

## **English Rationale**

At St Augustine's Primary School we believe English should be exciting, engaging and challenging. We use a variety of media - texts, images, film clips and online activities to bring English to life.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy in the Early Years**

When children first enter the school in the Foundation Stage, we build on their literacy knowledge from home and pre-school / nursery, and daily learning takes place within an integrated EYFS curriculum. There are a wealth of writing and reading opportunities across the classroom, outside areas and throughout the whole curriculum. Children are taught the 44 phonemes of the English language and to blend these together to read new words, and segment them to spell. Development of gross and fine motor control is encouraged through play-based activities including 'dough-gym', using tweezers, writing with water / in cornflour / on large chalkboards etc. Reading and writing is encouraged in many ways, including through the roleplay area, labelling designs for construction models, reading and writing messages to class members. We aim to instil confidence and independence in early literacy skills that will ensure children attain the Early Learning Goals (expected at the end of the Reception year) and prepare the children well for Key Stage One.

### **English in Key Stage One and Two**

The teaching of reading, writing, and spoken language, is based on the guidance set out in the new 2014 National Curriculum.

### **Reading**

At St Augustine's we place great importance on the teaching of reading. At every stage of a child's life, reading should be pleasurable and we believe that time should be devoted at school and home to 'reading for pleasure'. Children have the opportunity to read books of their own choice, which they take home, read and discuss. This is key to the development and enjoyment of reading. We are determined to get it right for every child so St Augustine's prioritises reading and celebrates children's successes and progress.

Central to our approach to early reading and writing is the development of phonemic awareness. We teach children to read using the synthetic phonics approach. Children learn the sounds that individual letters and groups of letters make (phonemes) and are taught how to blend them together to read words. This begins early in Foundation where teachers monitor the children's progress carefully and keep in touch with parents/carers about how this is going. A systematic approach is used throughout the school based on the 'Story Time Phonics' programme. Children have a discrete 15 -20 minutes phonics teaching every day because we know little and often really makes a difference. Guided Reading sessions are carefully planned for using books that are colour banded. Each colour band contains both fiction and non-fiction. There are phonic based books at the earlier levels and poetry within each band; giving children breadth and interest in different authors and illustrators.

Alongside the strategies taught to decode words sits the skill of comprehension. Children are taught how to make sense of what they read during whole class shared reading, through small guided group work with the teacher and then they practise this skill when they read

independently. In KS1 children have two guided reading sessions per week and in KS2 at least one. Children take home a reading book to practise at home. Alongside this we keep a Home/School Reading Diary. In here, parents will find tips on how to support their child with reading and some of the things their child will be working on in reading that year. Our overall aim is to ensure that all our children leave Year 1 in a strong position to broaden their reading further in Year 2. Any children in Key Stage 2 that need further specific support are able to access the specific intervention based on their areas on need.

In terms of resources each classroom has a well-developed book corner where children can select a book and read quietly in a den, under a giant leaf or on a comfy seat. Books have been chosen in consultation with the children so we can be sure there is something that appeals to everyone.

Learning is planned in a cross- curricular way and we routinely use books as our starting point for a topic. Using a high quality text as a basis for learning really engages the children and helps to develop quality writing as well as stimulating learning in other areas of the curriculum.

## **Writing**

Writing lessons focus on the development of handwriting, punctuation, grammar and the creative process which brings this together to make a piece of writing. There is a strong emphasis on developing writing skills and teachers model how to structure and organise writing so that it engages the reader. Children are given the opportunity to write imaginatively, record information, express themselves accurately and to use an adventurous and wide-ranging vocabulary. Punctuation and grammar are taught as an integral part of this process and spelling strategies are taught throughout the school. The teaching of phonics and spelling aims to show pupils how to become natural and accurate spellers. Children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 are taught developmentally appropriate spelling strategies using the Letter and Sounds approach as part of their daily phonics sessions. Key Stage 2 builds on the approaches introduced in Key Stage 1, with an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. It is expected that pupils assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources for making corrections. Teachers plan rich and varied writing tasks, which often relate to the topic being studied at the time.

## **Spoken Language**

This area of the curriculum focuses on children's ability to communicate well. Speaking & listening is not taught explicitly as this permeates through every element of children's school life as we feel this is an essential life skill. This aspect of literacy includes the development of speaking and listening as well as drama and group work.