St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harroagte,
a Voluntary Academy

Let all that you do be done in love.

'Be grateful; Be humble; Be brave; Be giving'

English Policy

Policy review date – September 2026
Person Responsible – Jenny Dalby
Ratified by Governors – December 2026
Review date – September 2027

Overall Aims and Objectives.

We recognise that the acquisition of language skills empowers our pupils and provides the foundation for all future learning. Our English curriculum promotes high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language and develops their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

We believe it is crucial for pupils to learn to communicate fluently in spoken and written form and develop their ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and across a range of experiences. The development of reading and listening skills enables our pupils to acquire new knowledge and develop emotionally, culturally and intellectually.

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

At St Joseph's Primary School, we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Have access to a broad and balanced, enriching curriculum.
- Enjoy active participation in a wide range of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities.
- Achieve success and experience enjoyment in English, regardless of their starting points or individual needs.
- Have the opportunity to creatively express themselves in and through spoken and written language.
- Have the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced range of literature.
- Use a wide range of materials and resources, including ICT to support their learning.
- Develop the ability to analyse and make informed critical judgments about their work and the work of other writers, in an appropriate way.
- Have equal access to high-quality English teaching and learning opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, faith, socio-economic background or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Curriculum

<u>Spoken Language</u>

In developing spoken language, we aim for all pupils to:

- Think critically and logically, ordering their thoughts and expressing them clearly
- Develop strong oracy skills that build confidence, understanding and effective communication for learning and life.
- Express and justify their feelings and opinions with increasing clarity and effectiveness and respect the opinions of others

- Communicate with ease in varied circumstances for different audiences and purposes
- Listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard.

Speaking and listening underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and an understanding for reading and writing.

At St Joseph's, pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in varied ways across the curriculum. They learn how to speak audibly and fluently, articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions and listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers. Structured opportunities are planned to extend vocabulary and language development, while adults model high-quality spoken language and effective listening skills.

We also provide regular whole school opportunities for developing speaking and listening activities such as leading assemblies, reading at Mass, leading collective worships and taking part in seasonal productions and plays. Across school, all pupils are taught to listen, evaluate and respect the opinions of others. They are encouraged to speak expressively and confidently in front of others and use drama and role play to explore a range of issues and deepen their understanding of texts.

In EYFS, communication and language development is prioritised through purposeful interactions, storytelling, songs, rhymes and play-based learning, enabling pupils to develop vocabulary, confidence and fluency in spoken language.

Reading

We aim to develop confident, fluent and thoughtful readers who read for pleasure and purpose. Our teaching develops both accurate word reading and language comprehension. In developing reading skills, we aim for pupils to:

- Develop a love of reading through regular opportunities to listen to, discuss and enjoy a wide range of high-quality texts.
- Apply their knowledge of systematic synthetic phonics to decode unfamiliar words accurately.
- Read with increasing accuracy, automaticity and fluency, using appropriate expression when reading aloud.
- Develop vocabulary and understanding through rich discussion of texts, explicit teaching and wider reading.
- Monitor their understanding, recognise when something does not make sense and reread or seek clarification where necessary.

- Retrieve information, make inferences and explain their ideas using evidence from texts.
- Develop the confidence and stamina to read independently and silently as their reading becomes increasingly fluent.
- Develop imagination, empathy and critical awareness through traditional and contemporary fiction, poetry and non-fiction.
- Broaden their knowledge of the world and deepen their understanding and appreciation of different cultures, experiences and perspectives

At St Joseph's, we recognise that reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It facilitates independence in the quest for knowledge and allows the reader to share experiences, which would otherwise not be encountered.

Reading for Enjoyment.

At St Joseph's we aim to create a reading culture that promotes a life-long love and enjoyment of books. We provide a wide range of reading material and opportunities for pupils to select texts of their choice. Each class has an inviting book corner, displaying a range of texts and weekly time is allocated for free reading. Our school library is available for every child to use and each class has a timetabled weekly slot. Pupils are encouraged to regularly choose their own library book to share at home, in addition to their reading book. We believe that all staff should be 'reading role models' for pupils, encouraging them to read widely through recommendations from their own reading. Pupils are also encouraged to share their reading and make recommendations to each other, both in their own class and across other year groups and pupils in Reception and Year Six have reading buddies. Each class has a class text which is displayed and read to pupils by an adult. Further to this, reading for pleasure is also promoted through World Book Day, celebrated annually and other events such as EYFS bedtime stories and KS1 Secret Reader Storytimes.

