



**MUNTHAM HOUSE SCHOOL**

# ENGLISH POLICY

## **English Policy**

### **Overview**

To expand the pupils' experiences and maintain purposeful learning, the English department deploys theme-based English lessons in Key Stages 1, 2, and 3, with Key Stage 4 lessons focused on GCSE exam criteria.

In Post-16, English teaching is focused on GCSE retakes. Time is also made for independent study, whereby pupils can be supported with their GCSE retakes if they are being done through a college provider. As pupils' literacy ability is fundamental to the attainment and success across the curriculum, individuals are targeted through the chosen topics, 1:1 interventions, in-class support, and regular verbal and written feedback. With this support, the department aims to ensure pupils can communicate effectively and efficiently both verbally and through writing to enable them to further their education or be successful in the workplace.

With support from subjects across the school, the department hopes to demonstrate to the pupils how vital literacy skills are. Focus is on the following skills:

- Speaking and debating
- Listening and responding
- Phonics and spelling
- Decoding and comprehension
- Handwriting and written forms
- Grammar and syntax
- Language analysis
- Writing for a purpose

### **Intent, Implementation and Impact**

#### **Intent:**

The English Curriculum is focused on and sequenced: for the acquisition of skills needed to enjoy a full range of texts; to equip pupils with the necessary skills to access and understand written information in their future; for pupils to be able to communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas and opinions, expressing themselves with fluency and accuracy. It is intended that all pupils gain qualifications in English, typically GCSE English.

Texts cover issues such as online activism, the experience of refugees, and the study of at least one Shakespeare play. Texts range from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century and include a variety of plays, novels, poetry, and works written by authors of colour to widen pupils' experience of voices that they would not normally access.

#### **Implementation:**

Skills are taught through a wide variety of methods aimed to suit visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learners. These include but are not limited to the use of discussion, mini-workshops, dramatisations, re-enactments, and role plays, as well as the use of film and live theatre to gain a deeper understanding of a text and to enrich the cultural capital of all pupils. Learning tasks are made as interactive as possible to satisfy all learning needs. The teaching of reading and writing is informed by occupational therapists who work with the English department to support the needs of individual pupils.

The staff team has an ever-increasing subject knowledge with training courses booked and completed regularly. Thought is given when deploying LSAs, with LSAs and subject specialists included in identifying those needing targeted intervention and planning and resourcing these.

English teaching focuses on facilitating the expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas, facilitating structured debate and conversation, and encouraging social and communication skills such as turn-taking. Debates on conversation link with current world events and texts studied, including teaching and modelling tolerance of viewpoints, including fundamental British values. Whilst the sequence in which skills are taught and layered is primarily static and differentiated on a 'stage not age' basis, a fluid and adaptive approach to selecting texts based on the interests and needs of the pupils is employed.

Spelling is aided by learning Standard English and Received Pronunciation, appreciating dialects and colloquialisms. The English department is working to present a uniform approach to effective and respectful communication in lessons and the wider school community.

### **Impact:**

Some pupils gain GCSE grades level 4 or above, while most achieve a GCSE grade that reflects their ability, which is usually beyond what was deemed possible from their baseline measurement. Most pupils can develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum offered in English. All leave with a level of English sufficient to proceed into further education or the workplace and become positively contributing members of society.

### **Aims**

- To engage pupils as learners at many levels by linking topics with practical experience.
- To enable all pupils to be independent by providing them with the skills necessary to communicate effectively.
- To encourage creative thinking and self-confidence in their literacy ability.
- To work with other schools and organisations to share good practices to improve policy and practice.

### **Objectives**

- To develop pupils' key skills and confidence in all areas of literacy, including body movement, facial expression, eye contact, signing, verbal reading, and writing.
- To develop fine motor and handwriting skills through multi-sensory experiences for those pupils working below their expected level.
- To present pupils with a broad range of topics, extending their experiences of different reading materials and experiences through visitors and off-site activities, which will stimulate interest and provide pleasure.
- To link language with thinking processes in various cross-curricular contexts to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills.
- To enable pupils to communicate effectively using all verbal and written forms,

including ICT.

