

**SINCLAIR HOUSE SCHOOL**  
**ENGLISH POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**This policy, which applies to the whole Prep school inclusive of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception to Year 6), is in support of the health and safety policy and the individual health and safety assessments. This policy is publicly available on the school's website. On request a copy may be obtained from the school's office.**

Sinclair House Schools strives to ensure its pupils develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and spelling to a high standard. 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.

**Aims and Objectives**

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing within a variety of contexts.

**The Aims of English are:**

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions within each English lesson, including through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- to develop speaking, listening and word processing skills.

**The Structure of English**

In KS1, Phonics (and, dependent on cohort, Y3) & Spellings, Reading and Writing are all timetabled separately. In KS2, Spellings, Reading and Writing are all timetabled separately. Regular opportunities for Speaking and Listening are embedded throughout these lessons, as well as in Drama lessons, which are taught by a specialist teacher from KS2.

**English Curriculum Planning**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. In the Summer term of Year 5 and Autumn term of Year 6, the curriculum focuses on the requirements of the 11+ examinations, with a focus on past papers and thirty minute writing compositions. We carry out the curriculum planning in English in two phases (long-term and medium-term).

Our medium-term plans give coverage of the main writing lenses (as defined by 'The Write Stuff'), spellings, phonics sounds (in KS1) and class readers for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.

It is up to teachers how they document their weekly plans; these may be kept as a 'traditional' short-term plan, as a PowerPoint, notes in a Teacher planner etc. Weekly writing plans include the specific learning objective/lenses (steps to success) for each writing lesson. Reading lessons focus on three comprehension questions, which teachers may choose to display on a PowerPoint, or work directly from the comprehension. Spelling lessons follow the Spelling Shed, and teachers

have the option to use these PowerPoints and resources. Phonics lessons follow Monster Phonics, and teachers have the option to use these PowerPoints and resources.

#### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Sinclair House School Early Years Foundation Stage follows the Montessori philosophy, methodology and Montessori learning programme together with the document "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" to inform planning in the Nursery. The Reception class follows the National Curriculum 2014 in conjunction with the 2017 EYFS Statutory Framework.

**Kommentar [FP1]:** Melissa to check and remove Nursery references

We encourage the development of the pupils' ability to listen, speak, read and write for a range of purposes. This learning forms the foundations for later work in English. These early experiences include giving 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.

The EYFS covers English through the prime learning area of Communication and Language and the specific learning area of Literacy. The corresponding Early Learning Goals for Communication and Language are:

1. Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
2. Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
3. Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present, and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

The corresponding Early Learning Goals for Literacy are:

1. Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
2. Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

In the EYFS Nursery, the Montessori Language Program is used. The Montessori Language Program is a thorough foundation for reading and writing. It uses a concrete phonics method of teaching the letter sounds in a way that is fun and multi-sensory. The Montessori Language Program begins with creating a language rich environment for children, playing games, singing songs and rhymes and playing rhyming games and 'I Spy', helping children to identify the initial letter sounds in words. The alphabet is presented through Sandpaper Letters, the focus is on formation and identifying words and objects with initial sounds. This is supported through using a 'sound basket' where a letter is introduced or reinforced and children are asked to collect an object from home that starts with the letter sound. Each child will work on these sounds at their own pace. Teaching children letter sounds then leads on to word building with the Large Moveable Alphabet starting with 3 letter phonetic words (The pink series) and then moves to 4 letter phonetic words (The blue series), the following step is working with 4 letter blends (The green series). Each series is supported with related word lists, sentence strips and reading books, creating a step by step challenge for the child. Parallel to this, they begin to read sight word (High Frequency Words).

In the Reception class, teaching is aligned with the National Curriculum age appropriate expectations and the 2017 EYFS Statutory Framework. Reading children are placed onto the Sinclair House School Graded Reading Scheme. Teachers match the scheme to the reading needs of each pupil. Pupils in Reception are given a reading record along with a suitable book, which will be completed and signed regularly by a responsible adult (parent, guardian, grandparent etc.). Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided to promote their reading skills through making available a range of fiction books within the classroom at appropriate reading ages, as well as alphabet puzzles, nursery rhyme games, sand and water, matching sound cards, and role play.

