

English policy
MELBOURNE JUNIOR SCHOOL
March 2025



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This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Melbourne Junior School. It was developed through consultation with teaching staff. This policy will be observed in practice by the Head Teacher and subject manager on a termly basis as part of the monitoring process. It will be updated as necessary.

MISSION STATEMENT

AIMS

We aim to instill in our pupils a love of reading, the ability to talk and listen well and to write for pleasure and purpose. We recognise the importance of literacy skills and how these link with life outcomes and achievement. As teachers, we present positive role models in our use of language, love of reading and our writing.

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of English within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

At Melbourne Junior School we aim for children to be able to:

- listen carefully and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts, expressing opinions, articulating feelings and forming appropriate responses to complex questions
- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct
- have an interest in books and read for enjoyment
- have an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms
- use reading as a means of gathering information to support learning across the whole curriculum
- write with increasing awareness of grammar, punctuation and spelling conventions
- write using a fluent, legible style
- understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the context
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Curriculum 2014.

Children should learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers

of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

ENGLISH IMPLEMENTATION

The English Curriculum is delivered using the Curriculum 2014. The teaching objectives are used to plan appropriate provision and ensure high expectations are set.

- Children are taught in mixed ability, class groups.
- English is usually taught in a daily lesson. However, time may be occasionally blocked together to allow extended writing activities.
- Opportunities to teach and practise English skills throughout the curriculum are exploited whenever possible.
- Long-term and medium-term planning for each year group is based on the Curriculum 2014. From this, unit plans are produced detailing specific learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, differentiation and resources required. Opportunities for assessment are also identified.
- Wherever possible, English planning makes links to other areas of the curriculum to provide purposeful contexts for speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning activities are differentiated not only within year groups but also within classes. Extra support is provided, wherever possible, to support children with specific needs.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

The Spoken Language element of English permeates throughout the wider curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies, such as: drama, discussions, debates, poetry recitals and presentations are used to engage all pupils, in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective oral communication skills in readiness for later life, adapting their vocabulary for all purposes and audiences.

READING

Reading takes place in a variety of settings and subjects. Children are presented with high quality resources and learning experiences. It is expected that teachers provide an environment that is rich in language through books, displays and other resources and are seen as teachers that read.

The Early Reading Journey and Phonics – Some children entering MJS may not yet have completed the Early Reading Journey and will therefore require the teaching of daily discrete phonics as an intervention. This is a priority and children are assessed as they enter KS2. The validated scheme used is No Nonsense Phonics.

Shared reading takes place both within the daily English lesson and a variety of other curriculum areas. A variety of texts are used: short extracts, novels, Digi-texts and film clips and images.

Whole Class Reading takes place outside of the English lesson, in three to four sessions a week. All children read the same text and complete a range of activities to develop their reading skills. The activities use DERIC: Decoding, Explain, Retrieve, Interpret and Choice, to develop the skills needed to be an effective reader. The responses to these activities are recorded within Reading Journals. In order for the children to experience whole texts, chapters may also be read during story time.

1:1 reading - teachers should read with all children individually at least once a term to complete a reading conference, in order to monitor progress and check the breadth of reading experiences. Daily reading will be carried out, where possible, with children who are below age-related expectations. This may be with a teacher, TA or parent helper.

Library sessions – Each class has a fortnightly library session where the children learn a variety of library skills. The children have the opportunity to change library books, undertake topic research and explore the library catalogue.

Home reading – It is an expectation that children read regularly at home and discuss their reading. This is recorded via Class Dojo.

Resources – Children who are still on the Early Reading Journey will select books from the reading scheme and may require books linked to their specific phonics stage. Each year group has a core text reading spine, ensuring that the children experience a wide breadth of texts and authors, not just in English but across the curriculum. Recommended Reads lists, which suggest a range of good quality, age appropriate, authors and texts are used to support and guide children with their book choices for independent reading.

The school library catalogue is regularly updated to ensure a wide range of current, quality texts, which reflect all aspects of society and the wider world.

Reading for pleasure and class novels – Reading for pleasure sessions allow time for teachers and children to share and recommend books, be introduced to new authors and publications and simply have time to enjoy a good book. All teachers should make time for a class novel to develop the children's love and enjoyment of reading. This may be the Whole Class Reading book.

