



*Faith, Family and Fascination*

# English Policy

## Boutcher C.E. Primary School

Reviewed by: Lorna Clifford

Last reviewed during: Summer 2021

Next review due by: Summer 2022

## **Aims**

The English National Curriculum (2014) states that:

***‘The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading and enjoyment.’***

At Boutcher C.E. Primary School, we believe the exposure of children’s literature within the primary school setting is vital as a rich context for learning; not only within English as a subject but to support building a reading culture throughout the school.

We aim to use high quality books that offer opportunities for empathy and can aid philosophical enquiry, as a means of developing the spoken language requirements through debates, drama and discussion using the issues raised through, and within, the text.

## **Equal Opportunity**

We aim to promote equal opportunities for, and have high expectations of all pupils irrespective of age, race, gender, background, physical/sensory ability, intellect and special educational needs.

We aim to personalise our curriculum, where appropriate, in order to fully engage and motivate all our pupils.

We analyse data from our monitoring procedures and are aware of any vulnerable groups and target support where appropriate.

We have high expectations of all our children and aim to overcome any potential barriers to their learning.

*For further information please refer to the Equal Opportunities Policy.*

## **Writing Curriculum**

At Boutcher C.E. Primary School, we believe that the mastery of written language is one of the most powerful gifts that we can provide to our children. We believe that writing should be purposeful, rich and enjoyable for all.

### **Aims**

- to have real reasons to write whether to explain, persuade, inform or instruct and that where possible, this can be embedded within our text or linked to a curriculum area
- to make writing opportunities meaningful; whether short or long, and to have a clear audience for their writing
- to develop stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling
- to help the children to develop an understanding that writing is both essential to thinking and learning and enjoyable in its own right
- to enable children to improve their writing through the editing process

## **Organisation and Delivery of Writing**

High quality texts are at the core of our English teaching. By placing books at the core, we are allowing teachers to use them as the context for the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum states that:

***‘This guidance is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers’ creativity, simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons.’***

Working alongside The Literacy Curriculum, we have developed a programme of texts from Reception through to Year Six, which include a range of genres and allow for full coverage of the National Curriculum objectives. Teaching staff attend regular training and new books are brought into the selection of texts from this. Where possible, we make thematic links with other areas of the curriculum.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the Foundation Stage, there is a big emphasis on phonics and letter formation. The structure of the week for English lessons is as follows:

In structured English lessons, children hear the phoneme and the lesson focuses on the recognition of this. Children learn and practise writing the grapheme for the phoneme (both lower and upper case using the Nelson Handwriting Scheme). During this lesson, a book is introduced and read which uses this phoneme.

In the Foundation Stage, we follow a sequences progression grid created by The Literacy Curriculum. This links phonics teaching with suitable texts.

## **Key Stages One and Two**

In order to meet the objectives of the 2014 National Curriculum and to ensure that children are inspired and have a meaningful purpose to write, stimulating texts are carefully chosen and used as a starting point for their writing.

We have developed a programme of texts which ensures that children have access to a range that provide thorough coverage of National Curriculum objectives. We use many of the planning sequences taken from The Literacy Curriculum, of which we have an annual subscription. Planning sequences are adapted and personalised to ensure all access arrangements can be made to support children with the requirements.

## **Baseline Expectations:**

- to teach English lessons four times a week lasting approximately one hour each
- to ensure SPaG objectives are included in each of our daily English lessons
- to plan and teach English lessons from a carefully selected text or film
- to plan for opportunities for independent writing

## **Writing Curriculum Planning**

We follow the Southwark ‘Performance Indicators in Writing’ objectives which are taken from the National Curriculum when planning for writing across the school.

A medium-term plan (MTP) created by *The Literacy Curriculum* for each text is used which includes grammar, spelling and punctuation objectives for that year group. This is a working document and teachers are encouraged to make changes as necessary in response to their teaching and the needs of the class. A notebook file / PowerPoint is

created which builds on the MTP. The English Coordinator supports with planning as needed.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is a continuous process which both reinforces teacher/pupil planning and provides clear information for others. Assessment is monitored termly by co-ordinators and regularly by SLT in weekly Secret Student monitoring and through 'book looks'.