Pupils learn how to form letters as soon as they are able to control a pencil adequately. Much time in the Nursery and Reception is spent in reinforcing the manipulative skills needed to form each letter singularly. Before the pupil begins to learn to form letters it is essential to determine appropriate grip and flexibility of hand movement. The large pencils should be

used first since they are more readily gripped by little fingers. Children form a concrete impression of the shape of letters through tracing Sandpaper Letters and they practice on white boards, in sand trays and chalk boards. Specific teacher led lessons and activities are presented weekly that focus on the sounds of the week and the writing skills, such as the parts of a sentence, grammar or exclamation points as a whole class or on a small group basis. Sentence writing is taught and practiced, with the children creating class books and holiday cards. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided to promote their writing skills through using a range of materials, chalk, paintbrushes, crayons, to write in a range of situations, shopping lists, letters, stories, captions, or prescriptions. The children are encouraged to include writing in all areas of learning.

To appreciate the approach in our Montessori Nursery please observe the pupils in this area of the school and consult the EYFS Policy, the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (DfE: April 2017) and our internal document [Montessori Provision EYFS Links](#).

### Writing

At Sinclair House School, pupils are given a wide range of purposes and audiences to write for; our coverage of non-fiction, fiction and poetry are mapped out in the whole school overview and medium term plans. Where possible, writing is given a 'real life' purpose e.g. sending letters to an author or writing an article for the school newsletter. Further extended writing opportunities are planned for in Humanities.

Teachers largely follow 'The Write Stuff' to deliver their Writing lessons. This is a step-by-step framework for strengthening the teaching of writing based on the 'lenses' from the 'Writing Rainbow'. Writing is driven through sentences; these are seen as vital as they are the building blocks of larger texts and pupils need support to make sentences that match the correct audience and purpose of the writing. Therefore, apart from when the children reach the stage of planning and editing independent writing, the learning objective will always take on the same form ('To write effective sentences for our [insert genre]') whilst the lenses provide the success criteria (e.g. a feeling sentence, a simile and a relative clause).



### Structure of a lesson:

The structure of an English lesson following 'The Write Stuff' method will look quite different to a 'traditional' 3 part English lesson, as detailed in the diagram below. Pupils, like adults, engage more with short, intensive moments of learning that they

can apply immediately; it is accepted that children may only write three sentences in a Writing lesson, but it is expected that these sentences should be of a very high standard, both in terms of content and SPAG.

#### **Initiate:**

In the initiate section, children are drenched in experiences which provide them with language. This is the part of the lesson where the teacher initiates pupil interest and engagement. This may be through drama, pictures, listening to music/sounds, watching videos or using thesauruses to collect words etc. Children are required to 'chot' (chat and jot) with a partner, giving them a bank of ideas to draw upon when they come to write their sentence.

#### **Model:**

Here the teacher uses 'demonstration writing' (verbalising the thought process that goes into writing) as they write a model sentence, based around a given lense(s).

#### **Enable:**

Using their chotting from the initiate section, children have a go at writing their own sentences, through the selected lense(s).

The above process will be repeated 2-4 times in a lesson, dependent on age and cohort.

#### **Differentiation:**

This method encourages a mastery-style approach to the teaching of writing. All children access the same work and are kept together in the same 'writing moment'. Partner/group talk is an integral part of the process as well as 'magpieing' of strong ideas. Support is achieved largely through mixed ability pairings or the use of resources including writing frames, spelling banks or pre-prepared words and ideas to support the 'chotting' stage. Children who require support can also stick more closely to the teacher model, perhaps substituting a few words with their own choices.

Challenge is provided through the opportunities children are given to 'deepen the moment' (at this point in writing, children can choose their own lense to write through) and the expectation that these children will not closely follow the teacher model. Where applicable, children in KS2 are expected mark their sentence(s) with 'DTM.'

#### **Assessment**

At the beginning of each term, children complete a 'Cold Write' based on a film/book/picture. At the end of the term, children complete a 'Hot Write' based on the same stimulus, providing teachers with evidence of progress. The whole school writes from the same stimulus, meaning that clear progress can be seen throughout the year groups when we hold writing moderation meetings.

Independent writes at the end of each unit provide further evidence of progress and opportunities for assessment; these pieces of writing should be kept in a separate book which then follows the child up through the school, documenting their progress throughout the years.

Teachers assess writing on a half-termly basis using our school tracking system. Writing moderation meetings are held to discuss assessment of writing and ensure consistency of judgements.

