity to explore and enjoy a wide range of genres and texts in a safe, secure environment where they are not afraid to experiment and make mistakes. We believe that staff should always model a passion for reading, research, books and literature to inspire and enthuse pupils to develop a love of literacy.

Our creative, cross-curricular approach to English engages pupils and promotes learning links. Our carefully planned curriculum takes each pupil on a learning journey that builds on previous learning and encourages pupils to make connections to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to develop a 'growth mindset' and a positive approach to learning challenges.

Each classroom has access to reading, writing and role play areas to support, stimulate and challenge pupils to apply their learning. We provide a language-rich learning environment, which supports current learning and where the written word is displayed in a variety of print. Working walls and / or washing lines are used to display current learning and show progression through units of work. Displays throughout the school are frequently updated and maintained at a very high standard to celebrate the rich variety of learning taking place.

We believe that writing should be a creative process at a functional and imaginative level. Compositional and transcriptional skills are taught alongside creative aspects. Pupils are taught and given opportunities to self and peer-assess, enabling them to become more reflective and supportive learners.

Teaching across the school includes an appropriate balance of focused subject teaching and well-planned opportunities to use, apply and develop knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum. Teaching strategies include whole-class teaching, guided group work and one-to-one support.

Teaching and learning in the early years follows the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework and is based on the areas of learning of communication and language, physical development and literacy. In key stage 1 (KS1), teaching and learning of reading, writing and phonics is based on the national curriculum for reading and writing. Phonics is taught following the school's bespoke systematic synthetic programme. Pupils are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in the early years and national age-related expectations in KS1.

We aim to provide for all pupils to reach their full potential in English. Pupil provision is personalised to the needs of the pupil through adapted planning. Every pupil is given the opportunity to work with a teacher on a regular basis. Pupils in need of further support are identified through ongoing assessment and targeted support is provided where appropriate.

### **Speaking and Listening**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School, speaking and listening is a key feature of our English curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are explicitly taught and there are a range of opportunities, both planned and incidental, for pupils to revisit, apply and extend these skills. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to develop effective communication skills and raise reading and writing standards. We use strategies to support pupil's oral language and embed their knowledge of texts. Pupils are encouraged to use discussion to explore and extend their ideas while addressing their misconceptions.

Teachers plan opportunities for paired and group talk and whole class discussion encouraged by open-ended, cross-curricular questioning. The oral sharing of experiences

and ideas supports equality of opportunity in terms of access to the curriculum and promotes pupil's motivation and engagement across subjects. Those who are less comfortable with written forms can communicate effectively and develop confidence through speaking and listening.

The school uses strategies to enable pupils to build and internalise vocabulary and language structures and develop a love of storytelling and presentation. Speaking and listening is supported throughout the school with Makaton signs and symbols. Speaking and listening is encouraged through play, including role-play and drama activities.

Each class plans speaking and listening (show and tell) into their weekly timetable. Pupils also take part in class concerts throughout the year, sharing their learning with special adults and providing opportunities for public speaking.

### **Phonics**

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School, phonics is taught through our own bespoke systematic synthetic phonics programme. Further information is available in our Phonics Policy and curriculum journey.

### **Reading**

The Giles Nursery and Infants' School offers a coherent reading programme following the principles outlined by the national curriculum. The application of phonics is taught as the primary strategy in the teaching of reading. Quality, topic-related core texts are used as models for literacy units.

Teachers read aloud on a regular basis, using books from our Reading Spine. This is an opportunity to share a common enjoyment of books and an interest in stories and to extend pupils' knowledge and appreciation of literature. Books read aloud to pupils may provide a stimulus for thinking and discussion in class. Stories are also shared with pupils during KS1 assemblies.

In addition, we have selected a range of poems and short texts to read aloud with children to develop their reading fluency. Reading fluency is the ability to read with proper speed, accuracy, and expression. Alongside phonics, children need to learn to read with fluency to understand what they are reading. Teachers model how to read poems and short texts; children join in with their own copy of the text and gradually learn to recite the text by heart. Classes perform these texts during assembly each week.

Teachers model reading strategies and behaviours through regular shared reading opportunities. Shared reading is vital for the demonstration of the application of skills and to stimulate discussion around language and literary features.

In Reception, classes have discrete, shared reading sessions each day. In these sessions, the teacher and pupils share read a text that features many words containing the focus phonic sound of that day. Common exception words and high frequency words are colour coded to

draw pupil's attention to them. These sessions enable the pupils to join in with modelled reading and discuss what is happening in the text.