Moderation is a necessary process in order to ensure consistency when making judgements on progress and attainment. It also highlights gaps in learning and next steps in teaching. Moderation takes place both in school between staff, at meetings held between local schools and through the attendance of moderation sessions led by Southwark.

## **Approaches to support Writing**

### **Spellings**

In Year One, children take home five spelling words each week whilst the rest of the school take home ten to learn. Every child is tested on a Wednesday and taught the new spelling rule for the next set of spellings. The school has a subscription to *Readiwriter* and a task is set each week for that particular spelling pattern, which is completed at home as part of their homework.

### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)**

In order to meet the SPaG objectives of the 2014 National Curriculum, SPaG skills lessons are taught weekly in Years One – Six. We recognise the importance of children having the chance to apply these skills, so ensure that these objectives are also covered in all English lessons and that they have plenty of opportunities to apply these skills through a range of written genres and across all subjects.

### **Handwriting and Presentation**

Please refer to the Handwriting and Presentation Policy for further information.

## **Reading Curriculum**

At Boutcher C.E. Primary School, we believe that reading is an important life skill and we strive for all children to enjoy and value it. We recognise that enjoyment in reading arises from deriving meaning from text. It is our aim to develop and create passionate readers for life.

### **Aims**

- to help children to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on the reading content domain
- to use phonological awareness to decode and encode words
- to help children to be able to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts

### **Organisation and Delivery of Reading**

High quality texts are at the core of our teaching of reading. Where possible, guided reading is taught using the same text as that used for the writing curriculum. We are in the process of developing a range of texts across KS1 and KS2 which include a range of genres. If we are able to, we make thematic links with other areas of the curriculum.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Key Stages One and Two**

We aim to instil a passion for reading in all our children and therefore Guided Reading is integral in our school curriculum. At Boutcher C.E. Primary School, we have adapted a reciprocal teaching approach to Guided Reading, which is taught as a whole class, with children partnered in near-ability pairings.

This approach has been adapted in order to develop the children's comprehension skills and to develop their ability to question things themselves. It also gives them the opportunity to read aloud, develop decoding skills and intonation and expression as well as for child led dialogue, which is an important element of these lessons.

All children complete tasks in their read and respond journals in response to what they have read which further develops skills of the Key Stage One and Key Stage Two content domain. Each area has been reworded into child friendly language.

### **Teaching and Learning in Reading**

#### **Baseline Expectations:**

- One to one reading must take place in Reception and in Years One and Two. Children in Reception must read with an adult at least twice a week (specific children more than this) and every child must read at least once a week with an adult in Years One and Two.
- Guided Reading must take place four times a week in Years One - Six. This lesson should last between thirty and forty minutes.
- Comprehension must be taught weekly in Years Two - Six to develop a range of reading skills.
- Each class has a weekly visit to the school library. For more information, refer to the 'reading for pleasure' statement.

#### **Reading Curriculum Planning**

We follow the KS1 and KS2 Content Domain and Southwark 'Performance Indicators in Reading' objectives when planning reading across the school.

Teachers plan for Guided Reading, where appropriate, using the same book studied during English lessons. This allows for a deep discussion of the texts and for every child to access suitably challenging reads. KS1 and KS2 planning templates focus heavily on each area of the Content Domain and encourage teachers to plan questions which provide broad coverage of each objective within it. Included within our subscription to The Literary Curriculum are 'Literary Leaves' which also form part of our planning. The English Coordinator works alongside the teachers to plan for good coverage of both non-fiction, fiction and poetry throughout the year. We also try to select books where possible that support their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

## **Approaches to support Reading**

As well as guided reading lessons, we have the following approaches to teach and develop reading skills:

### **Phonics**

We begin the process of learning to read in the Foundation Stage, where we believe that the systematic teaching of phonics is the fastest and most effective way of getting young children to start reading. For information on how phonics is implemented and taught in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage One, please refer to the Phonics policy.