Reading at home

We want every child in our school to become a confident reader who reads with fluency and understanding. We recognise the vital role parents play in this and encourage parental involvement in reading at all stages of learning. Parents are given information in the Autumn term about the reading curriculum and strategies to support their child in reading at home. Pupils are expected to read regularly at home and parents are asked to sign their child's homework diary/ reading to record when they do. The books pupils take home are chosen by the child and teacher and teachers regularly review the level of books. We use e-books and structured book banding to support pupils in early reading until they are capable of independent reading. Pupils read their home reading book to their teacher at least once a week and a record of this, along with any other 1:1 reading session in school is made in the child's reading record / homework diary. Pupils who require additional support with reading will read with an adult more often.

The Reading Curriculum

In EYFS and Year One discrete phonics lessons are taught in a systematic way, using the validated phonics scheme 'Essential Letters and Sounds.' Discrete phonics lessons take place daily in Reception and Year One and the skills learnt in these sessions are explicitly modelled and applied across the curriculum.

Pupils who require additional support with phonics are identified by class teachers. In addition to quality first teaching in class, they receive targeted support through bespoke interventions delivered by teaching assistants.

Parental involvement in phonics learning is encouraged and parents are invited to a phonics workshop in the Autumn term. Information about phonics and strategies to support learning at home are shared and throughout the year teachers continue to communicate progress with parents.

In Year two, teaching consolidates pupils' phonic knowledge and develops their ability to read and spell increasingly complex words. Pupils build reading accuracy, automaticity and fluency, alongside their understanding of texts. Pupils who have not yet secured decoding receive systematic phonics teaching and closely matched reading practice for as long as needed, including in Key Stage 2

From Reception, pupils develop language comprehension through listening to and discussing high-quality stories, poems and non-fiction. Through 1:1 reading with an adult, small group reading and whole class sessions, pupils begin to develop comprehension skills. These skills are built upon in KS1 and KS2 through whole class reading sessions. These sessions develop skills through experiencing high-quality discussion with the teacher where learners are encouraged to both understand and apply core-reading skills, widen their vocabulary, develop higher order reading skills, improve knowledge and understanding of what is being read at word, sentence and whole text level as well as increase a child's fluency in a meaningful and coherent manner. Skills of retrieval, inference and prediction are developed, and critical and evaluative thinking are encouraged. Further comprehension activities also occur frequently within English lessons.

In addition to statutory assessments, pupils are also formally assessed in reading during each termly school assessment week. Continual teacher assessment is used to inform planning and interventions.

Writing

In developing writing skills, we aim for pupils to:

- Have an interest in words and their meaning and developing a growing vocabulary to use in written form
- Understand a range of text types and genres, be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation

- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- Develop an awareness of purpose and audience
- Evaluate their writing and that of their peers and share good examples
- Develop an understanding of different word classes and their role within texts
- Produce independent pieces of writing using correct punctuation and sentence construction
- Spell an increasing number of words correctly and understand and draw on a range of spelling rules, patterns and methods
- Develop a consistent, fluid and joined handwriting style

At St Joseph's, we aim to inspire pupils to become enthusiastic, confident and creative writers who enjoy expressing their ideas and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences. Through rich, high-quality literature and the Ready Steady Write approach, we foster a love of writing and provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to write independently, creatively and frequently.

We recognise the strong links between reading, speaking and writing, and understand that spoken language underpins pupils's development as writers. By immersing pupils in vocabulary-rich texts and discussion, we support them in developing the language, grammar and understanding needed to write effectively.

Our writing curriculum provides a broad, balanced and progressive pathway that enables all pupils, regardless of background, need or ability, to write fluently, develop their own writer's voice and achieve their full potential. We nurture a culture of high expectations where pupils take pride in their writing, learn to revise and improve their work, and adapt their language and style to suit different contexts and genres.

By meeting, and where possible exceeding, the expectations of the Early Years Framework and National Curriculum, we equip pupils with the literacy skills, confidence and ambition needed to make a positive contribution to their community and wider society.

<u>Organisation and Curriculum Coverage</u>

Our English curriculum is developed around a sequence of high-quality age-appropriate texts, using Literacy Count's **Ready Steady Write** units of learning. We use each book to create opportunities to:

- Develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to use and apply across the wider curriculum, through sentence accuracy sessions;
- Explore the writing structure and features of different genres, identifying the purpose and audience;
- Plan and write an initial piece of writing with a clear context and purpose before evaluating the effectiveness of Writing by editing and redrafting.

