



# English Policy 2014-17

School Mission:

## We will:-

- ❖ love our children.
- ❖ provide a safe and secure environment.
- ❖ make our school a Christian community.
- ❖ value and respect all members equally.
- ❖ provide a broad, balanced, rigorous and effective education supported by a rich, stimulating curriculum.
- ❖ treat all our children with kindness, patience and fairness.
- ❖ prepare our children to take their place , with confidence, in a constantly changing world.

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## 1. **ENGLISH MISSION STATEMENT**

At St. Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School we want to make learning vivid, real and enjoyable.

We are an inclusive learning community and children here will develop their ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Using a range of texts (written, spoken and media based)

our children use language to explore and express ideas, views and feelings which enhances self-confidence, wellbeing and future opportunities.

### **AIMS**

- ❖ To promote and nurture skills of speaking and listening so that our children can maximize learning opportunities whilst building the confidence, desire and ability to listen carefully as well as express their views and opinions orally.
- ❖ To provide a rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- ❖ To develop in our pupils a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives.
- ❖ To promote pleasure for reading in our school community.
- ❖ To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts.
- ❖ To teach children the craft of writing so that they develop confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences as well as enjoyment and creativity.
- ❖ To have an interest in words and their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- ❖ To teach the basics of phonics, spelling, handwriting and punctuation and thus facilitate creativity and increase automaticity.
- ❖ To ensure that this "learning bus" of basic skills stops at regular intervals as children progress through year groups to offer opportunities to revisit, consolidate and provide "catch up" opportunities for our children.
- ❖ To value and celebrate diversity in culture.

Our approach will be an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Our 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.

## **Statutory Requirements**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We are guided by the National Curriculum as well as other initiatives.

### **In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) children are given opportunities to:**

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication;
- take part in a daily phonics lesson.
- develop a love of story and build reading skills.

### **At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) children are given opportunities to:**

- learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say.
- begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm.
- use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

### **At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6) children are given opportunities to:**

- learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences;
- read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them;
- explore the use of language in texts;
- learn how the structure of language works.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

Reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision through analysis of data.

Governors monitor aspects of literacy that are linked to the Whole School Development Plan.

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

## **2. SUBJECT ORGANISATION**

### **A: Teaching and learning Strategies:**

The English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum Programmes of Study as guidance. The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum. Pupil provision is related to attainment, not age.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily. Teachers use a cross curricular base linked to class topics. A balance of speaking & listening, reading and writing will be included. Objectives from the Programmes of Study for Literacy are used. Visual literacy and ‘Quality texts’ are important components. Teachers cover grammar objectives as well as explicit lessons related to spelling. A balance of fiction, non-fiction and text type is used to ensure coverage across the age groups. Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting (shared/modelled reading and writing) and within ability led guided reading and writing groups. We are building in time within lessons for children to reflect on their marked work and independently respond to teacher prompts to help improve their writing.

For 4 days each week the younger children in school (from Reception to Year 2) work in Phased Groups to deliver Phonics and specific teaching and Support for Spelling. Guidance for how Support for Spelling relates to the new curriculum is used. Phonics Play materials are used for planning phonics; supported by a range of materials and the core scheme ORT “Floppy’s Phonics” along with Project X for ‘catch up’. The Letters and Sounds document is used to inform progression and coverage throughout each Phase. Children are assessed informally throughout the year (more regularly and formally for those children who need closer monitoring). Children are moved through the groups in response to these judgements and this movement is flexible according to need and ability. For those children in KS2 who are “stuck” and display specific spelling difficulties, we have a small “catch up” group led by a trained Teaching Assistant. In Foundation Stage, children work in phased groups on a daily basis; more able children in Nursery working with children in Reception. In Year 1 and Year 2 Phonics are taught daily; explicitly and implicitly.

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, the teaching of early reading and writing skills is supported by the documents Letters and Sounds and Jolly Phonics. A range of good quality structured texts which are phonetically decodable are also used to support the development of early skills. Our main reading scheme is Oxford Reading Tree supported by a range from other schemes that are used in the context of immersion in ‘real books’. Overall teaching and learning objectives are drawn from the Development Matters document and the National Curriculum.

Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives.

## **B: Inclusion**

Inclusion is a very high priority in our school. We aim for all children to participate in mainstream lessons.

In all classes children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do this through differentiated group work, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. For some sessions they are in mixed ability groups so they can learn from each other and support one another with the aim of achieving layered targets or individual targets.

We use teaching assistants to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

Pupil Premium and Special Needs children receive additional support as their needs necessitate. (See documentation)

Some specific interventions to target specific children are:

- Nurture groups
- Rapid Read
- Rapid Write
- Spell Well
- Speech and language programmes
- Nesy Programme

### 3. APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

The Four Strands of Speaking and Listening permeate the whole curriculum:

- Speaking;
- Listening;
- Group Discussion and Interaction;
- Role play / Drama

Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards.

Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

#### Some of the activities we use to support speaking and listening:

- **Questioning**:- we actively encourage children to raise and answer questions, use talk partners and express their opinions:
- **New vocabulary**: this is a high priority need for our children. We encourage them to use technical and new vocabulary within an atmosphere where mistakes in their use are accepted as steps on the way to learning:
- **Re-telling, role play and drama opportunities**:
- **Listening to and joining in** stories, poems, rhymes and songs:
- **Hot seating** to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character and the relationships of the character:
- **Talking about text** – our children are given many opportunities to talk about and discuss reading and writing:
- **Discussion / debate** – opportunities for this are within classrooms and can be related to current class focus or topical issues. In School Council children are provided with debate opportunities:
- **Reporting back and collaborative work** – after group work. Listening actively to one another so that the group can function:
- **Presentations** - Planning and carrying out presentations in various groupings with various audiences.

### 4. APPROACHES TO READING

#### Inside the Classroom:

**Structured early learning programme** - The teaching of early reading skills begins in Nursery. In Reception children are taught daily during shared and guided group sessions using structured and repetitive ‘big books’ and guided reading texts. Guided reading texts are drawn from a range of good quality schemes including Floppy’s Phonics, ORT and Rigby Red Giant. Books are levelled across the schemes for continuity and progression using ‘Book Bands’. The local Library Service helped us to do this. New reading books that are purchased also fit in to these book bands to ensure continuity in reading book progression. Jolly phonics is also used to support word recognition and word building skills. Daily storytelling is very important and our children are encouraged to re-enact stories through role play, use of puppets; and sharing of good quality texts. Song and rhyme are important elements in Nursery and Reception; children are given the opportunity to read with children in Years 3 and 4.

### **Shared Reading**

The teacher’s role is to make apparent what good readers do. During shared reading the children can access a text which may be challenging to them individually. Reading skills and strategies are clearly modelled, and discussion should help children to deeper understand the text. In shared reading all abilities are included in discussions by differentiated questions. We recognise that those children who have poor word reading skills may not always have poor comprehension skills- as illustrated in the model of reading.

Shared reading takes place within Literacy and also through the reading of information texts related to other curriculum areas. In Year 1 and 2 the children have opportunities for shared reading through particular real books which they share one between two: e.g. Shark in the Park in Year 1; Dogger and Amazing Grace in Year 2. From Y3 upwards classes have class novels.

### **Guided Reading**

In guided reading the class is divided into groups of approximately 6 children of similar reading ability. The text is selected at instructional level for the group and sessions reflect a specific teaching focus appropriate to the group. We use the same proforma for recording Guided Reading session notes across school which are levelled with guidelines on the Assessment Foci for reading.

## ***Suggested Structure of a Guided Reading Session***

### **Book Introduction**

This provides the context for the reading. The teacher activates children's prior knowledge and/or discuss the main themes of the text, including some prediction of the contents.

### **Strategy Check**

Just prior to independent reading the teacher guides the children to focus on and apply key strategies while reading independently.

### **Independent Reading**

Children read independently while the teacher gives focused attention to support, monitor and assess individuals as they read. This will assist in "building a picture" for assessment.

### **Returning to the Text**

The teacher asks questions, promotes discussion and interacts with the children to extend their thinking and develop their responses to the text.

### **Independent reading**

Children are given the opportunity and encouragement to read independently in order to build confidence, stamina and fluency, as well as develop their experience of a range of books and authors. We encourage reading with a wide base rather than progression through one scheme.

From Year 2 onwards there are timetabled opportunities for periods of silent reading several times a week to build reading stamina.

Children have access to a wide range of books including fiction and non-fiction via the school library, the Library Bus, Schools' Library Service, visits to Carlisle Library (for Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 4) and School Book Fairs.

We encourage children to select books they really want to read from the school library. Selecting from a choice of texts is an important part of developing independence. Selecting texts motivates readers and helps children to develop and discuss their reading preferences.

In Reception, KS1 and, where appropriate in KS2, children are given a reading book at an appropriate level to take home, together with a reading record. Children's individual reading is monitored by teachers, supported by teaching assistants who change books on a regular basis, usually daily in KS1. Parents are encouraged to communicate with school through the reading record. Where children do not read regularly at home teachers arrange for them to read individually at school to parent helpers, teaching assistants (this can be done as part of guided reading activities as well as other times) or older children. Rapid Read computer intervention is used from Year 2 – Year 6. It is interactive and monitors children's reading and comprehension at an individual level.

In Reception and KS1 Home reading record books are collected daily and checked. In KS2 Home reading record books are collected weekly and signed or stamped by a teacher or teaching assistant and note added, if appropriate, in order to monitor home/school reading. Reward stickers or other prizes are given for regular reading at home.