- To enable pupils to communicate effectively and confidently within various forms of speech and social groupings in formal and informal contexts.
- To teach pupils to read fluently and with understanding, using appropriate reading strategies supported by phonics teaching, letters and sounds knowledge (using Read, Write Inc. & Jolly Phonics), reading recovery schemes (Talisman series) and the Accelerated Reader program.
- To develop pupils' knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts and to enable them to develop preferences and make informed choices.
- To develop pupils' ability to use information texts and to locate, extract and use relevant information.
- To develop writing skills for various purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation, and grammar appropriately and confidently.
- To promote the wide Use of ICT and media texts as a medium for further language development across the curriculum.

### Teaching Guidelines

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum.

Pupils in Reception develop a knowledge, understanding, and skill set through play activities and direct teaching, which informs the skills needed for further communication and literacy progression. The work covered in Key Stage 1 builds on the '*Early Learning Goals*' from the '*Early Years and Foundation Stage Statutory Framework*' for pupils aged under five, not forgetting that all curriculum areas help build and extend our pupils' literacy ability. Hence, school-wide involvement is essential.

Lessons all have clear learning objectives, which pupils share and understand. Pupils are always aware of what they will learn through a lesson activity and what skills the teacher is looking for in their learning.

Teachers use a range of learning and teaching styles, incorporating individual, paired, group, and whole class work into lessons.

Pupils are taught through discussion, practical activities, games, investigations, problem-solving recording, practice, and consolidation, and they regularly use IT to record and support their work. The teaching style and methods are varied according to the topic or theme and the pupils being taught.

In each class across the school, pupil ability varies widely. Teachers use various methods to ensure suitable learning opportunities for all pupils by matching the task's challenge to the pupil's ability. This is achieved through the use of:

- Displays: as learning walls and a celebration of success, regularly added to and changed throughout the year. These are in the English classrooms, the school corridors, and the Library.
- Targets: every pupil has a literacy target they know. These are shown in individual pupil books, and pupils regularly converse about meeting their agreed targets.
- Spellings: pupils use spellings to build their phonics, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge. Lessons designated as 'SPaG' (Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar)

are taught regularly. Attention is drawn to root words, prefixes, suffixes, and phonics knowledge throughout all lessons. Dictionaries and Thesaurus are available in both English classrooms and in Primary.

- Differentiation: short- and medium-term plans are differentiated to enable teachers to include all learners in a class lesson.
- Feedback: all books are marked, and pupils are encouraged to take time to respond in some way to the highlighted success and ways forward that have been suggested.

### **Curriculum Planning**

This is organised in three stages – short-term, medium-term, and long-term:

#### **Long-Term Planning**

Long-term plans are based on the National Curriculum for English, which details what will be taught over the Key Stages. It provides the skills and spellings for planning English activities for each year group. The English coordinator undertakes this planning in conjunction with the Basics Skills team. It is monitored regularly. Book scrutinies, checks of planning by the Head of Education and Head of English, collaborative work in the Primary Unit led by the Head of Primary, and liaison between Key Stage 3, 4, and 5 teachers seek to ensure that all areas of the National Curriculum are taught, with members of staff being accountable to one another.

#### **Medium-Term Planning**

Medium-term plans take the long-term plan and organise the teaching of English into half-termly sections. In primary, planning is set in half-termly topics that match the foundation subject in the Creative Curriculum model. Each topic has outcome pieces which are used for assessment and subject tracking. For Key Stage 3, the half-termly sections are given a topic theme and overall outcomes/s which are assessed by a 'final assessment piece' towards the end of each half term.

Planning is done on a year group by year group basis, with texts, tasks and skills linked to each Key Stage 3 and 4 year group. It is regularly updated to meet pupils' needs and address the changing nature and enthusiasm of pupils in our community. Medium-term planning is more detailed, and the objectives are more specific than long-term plans.

Medium-term planning is developed by the class teachers who respond to the needs of their pupils. It also ensures that a balanced distribution of work is undertaken across each term. This differs slightly from Key Stage 4, which considers the demands of the exam board criteria and 'speech and language assessment'. Planning is therefore organised in half-termly sections and follows a two-year programme. For both English Language and English Literature, what is taught also reflects the changes in government guidance and exam criteria and associated changes in assessments and areas to be studied.

