

31.5 CURRICULUM POLICY FOR ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Imagine a School which will ensure its pupils develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and spelling to a high standard. School pupils will be encouraged to explore and analyse a wide range of texts, with the aim of developing their individual tastes for different genres and textual styles and, in turn, fostering an enduring love of literature. By means of discussions, group work, drama and role-play, pupils will learn to express themselves in a confident, creative, imaginative and articulate manner to a variety of audiences. In their writing, pupils will develop their skills of sentence construction, story writing and recording of information, with regard to grammatical and structural conventions, at the same time developing a wide vocabulary and the ability to write for different purposes and occasions.

The Teaching of English inspires students to enjoy and appreciate literature and the written word in all its forms. In the senior school, pupils explore the workings of the English language, for instance its etymology, grammatical structures and literary and rhetorical techniques, and an emphasis is placed on the teaching of grammar and spelling. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop confident speaking and listening skills by narrating, discussing, arguing and persuading in a range of activities, and they are encouraged to discuss the implicit meanings of literature and its relevance to social, historical and cultural issues. Students are exposed to literary genres, ranging from Shakespeare to current journalism. The influence of the media is studied explicitly through the analysis of newspapers, magazines, advertising, film and television.

The English course at GCSE develops candidates' ability to read with insight, distinguish between fact and opinion, evaluate how information is presented, follow an argument, recognise inconsistencies, and understand linguistic and structural devices. Pupils must show their competence and confidence in speaking and listening in a range of situations. They will need to read literary and media texts, including contemporary and pre-twentieth century literature, and write in a wide variety of forms and styles. This encompasses critical and imaginative responses to literary and factual material.

Magdalen Court broadly follows the National Curriculum. Literacy should develop pupil's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It should also enable Pupils to be enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers. A broad and balanced English curricular education is the entitlement of all students, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, class, aptitude or ability. At Magdalen Court, our objectives in teaching Literacy are :

- to teach our pupils to express themselves clearly in both writing and speech
- to develop their reading skills
- to enable them to use grammatically correct sentences
- to teach pupils to spell and punctuate accurately in order to communicate effectively in written English

Speaking and listening, reading and writing should be included into all areas of the curriculum; it is important to encourage the usage of these cross-curricular links. The effective use of literacy must be the concern of all teachers in all subject areas; each area of learning has a contribution to make through the special opportunities it presents.

As a core subject, English will be timetabled for a significant amount of curriculum time for all pupils from Key Stages 1 to Key Stage 4.

AIMS

Speaking and Listening

- To communicate in a way appropriate to the target audience whether peer group, adult etc
- To use the vocabulary and grammar of standard English
- To develop the ability to listen with attention and respond accordingly
- To provide an outlet for self-expression
- To participate in group discussions
- To participate in a wide range of drama activities.

Reading

- To read accurately, fluently and with understanding
- To develop enjoyment, enthusiasm and independence
- To develop the key comprehension skills of literal, deductive, inferential and evaluative understanding
- To be able to analyse and reflect on a variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction
- To cultivate a lifelong habit of reading

Writing

- To plan, draft and improve written work on paper and in ICT
- To develop compositional skills in fiction and non-fiction writing
- To use characteristics of different kinds of writing
- To write for a wide range of purposes and audiences
- To correctly use a range of punctuation

Spelling

- To develop a range of skills, including the learning of rules and patterns in spelling

Handwriting

- To develop a legible style of handwriting in both cursive and printed styles
- To be able to use different forms and styles of handwriting for different purposes eg labelling, writing notes, diagrams.

English Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. Amongst other guidance, we use the National Literacy Strategy as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases: long-term (scheme of work), medium-term and short-term. The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching details what we teach in the long-term. Our Scheme of Work identifies the key objectives in English that we teach to each year.

Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The English Key-Stage co-ordinator is responsible for reviewing these plans. Plans are available to access in the teacher's classroom planning folder. These medium term plans are identical for each class in a year-group to ensure continuity of teaching across classes. Teachers then adapt their differentiation of the lessons in the weekly plans as needed.

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 pupils will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject co-ordinator often discuss them on an informal basis.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Our Curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our pupils learning experiences enable them to develop competency across all the learning areas. The Early Years Goals are organised into seven areas and provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS, so layering secure foundations for future learning. The Communication, Language and Literacy areas of learning include speaking and listening, linking sounds to letters and reading and writing. Communication language and Literacy links into the National Curriculum. We relate the English aspects of the pupils work to the objectives set out in the EYFS Learning Goals which underpin the Curriculum planning for pupils aged three to five.

We give all pupils the opportunity to talk and communicate in a 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.

We use a combination of phonics programmes to provide an effective syllabus. Letters and Sounds is a six-phase teaching programme designed to help practitioners and teachers teach pupils how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Pupils at the school are consistently well above average on reading tests. We use the synthetic phonics method of teaching phonics in a way that is fun and multi-sensory. Pupils learn how to use the letter sounds to read and write words. This scheme will also be used to increase the learning styles catered for.

Pupils will learn how to form letters as soon as they are able to control a pencil adequately. Time in the EYFS is spent on reinforcing the manipulative skills needed to form each letter singularly.

It is the function of EYFS to begin the Language programme of the school. It will be essential, therefore for the teachers to be aware of the ultimate objectives that the school has set itself. As well as referring to Literacy work samples at the start of the year –the EYFS teachers create records of their own to illustrate the rate of development for individual pupils through the range of pursuits. This is done in light of the expectations of the EYFS Framework expectations.

KS1&2

The Key Stage1 & 2 curriculum is based on the National Curriculum. We use some of the published material provided but have spent a great deal of time and effort generating our own materials and schemes of work. During each year the students tackle a balance of Literature and Language based tasks. The schemes of work are adapted each year to ensure they are up to date. The specific tasks undertaken in lessons are aimed at building up the pupil's experience, skills and knowledge.

Speaking and Listening

Pupils are encouraged to be appreciative audiences and to have meaningful discussions, wherein the right of others to speak and to be listened to is respected. Opportunities where pupils are able to speak to a variety of audiences and in a variety of styles will be provided.

Handwriting

Pupils will be expected to develop a range of styles of handwriting to suit different tasks: free writing, note taking, scientific labelling, art and design etc

They will be expected to maintain high standards of presentation in all curriculum areas.

Teachers will aim to produce good examples of particular kinds of writing and display students' writing attractively, encouraging them to take pride in the presentation of their work.

- In the Prep school we will use the Nelson Handwriting scheme for Years 3 to 6, to provide a complete guide to the practice of teaching handwriting allowing pupils to write with greater confidence, speed and legibility.
- In Year 3, Pupils will be expected to write in pencil, in a joined fluent style in all areas. Those who already have a fluent, legible style can use Stabilo pens in their practice handwriting lessons.
- Pupils in Year 4 will all be expected to use Stabilo pens in handwriting practice by the end of the academic year.
- Pupils in Year 5 will use Stabilo pens or cartridge pens for handwriting practice, as well as for all literacy work after the October half term. The use of cartridge pens may be introduced before the summer term
- Pupils in Year 6 will continue to have handwriting practice lessons as well as using cartridge or Stabilo pens for literacy, humanities subjects and science.

To achieve our aim in the Junior school, the teacher will:

- Teach one session of handwriting a week, keeping all pupils on the same objective
- Expect high standards of presentation for all of the pupils' finished work
- Provide good models of particular kinds of writing
- Identify pupils with very poor handwriting for additional support
- Highlight that on occasions a specific style of handwriting is required eg labelling of scientific diagrams should be in lower case format, upper case for posters etc

- Remind pupils that the skills practised in the handwriting sessions should be maintained in all their written work.

