

ST NEOT SCHOOL
ENGLISH POLICY

Subject Co-ordinator: Dan Jewell
Governor with Responsibility: Carol Craze

Aims and objectives

The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. The use of written and verbal language in the classroom enables children to communicate ideas, views and feelings creatively and imaginatively. As they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, playscripts, non-fiction and media texts, children gain an understanding of how language works. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their audience;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard, and respond appropriately;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value; to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through immersion in challenging and lengthy texts.

Teaching and learning style

At St Neot School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, guided by the National Curriculum (and the Renewed English Framework). Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding of English. We do this through a daily lesson that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. During these lessons children participate in a whole-class shared reading or writing activity or a whole-class focused word or sentence activity; most lessons follow with a guided group or independent activity and, finally, a whole-class session to review progress and learning. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and individual whiteboards to support their work. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible children have opportunities to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at St Neot School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

English curriculum planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the Renewed Framework as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in two phases: a long-term overview across the year and detailed weekly plans. The National Curriculum Framework for Teaching details what we teach across the full academic year and identifies the key objectives in English that we teach to each year group.

Each year's overview defines what we teach and ensures an appropriate balance and distribution of work each term. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans. Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and their independent task. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.

Homework

English writing homework is set weekly and provides pupils with the opportunity to prepare a piece of quality writing at home that reinforces the work within the English lessons. All writing homework is marked by the teacher and returned to the children. Pupils are given differentiated spelling lists weekly based upon the Letters and Sounds spelling scheme.

Handwriting

Children are encouraged to write in the fully cursive style as soon as they enter St Neot School. Handwriting practice takes place regularly. By the time children are in Year 6 they are expected to write in cursive for all of their work.

Assessment and recording

Teachers assess children's work in English continually. The daily assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson allows them to adjust their teaching and planning for subsequent lessons. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) is a continual assessment programme that teachers use to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. Teachers make year-end assessments towards the end of the school year; these assess each child's progress against school and national targets. Year-end assessments enable teachers to set targets for the next school year and help teachers to summarise the progress of each child for end-of-year reports and parent discussions. The teachers use these end-of-year assessments as the basis for planning work and class groupings for the new school year. End-of-year assessments are made using the year's APP material, optional QCA test in reading and individual teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Y6, plus the optional national tests at the end of Years 2, 3, 4 and 5. Teacher's assessments of children's progress are guided by the level descriptions within the National Curriculum.

The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review pupils' work against the objectives and expectations outlined at each level within the APP material. This ensures a consistency of levelled work across the school.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked and applied to every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

The Foundation Stage

We teach English in the Foundation year as an integral part of the school's work. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school. We relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during lessons and they communicate clearly through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Information and Communication technology (ICT)

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when researching a topic and use different software to present their work. Children use the planning and proofing tools available on computer when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education, and the wider issues of citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical issues and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions raised in a variety of texts and experiences. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children of differing abilities and backgrounds to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

Teaching English to children with special needs

At St Neot School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT and other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- using translators and amanuenses.
- intervention groups

Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate literacy resources. Each classroom has a speaking and listening area with a CD player and a range of CDs. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research as well as fiction and poetry. Further resources are centrally stored on the English shelves.

Monitoring and review.

Monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, keeping informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject across the school. The subject leader gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The leader has regular management time allocated in order to enable them to review samples of the children's work and to undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The named governor responsible for English meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.