#### **Targets**

Children are given individualised targets in writing. Please see our targets policy for further details.

#### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

The teaching of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is based on the National Curriculum (2014). Punctuation and Grammar should not be taught in a discrete lesson; it is essential that it is taught in context, and therefore is taught within our Writing lessons. This allows for continual, drip-feeding of grammar skills, meaning that key punctuation and grammar objectives keep being revisited throughout each unit.

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing, experimenting with description and style. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's creativity.

In Reception, spelling tests start in the Summer term. Years 1-6 have weekly spelling tests and discrete spelling lessons. We use 'The Spelling Shed' to support our planning and teaching.

### **Phonics**

We deliver daily discrete phonics lessons following Letters & Sounds, enabling children to decode effectively. Teachers use 'Monster Phonics', a systematic multi-sensory way to teach phonics, to support their planning. Whilst it is dependent on cohort, in general, Phase One is taught in Nursery/beginning of Reception, Phase Two, Three and Four in Reception, Phase Five in Year One and Phase Six in Year Two. Any additional phonics interventions required in Year 3 are led by the form teacher.

### **Assessment**

Please see our phonics assessment policy.

### **Reading**

From Reception up to Year 2, children have regular opportunities to read 1:1 with an adult with effective questioning to promote an in-depth understanding of the text. Questions progress from literal to inferential as the children move up through the school. In KS2, children are given greater ownership over their reading and are responsible for making sure they read each night. In KS1 and 2, children take home a banded book which is appropriate to their level of ability. Children progress through the scheme, and once they have completed it, have 'free choice' of age-appropriate reading material from the library.

In both KS1 and KS2, guided reading slots are timetabled at least 3 times a week. These should be used as the form tutor/English teacher sees appropriate and may include whole class guided reading, paired reading, silent reading, 1:1 reading with the teacher. One of the sessions should promote reading for pleasure where the class shares their class text and focuses on reading fluency. The main bulk of guided reading sessions should be focused on practising answering comprehension questions (Year 1 should aim to start this in Spring term). Similar to our approach to Writing, this should be a slow and in-depth process. Where possible, children should be exposed to the same text and questions; they should work in mixed ability pairs to answer the question, before the teacher provides a model answer exposing the 'reading brain'. Children should then self-assess their answer against the model answer, editing and adapting as appropriate.

Class texts are shared on a regular basis. These are seen as purely 'reading for pleasure' and it is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that these are a mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, e.g. 'World Book Day' - where children are immersed in storytelling, book discussions and the opportunity to dress up as a book character and share their favourite books. The 'Readathon' provides children with an incentive to read widely whilst raising money for charity. Children are allowed to use the library during selected playtimes and are encouraged to take books out; they have ownership over this with use of personal barcodes and scanners.

### **Assessment:**

Children have guided reading books where they record their work. They are formally assessed in reading using the NGRT three times a year. 7/8/10+ comprehensions are given in Year 3, 4 and 5 respectively to track pupils against the 11+ standards and expectations.

### **Handwriting**

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. As soon as the children are ready, they should be taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct tripod grip and develop a legible and joined handwriting style. The school follows Collins Treasure House, a comprehensive programme designed to support teachers and children through the stages of learning with a clear, fluent, legible and fast style of joined writing from the early stages to the top of the Primary phase. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching should be planned for and delivered.

When children's handwriting is fluent and cursive, they can achieve their pen licence and write in fountain pen. This can be earned when writing is consistently legible, neat and fluent across all subjects and acts as an incentive for children to always try their best with presentation. By the end of key stage 2, all children should be displaying an efficient, quick, neat and legible handwriting style that is effective in recording their ideas.

### **Contribution of English to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas**

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

#### **Mathematics**

English contributes significantly to the teaching of Mathematics at Sinclair House School. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 use mathematical stories and rhymes that rely on areas such as counting and sequencing.

Children in Key Stage 2 and 3 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the Mathematics involved. They evaluate, explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

#### **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

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

#### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship**

English contributes to the teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship. We encourage younger children 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 children research and debate topical problems and events. The children discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

#### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children 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 children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

#### **Teaching English to Children with Special Educational Needs**

At Sinclair House School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. 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 child's different needs. Assessment against the Independent Curriculum and National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child 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 child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through the graduated approach from the SENDCo will lead to the creation of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for children with special educational needs. The ILP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English.