In KS1, classes have discrete, guided reading sessions each day. In guided reading sessions, teachers work with groups of pupils who demonstrate similar reading behaviours and can access similar levels of texts. Texts for guided reading are carefully chosen at the instructional level, which the pupils can read with skilful support, and which offer challenges and opportunities for problem solving and discussion.

In guided reading, pupils apply the phonics and reading strategies already taught to new texts. The school's guided reading planning format includes the Herts for Learning reading criteria, which are linked to national curriculum expectations.

Guided reading sessions are structured as follows:

- Book introduction
- Strategy check to review specific reading strategies (word-reading and / or comprehension)
- Independent reading / whole group reading
- Returning to the text
- Response to the text

As pupils start to read extended texts, several guided reading sessions may be needed to complete all parts of the structure.

Teachers select focus learning intentions for each session, annotate the planning and note reading sessions in home / school reading books.

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School, pupils read independently in a wide range of contexts. Pupils are taught how to choose texts and develop independent reading skills, which will allow them to read with purpose and pleasure.

Every class has a selection of books organised into coloured book bands that pupils borrow to read at home. Parents record reading carried out at home in home / school reading records. Incentives are in place to encourage reading at home, for instance, each class has a 'reading teddy' that goes home with a pupil each weekend.

Parents are supported to read with their child at home with information specific to their child's year group given out at the September parent consultations. Questions they can ask their child to develop comprehension and understanding are provided in home / school reading records. Teachers and support staff model how to comment in reading records and record next steps / targets.

Pupils pinpointed for extra support in reading are given the opportunity to participate in more intensive individual programmes to support their progress, including additional guided reading groups, additional reading with teaching assistants or volunteers and Project X Code reading intervention in Year 2.

Each classroom has a warm, inviting reading area containing a range of high quality, accessible books that stimulate and challenge pupils in their reading choices.

Pupils have regular access to school library books. Books are updated regularly and include foreign language texts for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

## **Writing**

All pupils take part in daily writing activities, either in phonics, handwriting or English sessions. We recognise the importance of the fundamental relationship between spoken and written language. The use of a wide range of speaking and listening activities outlined above develops pupil's oral skills as a prerequisite to writing and they are given opportunities to explore and extend their talk as a preparation for writing. The principles of Talk for Writing are incorporated into our planning sequence for writing. A key feature of Talk for Writing is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided writing to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully.

We make clear links between the pupil's reading skills and writing and texts are often used as a basis for developing writing skills. Analysis of a text provides a model for pupils' writing. We also use a range of other engaging starting points as a stimulus for writing including drama and role-play, first-hand experiences, visual starting points (including film and pictures) and artefacts.

In the early years, pupils are assessed against the Development Matters statements for physical development and writing. Pupils experience writing in a range of settings and opportunities for mark-making and developmental writing are available through all areas of learning and throughout the learning environment. Pupil's own attempts at early writing are celebrated and promoted alongside the direct teaching of key skills that will enable the pupils to progress through the stages of writing development.

In KS1, we implement the national curriculum programme of study for writing during explicitly taught sessions and cross-curricular work. The teaching and learning of writing is experienced through:

- **Shared writing:** This is the key teaching tool for demonstrating the process of writing. It is used to teach the generation of ideas, grammar and spelling skills, to demonstrate features of layout and presentation and to focus on editing and refining work. The teacher explicitly models teaching points.
- **Guided writing:** This involves the teacher working intensively with a small group of pupils. Sessions are used to meet specific objectives and to focus on specific aspects of the writing process. Particular areas are targeted for individual pupils.
- **Independent writing:** Pupils are given opportunities to apply skills learned in shared and guided writing across the curriculum in a range of contexts. All writing activities have a purpose and quality is promoted through book making, publication or presentation to an audience. Independent writing is supported through the use of

working walls, dictionaries, word banks, writing frames and phonics and word displays.

To enable pupils to develop their writing skills when working on a new text type, success criteria are generated and are displayed on washing lines or working walls to give pupils a reference point to check against while they write. Success criteria are lists of features to use when writing and they incorporate the expectations set out in the English programme of study.

The learning environment celebrates writing through displays of work in both handwritten and typed form as well as signs and labels. All classrooms have attractive and well-equipped resources for writing that pupils can access through a writing area or table. Opportunities for writing are planned for and accessible throughout the environment and across the school day. Functional and creative writing are demonstrated and promoted by staff. All classes display a combination of pupil-generated writing and prompts to support grammar, punctuation and spelling.

