

THE ROCHE SCHOOL

English Policy

This policy applies to the whole school and is publicly available on the school website. Upon request, a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

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Statement of intent

Our goal is to use the teaching of English language skills to enable children to communicate effectively. Our understanding of literacy is expansive: we want our pupils to be able express themselves clearly and articulately to their families, their peers and their communities, and – in an increasingly complex digital world - we want to enable children to understand the nuance of what is being communicated to them. Moreover, we see the teaching of English language skills as essential to a child's ability to express themselves creatively.

By developing our pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in school, we can support our children to grow into independent, well-informed and articulate individuals who are engaged and empowered members of our school community and of our wider society. The National Curriculum contextualises these skills as being part of a child's '*essential knowledge*' (p6). Moreover, we use the teaching of English language skills to enable creative expression and imaginative exploration.

Our English curriculum is designed to instil in children a genuine love of reading. This is not just because of the potential joy of reading and its ability to fire the imagination. A love of reading plays an important role in a child's personal development, sense of belonging and his or her empathic relationship with the wider world.

We see how reading high quality literature about other people and other places can foster the values of The Roche Approach: respect for others, open-mindedness about the diverse world around us, compassion for our peers, the pleasure of good humour, and the rewards of effort and commitment.

Finally, we recognise that good readers make good learners. We know that if our pupils consider themselves to be readers, they are likely to perform better in all areas of the curriculum.

Context

This English policy should be read alongside other school policies, including:

- Phonics policy

The Roche School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children fulfil their potential

- Handwriting policy
- Homework policy
- Curriculum and Planning policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy
- EAL policy
- High Achievers policy
- Assessment policy
- Marking policy

Our English curriculum overview and our year group-by-year group English medium-term planning support this policy, as will the relevant schemes of work for each Key Stage. These include:

- Phonics
- Grammar and Punctuation
- Spelling

Planning and teaching

We aim to meet the needs of every learner and as such our pupil groupings for English vary at different points in the children's learning journey.

Children learning phonics in Lower School are set according to their ability but work in mixed ability groups for all other areas of English. We employ mixed ability groupings in Upper School until pupils begin preparing for the 11+ exam in Years 5 and 6, when we introduce sets for children attaining at a very high level.

Across all sets, children of all abilities study the same literature and complete the same tasks. Some sets offer more support while others work at greater depth, but all children enjoy the same texts and participate in the same activities. All ability groupings are flexible and kept under regular review, in keeping with our school's Growth Mindset ethos.

In all year groups, for at least one day a week, the children undertake more skills-based lessons, again with the appropriate amount of support and stretch provided for each group. We seek to link the teaching of technical or transcriptive skills to the more creative and authorial aspects of English to enliven the learning experience and provide a meaningful context for the teaching of technical skills.

Teachers within each year group plan their teaching together, referring to the National Curriculum and using their own knowledge and experiences to inform planning for their individual sets. Teachers ensure that all lessons are differentiated and that each lesson challenges every child appropriately.

In Upper Key Stage Two, the children begin to move beyond the National Curriculum and towards the 11+ curriculum, in preparation for their secondary school entrance exams in Year 6. All aspects of English are covered in these 11+ English lessons, including reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and the study of fiction, poetry, drama and some non-fiction.

Reading

At The Roche School, we recognise the vital importance of reading high quality literature and we celebrate books and literature in all their forms. This aligns with the National Curriculum which states that, through reading, *'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually [...] Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge [and to] build on what they already know' (p13).*

The 2014 National Curriculum divides reading skills into two parts:

- Word reading/decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning, such as speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary, and that all these elements are essential to success. We support the acquisition of reading skills through a varied range of engaging and effective methods. We understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning. We encourage, challenge and celebrate children at every stage of it of their reading journey.

At The Roche School we aim for/to:

- Pupils to learn to read easily and fluently. This is achieved through daily phonics in EYFS and Year 1, whilst in Year 2 the children have thrice weekly phonics lessons. All children in Lower School read regularly to adults in school and all classes enjoy reading a class novel.
- Support individual children with targeted reading interventions such as the Toe by Toe reading scheme.
- Expose pupils to a range of texts throughout their time at school and to support them on their reading journey. We particularly value the teaching of whole texts and aspire to use extracts of literature merely to enhance our pupils' wider understanding of the genre or of an author's work, or to expose children to higher-level or classic texts.
- Use group discussion, role play and drama to deepen pupils' understanding of literature, including their understanding of setting, plot and character.
- Encourage pupils to read independently. This is done using quiet reading time in school, listening to an adult read in school or at home, and reading to or with an adult in school or at home
- Expect children to undertake daily reading at home and for pupil reading records to be updated on a daily basis.