Enrichment days, visits and visitors – A range of enrichment days will be planned each year to celebrate different aspects of reading, for example National Poetry Day, World Book Day and the Big Read Event. Also visits from authors and theatre groups to raise interest and motivation within the subject.

VOCABULARY

We want our children to develop a rich and varied vocabulary; therefore, each Whole Class Reading session and English unit has a focus on introducing and developing new vocabulary. Vocabulary triangles are used across the curriculum, classifying tiers of vocabulary. The children are then encouraged to use the new words learnt in the correct context within their work.

WRITING

The teaching of writing will include a combination of shared, modelled and guided writing. The children will be taught how to write for a range of genres, audiences and purposes, making links to 'real' contexts whenever possible.

During the teaching sequence, the children will: read quality texts, explore genre features, develop vocabulary banks, agree on success criteria, be introduced to a relevant aspect of grammar through Rainbow Grammar, discuss ideas, plan and write. Opportunities will be given to proof-read and edit writing, either independently or with peer support.

At the end of each unit of teaching, the children will produce an extended, independent piece of writing. Each piece will have a specific success criterion, produced during the teaching of the unit. Teachers and children will refer to these criteria when assessing the effectiveness of the writing. These pieces of work will be stored in the children's Writing Portfolio, which documents their writing journey from Year 3 to Year 6.

Feedback sessions provide the children with an opportunity to reflect on their writing, taking onboard comments for improvement and receiving detailed feedback from teachers.

A variety of enrichment activities and visitors will be planned to motivate and inspire writing. Entry to writing competitions, both local and national, is also actively encouraged.

Rainbow Grammar

The school uses an approach called Rainbow Grammar to teach the specific objectives for each year group. In Rainbow Grammar, colours are used to represent different parts of a sentence. The children learn how different parts of sentences work; what different types of words and parts of sentences are called; how to join the different parts of sentences together how to punctuate them accurately.

Most importantly of all, they learn why writers use these different sentences and how they help to improve their writing. The children then apply this knowledge and skills within independent writing.

SPELLING

The Spelling Shed programme has been adopted to support the delivery of the objectives in Curriculum 2014. For the majority of children, spelling lessons take place in class groups. The children receive two spelling sessions a week in addition to weekly test. The children take home a spelling list to learn and have the option of using the online Spelling Shed games to practise.

Some children will require further revision of the phonics work completed in KS1, to reinforce key areas and phonic understanding, and also revision of high frequency words. Specific support programmes will be used to generate appropriate spelling lists.

HANDWRITING

The school teaches a cursive style of handwriting that builds on the work of our partner infant school. By the end of KS2, we want children to be able to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed, and to be able to make decisions about when to join letters, selecting the writing implement most suited to a task.

The aim is to have taught all the basic joins by the end of Lower School. In Years 3 and 4, children will receive weekly taught handwriting lessons. During these lessons a range of strategies will be used to model and practise skills. Children complete their handwriting in exercise books with tramlines to support with the sizing of letters.

In Years 5 and 6, the children apply their handwriting skills in all written work, aiming to develop a personal, fluent style.

In Year 3 and for the majority of Year 4, children will write in pencil. As soon as children demonstrate, fluent, joined handwriting in all writing, they will write in pen. All children will write in pen in Upper School. Blue ink pens are used across the school.

THE USE OF IT

Opportunities to use IT to support teaching and learning in English will be planned for and used as appropriate. IT is used to motivate and stimulate children's learning through a range of resources including multimedia texts and film clips. Pupils have the opportunity to use skills developed in IT to support and enrich learning in English.

For children with additional needs, IT may be used as a means to write and access key materials.

ASSESSMENT, REPORTING AND TARGET SETTING

Refer to the school's Assessment and Feedback Policy.

INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English, according to their individual abilities. Differentiated planning, varied choice of text types and use of different teaching styles enable all children to access the curriculum. Targeted teaching supports children who are making limited progress. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Intervention work is targeted at groups of children who have a specific need. These groups change and therefore interventions must be flexible to respond to these changes.

In class, intervention involves the class teacher or Teaching Assistant and may take the form of a guided or focus group to target a specific area. Out of class intervention may take place during assembly, registration or other agreed times.

ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English.

Monitoring and evaluating English:

- pupil progress
- provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
- the quality of the learning environment
- the deployment and provision of support staff
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up to date with recent developments in English and providing technical expertise.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The teaching of English will be monitored through the English development plan or School Improvement Plan where relevant.

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- SEND Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.