#### **Short Term Planning**

Short-term planning details the English activities that take place throughout a topic. Daily lessons are planned in detail, and the needs of the pupils inform specific class objectives.

Individual learning goals are set when it is needed for pupils in some lessons.

Teachers collaborate in the planning of English to ensure uniformity in the provision and to share expertise. The following plans are then created and taught from as follows:

- Topic plans are used by Key Stage 1 and 2 teachers in Primary to achieve a reading or writing outcome formally assessed per half term. Evidence of progression can be found in pupils' workbooks, teachers' mark books, and progress data.
- English plans are used by all Key Stage 3 teachers to achieve a writing outcome that is formally assessed per half term. Evidence of progression can be found in pupils' workbooks, teachers' mark books, and progress data.
- Library plans are used in the teaching of Primary and Year 7 by the Literacy Specialist to support the current or future writing outcome, and the Accelerated Reader programme is used. Accelerated Reader and the supporting MyOn program are used in KS1 and 2.
- Drama plans – within Key Stage 2, these are included in the Creative Curriculum planning map, and aim to increase pupil confidence in speaking and listening skills. In Key Stage 3, Drama lessons compliment the English objectives wherever possible.
- AQA GCSE English Language plans are used by all Key Stage 4 English teachers to enable pupils to achieve an English Language GCSE at Key Stage 5 for re-sits.
- OCR GCSE English Literature plans are used by all Key Stage 4 English teachers to enable pupils to achieve an English Literature GCSE.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

The English curriculum is monitored on a regular basis by the Head of English, who examines pupils' work, monitors classroom practice and planning, and ensures parity of entitlement for all pupils across the school. The English department meets half-termly to analyse pupil progress against individual pupil targets and teacher assessments. From this meeting, targets are revised, provision of future interventions are informed, and discussions are had, which can be referred to when writing the pupil end-of-year reports.

The Head of English identifies the training needs of the staff and plans the training programmes. The Head of English also attends training for English coordinators run by the local authority and other providers, including exam boards.

There is no legal requirement for assessment against the end of key stage levels until the end of each key stage when the National Curriculum assessments occur. However, to provide the information required by the state to set targets for the next three years, in Key Stage One and Two, pupils are assessed against the end of key stage levels at the end of every year. This is a summative assessment and details what the pupils know at that moment in time.

The formative assessments, which are more important to the school, are informal, continuous, and ongoing and identify the needs of the individual pupils. These are incidental, form part of classroom activities, and inform the pupils' future learning.

Various strategies are used to assess progress, including questioning, discussion, concept mapping, and marking. This information is used to identify the pupils' needs and to inform

planning.

English assessments also monitor gaps in learning caused by exclusions and time out of education from previous educational provisions and other issues. Curriculum coverage, interventions, and provisions are amended if areas of need are identified. Purchases of study books and materials enable learning during Homework Club, during residential hours on 'floor', and during revision sessions including the Key Stage 4 'Revisiadential'.

### **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is defined as 'a learning difficulty which primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word-reading and spelling...' (Rose, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Dyslexia is often seen in pupils with behavioural issues (Heiervang et al, 2001)<sup>2</sup> and hence there is a significant prevalence of dyslexia amongst pupils at Muntham House School.

The English and intervention teams identify pupils with dyslexic tendencies, in conjunction with scrutiny of EHCPs and observations from staff across the school. Diagnostic testing for dyslexia is outsourced to a specialist by the Head of Therapy. Following publication of a report following the diagnosis of dyslexia, resources are purchased, adaptations to lessons are made, and interventions are planned and implemented to support these pupils. The Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring that resulting access arrangements for exams are put in place.

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

Annually (or when the need arises) the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the Head of English, the Head of Education, and the nominated Governor. Necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.

**Last reviewed:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

**Next review due:** September 2025

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<sup>1</sup> Rose, J. (2009) *Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties: an independent report*. DCSF.

<sup>2</sup> Heiervang, E., Lund, A., Stevenson, J. & Hugdahl, K. (2001) Behavioural problems in children with dyslexia. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, Volume 55, Issue 4.