All classes display:

- Working walls showing up-to-date examples of current learning and the steps of the current unit of work.
- Year group specific success criteria / reminders for writing.
- Displays and celebrations of recent writing.

## **Handwriting**

At the Giles Nursery and Infants' School, we encourage pupils to take pride in their work and support them to present their learning to the best of their ability. An important aspect of presentation is handwriting and the development of fine motor skills to support letter formation, placement and size.

We follow the Penpals Handwriting Scheme, a complete handwriting scheme for 3- to 11-year-olds that offers clear progression through five developmental stages:

- Physical preparation for handwriting (early years / Year 1)
- Securing correct letter formation (Year 1 / Year 2)
- Beginning to join (Year 2)

Handwriting is taught as a discrete lesson at least twice a week. Whole class teaching uses digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning, including warm ups, teaching and analysing examples of handwriting. Practice books and workbooks support independent work.

All pupils are supported to access handwriting sessions. Additional support can be provided using pencil grips, thicker pencils, larger sheets of paper and so on. For pupils with poor fine motor skills and coordination, support groups are set up to help develop these skills. A range of resources and activities that aid the development of fine motor skills are available

in all of the classrooms. In Reception, pupils are taken in small groups and one-to-one for gross and fine motor skills interventions each week to support their physical development.

The Foundation content is in line with the EYFS framework and the KS1 content supports frequent, discrete and direct teaching of handwriting as required by the national curriculum.

### **ICT and English**

Use of ICT is a key skill to support communication in the digital age. We aim for all our pupils to be able to use and interact with ICT to support their speaking and listening, reading and writing. This will happen in a range of ways:

- Pupils being exposed to and creating their own digital texts by using iPads, creating presentations and word processing.
- Being able to safely use ICT following our Online Safety policy.
- Using a range of technology such as a visualiser to support speaking and listening.
- Using a variety of software packages to support key skills such as grammar or spelling.
- Using a variety of software packages to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Speech and Language Base pupils, for example Clicker.

### **Assessment**

Clear expectations, targets and regular observation and assessment of progress towards targets are in line with our school Assessment Policy.

For English, this incorporates:

- Ongoing assessment against Development Matters (EYFS) and the national curriculum (KS1) using Herts for Learning assessment criteria.
- Ongoing, rigorous formative assessment, including feedback at the point of learning.
- Phonics tracking against the phonics phases.
- In reading, teachers use a book band progression tracker to inform age-related expectation judgements.
- High frequency word / common exception word checklists (reading and spelling).
- Termly 'Big Write' themed weeks, which conclude with an independent piece of writing. This is then used by teachers to select targets and pinpoint next steps.
- Rolling targets that are SMART and are updated regularly.

Regular moderation sessions take place across year groups to ensure teacher judgements are secure. In addition, staff attend moderation cluster sessions with other infant schools. All year groups regularly attend external moderation training sessions.

### **Learning at Home**

Expectations for learning at home can be found in our Homework Policy.

## **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

All pupils are given full access to the national curriculum. We endeavour to ensure that all pupils reach their potential, irrespective of race, gender, age, home background or ability.

The Giles Nursery and Infants' School is committed to promoting equality. When planning and teaching English, staff will make reasonable adjustments to promote equality of opportunity. We embrace diversity and seek to celebrate and reflect the diversity of our pupils and staff in our curriculum.

Base pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes. Learning is made accessible with the assistance of a specialist teacher, teaching assistants and speech therapist.

## **Role and Responsibilities of the English Curriculum Leader**

The curriculum leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the English curriculum.
- Producing an action plan for English, linked to the School Improvement Plan, leading on new initiatives and monitoring outcomes.
- Lesson observations of teachers to ensure they are carrying out the aims of the English curriculum.
- Scrutiny of pupil books and reading records, to monitor progress and feedback.
- Monitoring the quality of the learning environment.
- Analysing data to track pupil progress and attainment.
- Supporting colleagues with their CPD.
- Auditing, purchasing and organising resources.
- Keeping up to date with developments in the teaching, learning and assessment of English.
- Informing the Senior Leadership Team, year group leaders and governors of any issues relating to English.
- Regular reporting to the Governing Body on the progress of English.

**This policy will be reviewed every two years or in light of changes to legal requirements.**