



“Let your light shine brightly.”

Matthew 5:16

English Policy (including Handwriting Policy)

Policy accepted by SLT on:	11/2/2019
Next review:	Spring 2022
Signed (Headteacher):	<i>R. Kaye</i>
Statutory policy: Yes/No	On school website: Yes/No

ENGLISH POLICY

1. Rationale

At Christ Church First School we believe that English is the principal medium through which we communicate at home, at school and in the wider world. Competence in English allows children to communicate effectively and leads to improved life opportunities, enabling them to express their own thoughts and to access the knowledge and ideas of others. It is integral to learning throughout the curriculum and of fundamental importance to all aspects of school life.

2. Aims

- to recognise and value the language skills that children have already acquired and to build on these, taking into account individual strengths and weaknesses;
- to develop children's understanding of spoken and written English so that they become enthusiastic, responsive and knowledgeable readers;
- to develop children's ability to communicate freely, effectively and imaginatively in spoken and written English;
- to encourage children to understand the importance of standard English.

3. Speaking and Listening

Aims

To develop the skills:

- to communicate effectively;
- to speak confidently in a variety of situations;
- to express themselves clearly using language appropriate to their needs and abilities and to the intended audience;
- to listen attentively and gain an understanding of a wide range of language;
- to listen to speakers with respect;
- to respond relevantly to language, developing their imagination, enjoyment and inventiveness and using language to formulate, clarify and express their ideas to others.

Objectives

At Christ Church we will:

- provide a range of opportunities for children to practise and experience their speaking and listening skills in all areas of the curriculum;
- provide a range of activities which will enhance children's self-esteem and will value each spoken contribution;
- provide a range of purposes, situations and audiences for speaking and listening;
- teach children to listen with increasing concentration, understanding and respect for each other's point of view.

4. Reading

Aims

At Christ Church we aim to enable our children to:

- develop a life-long love and enjoyment of reading and books
- read independently, fluently and expressively, with understanding and enjoyment;
- read a wide range of texts both for pleasure and information;
- read a wide variety of text types with interest, so that they can justify and evaluate their preferences;
- to inform and involve parents in the approaches we have to developing reading across the school, so that they can support their children's development at home;

Objectives

At Christ Church we will:

- teach children a systematic programme of synthetic phonics as the prime approach to learning to read words
- teach children how to use a range of reading cues, according to age and ability, to enable them to become fluent and independent readers;
- teach children how to describe, predict, analyse and evaluate texts;
- give children opportunities to develop the higher order reading skills of inference and deduction.
- give children opportunities to discuss texts and compare opinions;
- teach children how to gather and retrieve relevant information from different styles of texts;
- teach children how to use their reading skills across the curriculum.

5. Writing

Aims

At Christ Church we aim to enable our children:

- to use phonics as the prime approach to learning to write words
- to write clearly, accurately and confidently for a variety of purposes and audiences;
- to understand the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling;
- to plan, draft, edit and polish their writing so that it can be published for different audiences;
- to develop a consistent, clear, fluent and joined handwriting style and be aware of the importance of presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively;
- to write with confidence and enthusiasm from an early age;
- to feel valued as writers and to appreciate the writing of others.

Objectives

At Christ Church we will:

- teach a systematic programme for synthetic phonics
- teach writing through the 'Talk for Writing' process of Imitation, Innovation and

Invention;

- provide a wide variety of reasons and purposes for writing;
- teach the children how to structure their writing depending on style and purpose and how to organise, draft, edit and publish their work, either individually or collaboratively;
- teach the basic rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling, according to age and ability;
- provide opportunities for the children's writing to be shared, read, displayed and published;
- teach the children to write in a fluent, joined and legible hand from which a personal, attractive style can grow and provide structured opportunities to practise this.

6. An Approach to the Teaching of English

Talk for Writing

Since September 2011, we have been using a 'Talk for Writing' approach, to the teaching of writing. It is impossible to write any text without being familiar with the language rhythms and patterns. Therefore the language required for success at any form of writing must become part of the children's linguistic repertoire. We structure teaching to provide the appropriate language patterns enabling children to hear them, say them, read them and explore them so that they internalize them into their long term memories. This is particularly important if children do not come from linguistically rich homes and they are not read to. Through a process of Imitation, Innovation and Invention children build up a bank of text types so that the language patterns become part of their linguistic competency. We aim to teach 2 text types each half term, one which is fiction and one which is non-fiction. Application of skills through cross-curricular teaching are planned into half termly themes to ensure children revisit and apply skills independently. In the Nursery and Reception classes the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum supports teachers' to identify where children are developmentally in order to plan next steps. The emphasis is on developing children's language and physical skills alongside early mark making. Children are encouraged to write for a purpose in as many different contexts as possible through their child initiated activities as well as running alongside discrete adult led sessions to teach children key skills such as phonics. Where children are not meeting age related expectations interventions are put in place to support them further.