We use a range of teaching approaches to support this learning:

• Group Discussion – Pupils discuss and interrogate new ideas in a small group or whole class setting. They listen to and value each other's ideas whilst taking on board feedback so as to improve their own explanations.

• Partner Talk – Pupils work in partners to discuss their ideas. They are able to explain their ideas about texts they have read and prepare their ideas before they write.

• Questioning – Teachers use a range of questioning strategies to establish pupils's current understanding and develop their learning.

• Modelled Writing – Teachers model Writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the Writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the pupils to utilise in their own work. This happens daily, through sentence accuracy

• Shared Writing – Teachers use the ideas from the pupils to create shared pieces of Writing. This enables the pupils to see the Writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.

• Editing – All pupils are signposted to regular opportunities for reviewing and editing their own and the work of others.

• Working walls – Teachers and pupils regularly update working walls to ensure learning is documented within a unit of work.

Class teachers ensure that the Writing process is clearly evident on working walls, with modelled examples being available to all pupils as the sequence of lessons develops.

Pupils are given opportunities to deepen their knowledge in writing and to effectively draw upon their reading when constructing texts. writing groups and differentiation. Lesson plans for **Ready Steady Write** include appropriate challenge and these are considered when delivering lessons.

<u>Spelling</u>

At St Joseph's, we aim for pupils to become confident, independent spellers who can use a range of skills and strategies. Although spelling is taught discretely, we realise that pupils learn best when they are given regular opportunities to apply this knowledge in lessons across the curriculum.

Early spelling teaching is closely aligned with our *Essential Letters and Sounds* phonics programme. Pupils learn to segment spoken words into phonemes and represent these using the grapheme–phoneme correspondences they have been taught.

As pupils progress, teaching develops their understanding of spelling patterns, rules and exceptions, alongside word structure, including root words, prefixes and suffixes. We use *Spelling Shed* to support this teaching, ensuring that content is appropriately sequenced and builds on pupils' existing knowledge.

Pupils are explicitly taught spelling rules through the scheme 'The Spelling Shed' and weekly spelling homework is given in years 1-6. Pupils in years 1-6 take part in weekly spelling tests to monitor progress.

Handwriting

At St. Joseph's, we understand that developing strong handwriting skills is an important part of pupils's education, helping them to communicate their ideas clearly and present their work effectively across all areas of the curriculum. Handwriting is taught daily at the beginning of each English lesson, following the *Ready Steady Write* scheme. In Reception and Year 1, pupils are taught to form letters correctly using a printed style, developing accurate letter formation, sizing and spacing. In Year two, pupils begin to learn to join letters and work towards a fluent and consistent joined handwriting style. This is further strengthened throughout KS2, and as pupils progress into UKS2, they begin to use a pen for their written work. Through regular practice and consistent teaching, we aim for handwriting to become an automatic process, allowing pupils to focus their cognitive effort on generating ideas, expressing themselves creatively and developing their thinking rather than on the physical act of writing.

Marking and Feedback

Work is marked in accordance with the school's marking and feedback policy. In Key Stage Two, the pupils are also taught to self-mark using the success criteria and there are opportunities for peer marking and feedback.

Character Education

Character Education is embedded into every part of the school day and is infused throughout our curriculum at St Joseph's. In English, teachers seek opportunities to explore virtues and character strengths through the texts they use and the characters they study. The links that can be made are mapped out in a whole school document.

Pupils are supported in developing the building blocks of character and through their working practices and learning experiences in English they develop intellectual virtues such as critical thinking, moral virtues such as respect, civic virtues such as community awareness and performance virtues such as confidence.

Monitoring

English is monitored and evaluated by the SLT and English Lead in the following ways:

- lesson observations
- learning walks
- the monitoring of planning
- work scrutiny
- pupil interviews

- analysis of data

Assessment

At St Joseph's, we formally assess reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar termly. Statutory assessment takes place in EYFS, Year One (Phonics Screening Check) Year Two (optional) and Year Six.

Teacher assessment is continual throughout the year. Teachers draw on shared reading sessions, 1:1 reading, phonics assessments, practice assessment papers and work in lessons to inform current attainment in English and inform future planning. In writing, Ready Steady Write assessment grids are used to assess progress and attainment. Attainment against these objectives, along with NC objectives for reading and vocabulary, punctuation and grammar is recorded on Sonar half termly.

Related documents: Phonics Information for parents; Virtues in Texts; Reading Progression Map; Speaking and Listening Progression Map; Grammar, vocabulary and spelling progression map; Writing progression Grids; English Whole School Long Term Plan; Handwriting Policy; Marking and Feedback Policy.