By the time pupils enter Year 7 it is anticipated that they will have mastered the aims of our handwriting policy outlined above, however, teachers will be alert to identify pupils who continue to require additional support.

Reading

The Oxford Reading Tree is used in the Junior School. Pupils are introduced to the scheme in the EYFS and move through the stages appropriate to the individual level, either when a stage is completed, or at the teacher's discretion. There is a wide choice within each key stage to cater for different tastes and preferences. Pupils also have access to a variety of fiction and non-fiction books in each classroom in the Prep School.

Children in Reception, Years 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 are listened to individually daily.

It is hoped that most pupils will have finished the reading scheme by the end of Year 4 and therefore be ready for 'free reading books' only in Years 5 & 6. Any pupils who still require a more structured approach to learning to read will be regularly supported.

Writing

The use of good quality and motivational texts in the particular genre the pupils are studying ensures they are given the opportunity to cover a range of fiction and non-fiction writing whilst developing their writing skills across the curriculum. Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation as tools for improving key areas of writing will be used. In fiction, pupils write poetry, short stories and extended stories. In non-fiction the six text types: recounts, reports, instructions, explanations, persuasive and discussions are regularly covered in literacy lessons as well as through cross curricular work. Pupils will have the opportunity to practise grammar exercises and are encouraged to use dictionaries, and thesauruses to extend vocabulary choices. As pupils progress through Magdalen Court they will become increasingly able to develop their independence in assessing and improving their own work through redrafting and evaluating the work of their peers.

Spelling

In Years 1 & 2 Letters and Sounds spelling lists and tests are used. In Key Stage 2 the Andrew Brodie Spelling for Literacy is followed with weekly spelling tests. The Look Say Cover Write Check method, linked with joined handwriting, is used. Pupils are encouraged to find the meaning of unfamiliar words as part of this homework and practise them in context. Pupils at secondary level, In Years 7 and 8 will have weekly spelling tests and from Year 7 onwards will receive focussed support as necessary.

When teaching spellings our staff:

- Encourage children to enjoy choosing and using new and more difficult words.
- Praise all attempts at a word and then help with the tricky bits.
- Encourage children to collect the words they want to spell and keep a list for reference.
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own spelling. Use the school correction code which helps pupils to proof-read their own work to search for errors.
- Encourage children to take a note of the correct spellings of any mis-spelled words.
- Encourage the use of a dictionary and a Thesaurus - not just for spelling but for discovering the meanings of words. Every classroom should have an Adult Dictionary/Thesaurus, and a Spelling Dictionary/Children's Thesaurus - in addition to simplified Dictionaries.
- Encourage the use of electronic spellcheckers or word finders. Some will complete the word you have typed or give you options to choose from.
- Encourage discussion of the pronunciation and meaning of a word.
- Allow children to leave gaps for words they are uncertain about. These could be a basis for research and discussion.
- Encourage cursive handwriting, which is proven to aid good spelling, and discourage the use of block capitals as recognition word shape is impeded.
- Let the children mark and consult each other over their work.

- Encourage the breaking down of words into their syllables.
- Teach words in context - this helps the pupil to relate the word to its meaning.
- Keep spelling in perspective. It remains of secondary importance to what the child is trying to say, although it can affect the reader's response to what is written.

English– KS3 to KS4

The department is constantly striving to improve its schemes of work for all key stages and will endeavour to keep a broad depth whilst ensuring students receive sufficiently stretching depth in the subjects.

Speaking And Listening:

Pupils will explore, develop and respond to a range of skills and strategies, in a variety of contexts, adapting language according to task, audience and purpose.

Reading

Pupils will engage with, and respond to, a rich variety of print, developing analysis and awareness of forms and purposes of writing by relating texts to the social, historical and cultural contexts in which they were written; analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning; analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have two timetabled 35 minute single periods for silent reading, in addition to their three English lessons. These are designed to encourage the enjoyment of reading. The books, both fiction and non-fiction, used during this time, are selected with the aim of raising the pupils' standard of literacy and the selection is regularly updated. On completion, pupils write a short appreciation of each book.