To make English lessons inclusive, teachers need to anticipate what barriers to taking part and learning particular activities, lessons or a series of lessons may pose for pupils with particular SEN and/or disabilities. So in their planning, they consider ways of minimising or reducing those barriers so that all pupils can fully take part and learn. In some activities, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will be able to take part in the same way as their peers. In others, some modifications or adjustments will need to be made to include everyone. For some activities, a 'parallel' activity may be required for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, so that they can work towards the same lesson objectives as their peers, but in a different way – e.g. using an ICT-based means of recording information to compensate for difficulties with handwriting. Occasionally, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will have to work on different activities, or towards different objectives, from their peers.

Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;

- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids;
- using dictation software application on iPads;
- using Kindle application increases text size and colour backgrounds;
- using alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;
- using translators and amanuenses.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Short-term assessments that teachers include as part of every lesson help teachers to adjust their daily plans, recorded on whole class feedforward forms. Marking in English meets the requirements of our whole school marking policy.

We use our trackers to continuously assess the children against National Curriculum statements and individual targets are generated based on their ongoing assessment.

Children at Sinclair House School partake in the following assessments;

#### **Reception**

- Baseline Assessment

#### **KS1**

- Year 1 phonics screening Summer
- Year 2 phonics screening Summer for those who didn't pass Year 1
- Year 2 – GL CATS Assessment
- Year 1 & Year 2 PIE (Standardised Progress in English)
- Year 1 & 2 NGRT Reading Assessment (Autumn, Spring and Summer Term)

#### **KS2**

- GL CATS Assessment
- PIE (Standardised Progress in English)
- NGRT Reading Assessment (Autumn, Spring and Summer Term)
- 7,8,10+practise papers

When assessing pupils, teachers need to plan carefully to give pupils with SEN and/or disabilities every opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do, using alternative means where necessary to enable them to access the curriculum.

#### **GL Assessments:**

Sinclair House uses the GL Assessments: Progress in English (PiE) and New Group Reading Test (NGRT) as a levelling and tracking assessment. These are linked to the National Curriculum objectives and can be tracked and monitored throughout the pupil's time at Sinclair House. The GL CAT4 is tracked through each year group from Years 2-6. This can then be tracked from year to year and results are discussed between all teaching staff in formal review meetings with the Deputy and a summary document is produced each academic year.

#### **GL Assessment: New Group Reading Test (NGRT)**

The *NGRT* allows the assessment of reading and comprehension in a single test, whilst providing a wealth of diagnostic information. It provides a comprehensive overview of a pupil's reading and comprehension ability whilst identifying areas where they may be experiencing difficulties, to better inform target-setting. The overall scores broken down into separate scale scores, showing how sentence completion scores compare to those for comprehension, allowing for the implementation of better intervention strategies. Using Test 1 through to Test 4B we are able to obtain data for the age range within the school 5 years to 14 years whilst at the same time obtaining scores for pupils whose results are equivalent to those pupils up to the age of 16 years. The added advantage is that in addition to the standard age scores and age equivalent scores the National Curriculum levels for reading can also be calculated.

#### **GL Assessment: Progress in English (PiE)**

Progress in English (PiE) provides a continual assessment across the primary and lower secondary phases. It tests a pupil's reading and writing ability, and has become established as the standardised English assessment of choice in many schools.

The structure and content of the group tests allow for pupils to be tested bi-annually, used summatively at the end of the year. PiE comprises two forms. The Long Form includes open response comprehension questions and writing tasks. It is provided with detailed marking keys that have been rigorously moderated to guide teachers in the marking of their pupils'

extended written work. There is a Teacher's Guide for each test, which includes useful curriculum links and offers guidance on administering and interpreting results.

#### **Resources**

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All English classrooms have a range of age-appropriate support equipment and a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Access to the Internet is also available throughout the school, through the classroom 'smart board', individual computers in the ICT suite and class iPads. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the SLT who, along with the input of the English teaching team, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicate areas for further improvement. These may be turned into 'projects' for staff to work on. The SLT undertakes lesson observations of English teaching across the school.

Signed:



Mrs. Carlotta T.M. O'Sullivan  
Principal

Date: February 2021

**Review Date: September 2022**