- Encourage all pupils to see themselves as part of wider community of readers. This is done through school-wide reading events such as author and illustrator visits, World Book Day, Shakespeare Week and Poetry Week. Additionally, targeted children are challenged to participate in outside opportunities such as the Battle of the Books competition or the Carnegie Book Prize shadowing scheme.
- Encourage pupils to browse our school libraries independently and exercise personal choice in book selection: *"Browsing and choosing are vital and necessary starters for reading for pleasure. Just handing children books and telling them to read for pleasure is not reading for pleasure. Browsing and choosing teaches us about how reading can be part of our lives, how it can matter. Browsing and choosing involves special kinds of reading: scanning, selecting, picking up clues and cues."* - Michael Rosen, Children's Laureate (2007-2009)
- Instil in children a genuine love of reading.
- Formatively assess pupils' reading comprehension in the classroom on a weekly or even daily basis through the use of targeted questioning, whole class discussion and focused comprehension activities.
- Summatively assess pupils' reading comprehension skills every term
- Support pupils in EYFS to develop their reading comprehension skills through the study of class texts and discussion of books and reading. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have weekly comprehension lessons to support the development of their reading comprehension skills
- Expose pupils to a range of high-quality texts and to teach literature written by authors from a diverse range of backgrounds and representing a rich variety of voices, experiences and cultures.
- All children to be offered additional booster lessons to support their reading and the development of their comprehension skills as needed. These lessons may take place in small groups or may be one to one and tend to take the form of a weekly, 30-minute lesson.

Writing

At The Roche School, we understand that children should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Produce writing that is grammatically correct
- Structure their writing in a considered and purposeful way
- Employ a range of vocabulary that is rich and varied
- Write in a range of ways and purposes that are functional and/or creative and include narratives, poetry, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read.

This is compatible with guidance from the National Curriculum.

Additionally, we recognise that writing and reading are inextricably linked: we strive to continually cross-reference the teaching of writing skills with the teaching of comprehension skills and the literature children study in class and read at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, grammar and vocabulary and that both these elements are essential to succeed, and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through a range of methods. As a school, we understand that writing is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of their writing journey.

At The Roche School we aim for/to:

- Teach grammar and enable children to see and use these grammatical devices in normal practice.
- Correct grammatical errors orally and in written work (as appropriate)
- Have a systematic approach to the teaching of these skills, where we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling
- Use high quality literature to model and inspire good writing
- Undertake group or shared writing to model good writing
- Use group discussion, role play and drama to support the development of vocabulary and to support planning for writing
- Give children the opportunity to practise writing a wide variety of text types and to have a clear purpose for their written work
- Have children in Lower School produce an extended piece of writing once every two weeks. In Upper School, this happens weekly.
- Mark this extended writing and provide feedback to pupils on how they can improve
- Informally assess the development of pupils' writing skills on fortnightly basis for children in Lower School and on a weekly basis for children in Upper School.
- Formally assess pupils' writing skills on a termly basis.
- Support individual children who require additional practice with the transcriptive skills of spelling, handwriting and touch-typing with targeted interventions such as the Nessy Learning programmes.
- Encourage all children to see themselves as part of a wider writing community through author visits, writing challenges and writing competitions such as BBC 500 Words

Summary

The Roche School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children fulfil their potential

To achieve our school's aims, we aim to ensure that our English curriculum is:

- Appropriately challenging
- Differentiated to support children of all abilities and with varying learning needs
- Broad, covering the full scope of the curriculum in English lessons and making cross-curricular with other subjects
- Progressive, building upon the children's previous learning each term and each year
- Inclusive of all children and relevant to the children's lives and their understanding of our diverse world
- Purposeful and engaging
- Joyful, with an emphasis on the life-enhancing rewards of creativity, imagination and reading for pleasure.