



# English and Communication Policy

## Rationale

With the term 'English, we include the areas of Communication (Speaking and Listening) and Reading and Writing. This includes pupils working within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum (NC), and as such includes the relevant terminology of 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy'.

English is perhaps the most fundamentally important area of the curriculum, because in Oakleigh terms, it includes communication and all that develops from it. Every area of the curriculum is founded upon the need to communicate with children and to enable them to respond by whatever means they have available. We see it as our responsibility to develop these basic skills and to give the children the tools they need in order to communicate with us, their families and each other. This would include speech, signing (Makaton or on-body) and the use of symbols, communication aids and I.C.T. resources.

## The National Curriculum 2014 states:

'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 for enjoyment'

(Department for Education Statutory guidance, National curriculum in England: English programmes of study)

| The aims of the National Curriculum for English   | How we interpret these for Oakleigh pupils   |
|---|--|
| Read easily, fluently and with good understanding   | Develop skills in recognising objects, photos, symbols, and where appropriate, written words   |
| Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information  | Provide range of materials to support visual and reading skills, and provide breadth of opportunities to engage with visual supports throughout the day  |
| Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language | Where appropriate, use of AAC to develop vocabulary and sentence structure for communication and within lessons (eg colourful semantics, PECS sentences, other communication aids, where appropriate)  |
| Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage  | Our Scheme of Work covers texts from a range of cultures and across a range of genres. We have links with the School Library Service, with visits to the libraries, and visits from librarians to lead sensory story workshops.  |
| Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences      | Where appropriate, use of AAC to develop vocabulary and sentence structure for communication and within lessons (eg Makaton, colourful semantics, PECS sentences, other communication aids, where appropriate). Such systems are aimed at using literacy skills in reading and writing for functional communication. Mark marking in a range of mediums. |
| Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas                    | Pupils have opportunities throughout the day to express preferences and to make choices. We have a range of ways of involving pupils in their Annual Review meetings, sometimes with the teacher acting as advocate and representing what we interpret to be the pupil's views.  |
| Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate   | We aim for our pupils to be confident communicators, through whichever mode of communication is appropriate for them.  |

## Purpose

Opportunities to study English occur all through the day as well as in timetabled lessons. Children practise their language and communication skills in all curriculum areas and at all times; they are constantly being offered opportunities to develop and expand their expertise. Explicit individual targets are written for all children for the timetabled sessions, but these can be carried over into all other curriculum areas and progress can be appropriately recorded. Any moment of the day can and should be considered as an opportunity for the development of language and communication; we seek to provide the best possible environment for the children to communicate with us and those around them.

The National Curriculum for English contains three strands:

- Spoken Language (Oracy)
- Reading
- Writing

There are two Statutory components:

- Spelling

- Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

## **Spoken language (Oracy)**

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically.

This is reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains.

We believe that our Communication Guidelines address the requirements of the National Curriculum for Spoken Language (see appendices below)

## **Reading**

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

We believe that our Scheme of Work text list and the Letters and Sounds phonics resources address the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 (see appendices below)

## **Writing**

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

We believe that our Communication, Developing pre-writing skills using a multi-sensory approach and Pre-Writing Progression guidelines address the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 (see appendices below).

## **Spelling**

There are Statutory Requirements in the Spelling component of Writing in English in the National Curriculum 2014. The skills outlined in the Statutory Requirements are at a higher level than most of our pupils achieve. However, if we do have pupils who are able to work at these levels, we follow the Statutory Requirements. We believe that our Communication, Developing pre-writing skills using a multi-sensory approach and Pre-Writing Progression guidelines address the pre-spelling skills of our pupils.

## **Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation**

This is a Statutory Requirement in the National Curriculum 2014. The requirements state

'The table shows when concepts should be introduced first, not necessarily when they should be completely understood. It is very important, therefore, that the content in earlier years be revisited in subsequent years to consolidate knowledge and build on pupils' understanding. Teachers should also go beyond the content set out here if they feel it is appropriate'. (p.74 The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document, September 2013)

We believe that the range of approaches adopted at Oakleigh fulfil this requirement, and that where appropriate we are able to introduce and teach the specifics of the requirements outlined in the National Curriculum 2014.

## **Interpreting the areas for Oakleigh:**

### ***Spoken Language and Listening (Communication)***

This embraces pre-verbal, early verbal and early receptive language skills. This area also takes into account alternative and augmentative means of communication such as Makaton signs, symbols, photographic representations, object cues, on-body signing and the use of electronic communication aids and ICT facilities. Intensive Interaction is a key approach used at Oakleigh to develop communication and social interaction skills. We use a Total Communication approach at Oakleigh School, whereby individual pupils are given experience of a range of Communication methods and are encouraged to develop the approach which is the most effective for them. Regular liaison exists between the subject leader for English, class teachers and the Speech and Language Therapists.

## ***Reading***

This area encompasses the recognition of objects, photos, pictures and symbols, use of pictures and then recognition of words and book skills.

### *Phonics*

While it is believed that for a lot of children with learning difficulties, particularly those with ASC, a 'whole word' approach to the acquisition of reading is often the most successful, the Rose Review into the teaching of Reading (2006) recommended a Phonics approach as being the prime approach to teaching early reading, stating that schools need a systematic programme, and discreet teaching. However, it notes that when children begin to learn to read, they have already made considerable progress in their language development. It is crucial that we consider this when developing programmes for the pupils at Oakleigh.