### **The School Library**

All children are provided with the opportunity to borrow one book each week from the library. Children are encouraged to choose books which they are interested in and this helps to promote a reading for pleasure ethos. A library club is run each morning for children in Key Stage Two and the school librarian is there to support children with their reading comprehension.

### **Key Stage Two class Librarians**

Each year, children in Key Stage Two are given the opportunity to apply for the role of class librarian. They work alongside the school librarian to develop a love of reading and meet regularly to discuss and action how this can be done school-wide. They are involved in learning walks, leading assemblies and general care of the school library and their own class libraries.

### **Class Libraries**

Each class has a dedicated reading area which offers a space that is inviting and engaging into a world of interesting pictures, stories, books and other reading material. For teachers, a reading corner in the classroom gives a platform where they can support and facilitate children to make meaning while reading.

### **Reading Partners**

We are in our fourth year of a reading partnership with members of a lawyer firm who visit school weekly to read with specific children. During this time, they develop comprehension skills through questioning and discuss vocabulary. This success of this is monitored through termly questionnaires completed by the children.

### **Reading at home**

There is an expectation that children read regularly and this is monitored by class teachers and support staff. Each child has a reading journal which is completed by parents, carers, children and staff to record update on their reading. The books in the Key Stage Two book corners are all given a colour which represents a level. Children select a book from the colour at which they have been assessed as reading at. Teachers assess this regularly and move children through the colours when they are ready.

### **Readathon**

For two years, we have held a readathon to further develop a love of reading in school as well as to raise money to purchase new books for the library and class reading corners.

## **Approaches to support the Spoken Language**

Throughout the school we aim to:

- provide a range of situations, audiences and activities which encourage children to develop confidence and competence in the spoken language
- develop children's awareness that different situations require different forms of oral expression
- develop the mechanical skills required for effective oral communication, e.g. voice projection, tone, clarity, pace of speech
- recite and perform a range of age appropriate poetry

- sing songs

Children in Key Stages One and Two are regularly involved in workshops with The Unicorn Theatre based in London Bridge. Teachers attend training sessions and work alongside specialised practitioners to lead the children in developing their spoken language skills. Children also have the chance to attend theatre productions and see performances linked with the text they are following and/or their theme.

Pupils in Years Five and Six are part of the Burnett News Club, which is run by the Economist Educational Foundation. Through this, children develop their critical thinking and literacy skills through open discussions about current affairs. The four skills embedded across all content and activities are scepticism, reasoning, speaking up and open-mindedness and serve as important and necessary life skills.

The Literacy Curriculum encourages teachers to give children rich experiences linked to the text and regular opportunities to discuss and act out topics covered. We believe that the Literacy Curriculum helps children to develop a rich vocabulary through choices of quality text, immersion in the language of the text, discussion and drama activities.

Teaching strategies which have been developed from the Literary Curriculum include:

- role on the wall
- freeze-framing
- conscience alley
- hot seating
- role playing
- drama

Children are also expected to be involved in services and class assemblies from the Foundation Stage and are taught to be confident when performing to an audience.

## **Working and Vocab Walls**

Each class has a working wall and/or vocab wall where vocabulary is displayed for children to access and to support language and spelling. The vocab wall is split into two criteria: Tier Two – these words are sophisticated words, more commonly found in written text and move the speech and writing from more social, conventional language to a more formal, sophisticated language which can be fundamental to academic success and Tier Three – these words are specific to topics and have a limited use outside of the context that they are used in. Every week, a new Tier Two word is introduced to each class and short activities and games are led around this to develop...

## **Outside Agencies**

The school has links with a number of outside agencies and specialist teachers to promote and enhance the delivery of English, namely:

- The Literary Curriculum
- Burnett News Club (run by the Economist Educational Foundation)
- The Unicorn Theatre
- CLPE

- The National Theatre