In addition to books which are studied as part of the curriculum, there is a variety of suitable reading material in classrooms and in the Library/Resource area. All classes in the Secondary School have access to library reading books.

Writing

Pupils will write a wide range of texts on paper and on screen for different purposes and audiences, adapting features and techniques to create a range of effects and shaping and constructing language for expression and effect. Pupils will use the conventions of standard English and use grammar accurately and appropriately.

At Key Stage 4 we aim to build upon the foundations laid in Years 7 – 9, to equip our pupils to deal with language across genres and to extend their enjoyment and appreciation of Literature. At GCSE we offer English, English Language and English Literature. Pupils will study:

- Shakespeare
- Contemporary Poetry: Seamus Heaney
- English Literary Heritage Poetry: Wilfred Owen
- Prose from other cultures: Mice and Men (Steinbeck)
- Prose for the English Literary Heritage: The Withered Arm and Other Tales (Hardy)
- Contemporary drama: An Inspector Calls (Priestley)

Language study includes a range of media and non-fiction texts designed to stimulate critical and analytical skills. Pupils are encouraged to write creatively and imaginatively and to engage in a wide range of Speaking and Listening activities to prepare them for real-life situations.

In English it is never just about the examination. In addition, we offer a broad range of experiences to our pupils: we organise theatre trips and study days whenever appropriate and available.

Formative Assessment

In line with our Teaching and Learning policy, the focus of marking should be with reference to the specified learning objective and indicate the next step (refer to AfL techniques). As pupils progress through Magdalen Court, they will become more familiar with the process of self and peer evaluation. They will be given the

opportunity to analyse and reflect on their own and other people's work in order to highlight achievements and suggest how or where improvements can be made.

Summative Testing

Summative testing is used to assess progress at key points in the academic year and these results are used to aid future planning both for individual pupils and groups.

All pupils at Magdalen Court will have access to the computer facilities and we will encourage the use of computers to support literacy as appropriate.

Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of Mathematics in our school. Pupils in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the Mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during class time and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The use of ICT enables pupils to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger pupils use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older pupils use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Pupils use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all pupils to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and Citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of Personal, Social Health, Economic Education and Citizenship. We encourage younger pupils 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 pupils research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage pupils to work together and respect each other's views. Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to participate in a Public Speaking Competition where they present a topic of their choice.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our pupils can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. 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 pupils to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

Teaching English to Pupils with Special Educational Needs

In English, in our school we cater for the needs and requirements of every pupil. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each pupil's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each pupil's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the pupil may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the pupil's needs. Where a child requires an Individual Education Plan (IEP); this IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where pupils are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a theatre trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils. Teachers provide help with communication and English through:

- using texts that pupils can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;

Gifted and Talented

Opportunities for gifted & talented students are highlighted in all schemes of work for all year groups. These can be relevant to particular tasks in the classroom, extension or homework activities.

Assessment and Recording

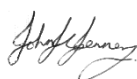
Teachers assess pupils work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help teachers to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. They use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. They use a class record of the key objectives as the recording format for this. Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, which they use to assess progress against teacher-set and national targets.

With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and summarize the progress of each pupil before discussing it with the pupil's parents. The next teacher also uses these long-term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests such as 'GL Assessment – Progress in Maths and English', 'Rising Stars' and 'Accelerated Reader' material and programmes and also teacher assessments. Samples of pupils work are kept in the English subject folder in the resource room. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school.

Monitoring and review

The monitoring of the standards of pupil's work and of the quality of teaching in English and Literacy is the responsibility of the English and Literacy coordinator. The work of the coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English and Literacy, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The English and Literacy coordinator gives the Headmaster an annual summary report in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement.

Date: August 2016



Signed:

Principle

To be continuously monitored and reviewed by no later than two years from the date shown above.