7. Early Years Foundation Stage

In the new revised Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum there are seven areas of learning and development. All of these are important and inter-connected. Communication and language forms one of the three Prime Areas which are highlighted as being 'particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive'.

7.1 Communication and language

- involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment;
- to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves;

- to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Children are supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. This includes Literacy which involves:

- encouraging children to link sounds and letters
- teaching children to begin to read and write
- giving children access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials)

In our Nursery and Reception classes teachers will focus on the three prime areas so that they are prepared fully for their learning in literacy as they progress through school. In addition our Reception class teachers will also be planning for children's learning in literacy.

7.2 Listening and attention

- children listen attentively in a range of situations.
- They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.
- They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

7.3 Understanding

- children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

7.4 Speaking

- children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.
- They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
- They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

8. Literacy

Reading

- children read and understand simple sentences.
- They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately.
- They also read some common irregular words.
- They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

Writing

- children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.
- They also write some irregular common words.

- They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others.
- Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

9. **Differentiation and Special Needs**

Children of all abilities benefit from work using English. Work is differentiated by task, outcome, resource or extra teacher resource whenever necessary. Support strategies have been introduced which include Early Literacy Support (ELS), and Wave 3 interventions such as the Individual Literacy Intervention.

10. **EAL**

For children whose home language is not English, class teachers will encourage and celebrate children's attempts to speak in their own language; through providing opportunities for children to develop and use their home language, supporting their language development at home. Teachers also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them throughout their learning in school. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, teachers assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, teachers will explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

11. **Breadth and Balance**

We recognise that we need to appreciate the range and skills of concepts to be taught. English is taught from a variety of perspectives which take into account different cultures, interpretations, aesthetic values, relevance to the audience and social values. We will endeavour to keep a balance of skills, concepts and perspectives across each key stage.

12. **Variety**

Children will be involved in a variety of activities which may start from many differing stimuli. They will have the opportunity to experience English in all its many forms and to appreciate its contribution to the understanding of their own world. We try to make experiences real and relevant wherever possible so that children see a purpose to their learning.

13. **Promoting Continuity and Coherence**

Formative assessment during teaching ensures curriculum continuity and progression in pupils' learning. It facilitates Summative assessment to support the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education.

14. **Curriculum Design**

Each half term we aim to teach children two different text types one of which is fiction and one which is non-fiction. Medium term plans are written using key skills for English using relevant objectives to support the teaching of skills at a text, sentence and word level. These objectives are woven into our curriculum plans to make learning exciting, relevant and meaningful for our children.

Short term planning is produced on a weekly basis with weekly objectives and a clear teaching sequence to support the differentiated objectives and to ensure progression.

Success Criteria is put together alongside children to create a Writer's Toolkit for the children. However these are an initial plan which is reviewed on a daily basis based on teachers' formative assessment of children's learning; and where children can be challenged further teachers may move away from these plans or where they need to be adapted to support learning further. They are annotated each week to inform assessment and future planning.

15. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is always ongoing and is crucial to the learning process. Work is assessed through observation, discussion, scrutiny of work and evaluating outcomes. End of year targets are set for each year group by discussion between staff. We use the 'Assessing Pupil Progress' materials to support our assessment accuracy by focusing on representative children in each class and assessing their progress in detail. This is used to support assessing similar groups of children.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's progress is recorded through daily observations of children which are added to an individual Learning Journey.

Formative assessment is carried out on a daily and weekly basis to inform future planning. It involves observations of children's daily learning measured against teaching objectives, determining which have been achieved and moving them on to the next stage of learning. Summative assessments and judgments based on ongoing assessment are made at the end of each term and for Year 1 in addition they undertake a Year 1 Phonics Screening check and in Year 2 SATs.

All children have individual reading records and teachers keep group guided reading records of objectives achieved. Marking is also part of the assessment process. (See Marking Policy)

Written reports are given to parents at the end of each school year and they have the opportunity to discuss these at parents' evenings.

16. ICT

The Co-ordinator ensures the relevant objectives are being delivered in each classroom for each year group. ICT resources are used in each class to enhance learning and teaching opportunities across the school.