The Rose Review also stated that,

“Pupils working within the P Levels will need to develop their speaking and listening skills in order to enable them to begin to develop their phonic skills.”

The Equals Guide to Literacy refers to linking sounds to letters at P5, and the introduction of a school phonics scheme at P6. This programme acknowledges that Synthetic Phonics can be a challenge for pupils working within the lower P Levels. They suggest that this approach could be adapted to focus on 'functional sounds', for example musical cues, tones of voice. Equally, they state that a kinaesthetic system with signs / actions to represent letters could be confusing if the school uses a signing system, such as Makaton which we use at Oakleigh School.

It is believed that the development of early cognitive and communication skills underpin the later development of reading skills. Reading skills first emerge with the development of symbolic understanding and this latter stage correlates approximately to P Level 4/5.

### **The EYFS for Birth-11 months says that children should,**

*“listen to, distinguish and respond to intonations and the sound of voices”*

At Oakleigh School, we believe that there is no single approach which is appropriate for our pupils, and as such we incorporate a variety of strategies, including both whole word and phonics. These include the See and Learn approach, the National Strategies Letters and Sounds programme (See appendix Introduction to Letters and Sounds Phase One), the Oxford Reading Tree reading scheme and the Colourful Semantics approach.

Reading for pupils with a visual impairment includes an overall sensing of items in the environment. Good practice is to have multiple copies of sensory story props, to maximise active participation and minimise waiting time. Follow up stories by making choices and exploring items 1:1 or in small groups. Also have story props that are distinctive to pupils, for example don't just have a soft toy of an owl which feels like all other soft toys, maybe have feathers. Encourage pupils with visual impairment to use their hands to locate items on their trays / the table, in order to later teach sequencing skills, such as 'now, next' with an object timetable.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used by many pupils at Oakleigh, and it is recognised that the formation of sentence strips is both a form of reading and writing.

### **Writing**

This area includes tactile exploration, pencil and drawing skills. Our children are all given opportunities to facilitate their writing using ICT capabilities, and the wide range of software that we are continually enhancing. We do not have a particular pre-writing programme which is followed, rather an individual approach for each child, in conjunction with the Occupational Therapist. There are resources and developmental stages as a resource on Shared Resources. See Appendices below.

The English Scheme of Work includes the National Literacy Strategy strands of Literacy which are speaking, listening, reading and writing. These are P Level referenced to aid teachers' planning. There are 12 Strands of Objectives, as follows:

## **Speak and listen for a wide range of purposes in different contexts**

1. Speaking
2. Listening and responding
3. Group discussion and interaction
4. Drama

## **Read and write for a range of purposes on paper and on screen**

5. Word recognition: decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling)
6. Word structure and spelling
7. Understanding and interpreting texts
8. Engaging with and responding to texts
9. Creating and shaping texts
10. Text structure and organisation
11. Sentence structure and punctuation
12. Presentation

Primary National Strategy, Primary Framework for Literacy

At Oakleigh School, we have decided to use the *Equals Guide to Literacy* as our framework for delivering the National Curriculum for English.

## **English Scheme of Work Guidelines**

- Refer to Communication / Spoken Language in planning for other subjects
- Use the Equals Guide to Literacy to guide planning for English Session work. This is a guide, and as such contains examples of how to plan for each P Level in each of the 12 strands of the Primary Strategy Literacy Framework.
- Lessons do not need to contain all of the strands.
- The text list is in the termly SOW folders and on the Server in General Information
- Use the book list to select books for the half term. Please try to ensure a spread of fiction, non-fiction and poetry across the year. Include at least 2 texts per term which are linked to the English strand.
- Books from the list have a white sticker on the back with the year(s) in which they are covered, and are stored in the box in the library. If there is a book you want to cover which is not on the list, or if there is a book you cannot find, please let the English subject leader know and we can get it. If there are books on the list which you think we should also have for the library, please let us know, and we can get more copies.
- The SOW is to be used as a framework, with teachers using their professional judgment for supplementing their planning with outcomes and activities, as appropriate.
- For general principles see Teaching and Learning Policy.
- For methods of planning see Planning and Recording Guidelines in Induction documents in School Handbook
- For methods of recording and assessment see Assessment Policy.
- Developmental targets for children and extracts from the National Literacy Strategy pertinent to Oakleigh are attached as appendices.
- **Spoken Language / Communication**
  - Refer to Communication Guidelines (later in this document)
  - Termly liaison meetings between class teachers and SLT
  - Regular liaison meetings between English subject leader and SLT team

- **Reading - Letters and Sounds**
  - Incorporate all 7 Aspects of Phase 1 into planning as appropriate, but do not work through them in order
  - Incorporate the 3 Strands of each Aspect into planning as appropriate
  - Refer to the programme in Daily or Additional Planning for English, according to the Strand / Aspect being covered
- **Reading - See and Learn and Oxford Reading Tree programmes**
  - Each class with pupils using this approach to have a set of resources
  - Liaise with pre-reading teacher regarding progress and next steps
  - Carry out lesson with individual pupils at least 3 times per week
  - Class teachers to use individual recording sheets and have these available for monitoring by pre-reading teacher, English subject leader, Assistant Head or Head Teacher.
- **Writing - Pre-writing programme**
  - Resources available on General Information
  - Annotate work to demonstrate level of support
  - Liaise with Occupational Therapist for individual pupil advice