17. Equal Opportunities

All children have the entitlement to participate fully in English, regardless of gender, race, age or ability, in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

18. Resources

Resources are identified by the subject co-ordinator and costed into the School Development Plan. This feeds into the school budgeting process.

19. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Appendix 1: Handwriting Policy

Aim /Rationale:

To help each child develop a handwriting style which is clear, fluent, joined and legible.

At Christ Church formal handwriting is taught through use of the 'Penpals for Handwriting' scheme.

The scheme acknowledges that handwriting is a developmental process with five stages of growth. These form the basic organisational structure of the scheme:

1. Readiness for handwriting; gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (Foundation 3 – 5 yrs)
2. Beginning to join (KS1 5 – 7 yrs)
3. Securing the joins (KS1 & Lower KS2 5 – 9 yrs)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Lower KS2 7 – 9 yrs)
5. Presentation skills (Upper KS2 10 – 11 yrs)

In addition, we believe that handwriting should be explicitly and actively taught, as well as links made with early phonics and spelling learning.

At Christ Church, we provide regular handwriting lessons for teaching and revising these skills. The frequency of these sessions varies according to the age and competence of the children, but take place at least once a week. The children also have a variety of other opportunities to practise their handwriting skills across the curriculum. The cursive handwriting script will be displayed in the classrooms for children to use and will be modelled by all staff writing for the children, both in shared sessions and in their books.

Early Years Foundation Stage – Physical Development

Curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage identifies the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude children need to acquire in order to attain the Early Learning Goals for handwriting. The guidance states that children should be able to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

KS1

The National Curriculum programme of study for KS1 handwriting and presentation states, that in order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught to:

Year 1:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Year 2:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

KS2

The National Curriculum programme of study for KS2 handwriting and presentation states that pupils should be taught to:

Year 3 and 4:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5 and 6:

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited to a task.

Implementation

In the teaching of handwriting at Christ Church, teachers explicitly demonstrate key skills, as well as observing each child's posture, pencil grip and movement. Early identification of children not making expected progress will be targeted with intervention.

Left handed children – All staff are aware from the beginning when children choose their dominant hand, who the left hand writers are in their class. They are taught explicitly from the very beginning how they should sit, hold a pencil and write in a comfortable style using the following guidance:

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

In the Early Years, children have access to a range of writing media. Their experiences include practise with implements of varying type, size and weight to support them in the development of necessary skills.

As the children progress to more formal handwriting situations, pencils are used for all formal, written learning. As children in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 make progress and reach progressive milestones, they receive incentives in the form of certificates and special pencils, which are awarded in assemblies. Children in Years 3 and 4 also receive certificates and will be introduced to pens when they are consistently using a neat, joined handwriting style in all their writing. They will then be told how they should use their pen in their writing – remembering not to use it in their maths books or for drawing diagrams or lines. They should only use their school handwriting pen (not biros or any other colour) and they should use it consistently, rather than swapping between pen and pencil. At this stage they receive their 'Handwriting Licence'. Where children's handwriting and presentation does not maintain the expected standard, they will receive three 'Penalty Points' before the 'Handwriting Licence' is suspended and the handwriting pen withdrawn, until they have earned it back.

Assessment

Formal assessment of handwriting is made against National Curriculum level descriptors. SLT will monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons and at other times – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum.

Appendix 2: Progression of skills and when children will be rewarded for these

Developing patterns and basic letter shapes – straight line patterns	Certificate
Developing patterns and basic letter shapes – loops	Certificate
Developing patterns and basic letter shapes –circles	Certificate
Developing patterns and basic letter shapes – angled patterns	Certificate
Developing patterns and basic letter shapes –eights and spirals	Certificate
Forming long ladder letters	Certificate
Forming one-armed robot letters	Certificate
Forming curly caterpillar letters	Certificate
Forming zig-zag monster letters	Certificate
Forming all lower case letters correctly in guided sessions	Special writing tool
Forming all capitals correctly	Certificate
Forming numbers correctly	Certificate
Accurately using appropriate finger spaces	Certificate
Letters orientated on the line	Certificate
Short letters short, tall letters tall and capital letters correctly formed and sized	Special writing tool
Beginning to join – horizontal joins	Certificate
Beginning to join – diagonal joins	Certificate
Beginning to join – anti-clockwise letters	Certificate
All letters are consistently and accurately joined	Special writing tool
Ascenders and descenders are equal and correctly situated	Certificate
Handwriting is joined and consistent across all areas of the curriculum	Handwriting pen and license
Children develop their own style, including loops for j, g and y	Handwriting pen and license Special certificate