### **Peer Reading**

We encourage this within classes and between classes – older children pairing with younger ones. Nursery partner Year 3 children; Reception and Year 4 children; Year 1 and Year 5 children and Y2 and Y6 children.

### **Reading Eggs**

We subscribe to Reading Eggs. Each child in school has an individual log in details. Interactive activities designed to improve reading skills are at an appropriate level for the children after an initial assessment upon logging in. Children are awarded certificates which we share in Celebration Assembly.

### **Phonics**

*See separate Phonics Policy.*

### **Resources**

We use Book bands coding system. Our main Reading scheme is Oxford Reading Tree. We have developed a whole school 'book bank' locate on the corridor to enable free access to all levels of reading. By doing this we have enabled children to read appropriately levelled texts whichever class they are in without being limited by class based resources. We are constantly striving to improve our quality and choice of resources.

### **Staff**

For each morning of the week each class has support of a Teaching Assistant. Pupil Premium children are given support as appropriate to their needs and extra group support. (See Document of Provision).

Links to parents – including homework, home-school liaison / communication books are strengthened and checked by support staff and teaching staff.

### **Home Reading**

Children are encouraged to bring the books they are reading at home into school and wherever possible are encouraged to share what they are reading with others.

#### **We expect and encourage children to read regularly at home:**

- Reading is seen as an integral part of pupil homework.
- Children are provided with a folder and home/school reading record.
- Parents are encouraged to write in the home / school record and in doing so maintain a dialogue with the school, aimed at helping their child learn to read.
- Children in Key Stage Two are expected to make at least 3 entries a week in this record.
- School staff monitor these.
- Time is built in for children to change books as and when this is needed.
- Support is given in choice of books for children.
- Able older readers choose their own on most occasions.

## **7. APPROACHES TO WRITING**

We endeavour to create an environment that will provide both reading and writing. To encourage all pupils to learn to be confident writers we encourage our children to fulfil their creativity whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically.

We provide stimulating first hand experiences beyond the reading model:

- We capitalise on children's own experiences and add to these by taking the children on regular class visits linked to stimulating topics.
- We use drama, DVDs and role-play as starting points for writing.

Writing takes place within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. We are using the **Big Write** approach.

### **Two 'Whats' and two 'Hows'**

Roz Wilson identifies that there are two 'Whats' and 'Hows' that are central to the writing challenges that children face. The 'whats' are thoroughly covered by the literacy curriculum and children are exposed to many text types through their reading. The 'Hows' are critical to providing children with tools and strategies to enable them to become confident writers able to write in different genre and to a range of stimulus . The Big Write centres on proactively teaching children the strategies and steps they need to develop from embryonic writers into emerging writers and finally confident mature writers who can apply their skills.

#### **The Whats :**

- 1) Text type and characteristics
- 2) Purpose of writing/stimulus

#### **The Hows:**

- 1) Skills- grammar, handwriting, spelling and punctuation
- 2) The writing voice and use of VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation)

By proactively teaching VCOP this will equip the child with the understanding and skills to write increasingly sophisticated text.

Each teacher chooses how they wish to teach and deliver these four generic targets of Vocabulary , Connectives, Openers, Punctuation but they should be taught systematically and in lively fun ways .

### **Key VCOP Aspects for St. Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School:**

**Vocabulary** - children's vocabulary needs constantly needs to be extended and reinforced through patterning. 'Wow' words should be avidly collected - magpie from texts, from authors and from each other. Each class will build a collection of wow words. Staff encourage children to check on the meaning of those words.

Wow words are age related and the teacher's definition of ambitious is crucial -a wow word should not usually be used by a child of this age or stage of development prior to proactive teaching.

**Connectives** - Every class should have a display of possible connectives to support the children in their writing .

**Openers** - The use of openers helps children to construct interesting and complex sentences. Each class should have a range of opener words on display and make reference to them regularly in shared and guided writing.

**Punctuation** - The Big Write uses the punctuation pyramid, which explains simply to children the level of punctuation required to hit each national curriculum level. The punctuation pyramid is displayed in each classroom and referred to regularly in lessons. Children will have individual copies of the pyramids.

**All staff should have high expectations for all children's writing:**

All writing in all lessons should provide opportunity for children to apply their writing skills.

### **Basic Skills**

- Children will practice elements of basic skills each day.
- Each class will have regular phonic sessions.
- Handwriting will be a focus with high standards expected.

### **The Big Write session**

- All children from Year 2 should have opportunity to engage in a Big Write session most weeks. This will be on a Friday morning.
- Year 1 will build to this during the Spring Term.

**In KS2 the session should be long enough to allow:**

- talk and planning session,
- a short break if appropriate
- and then a timed writing session.

**Arrangements for the Big Write:**

**Resources** - All Big Write pieces of work will be on writing sheets or in specific Big Writing books. Special Big Write pens or pencils can be used.

**Environment –**

- A positive writing environment should be created for the children.
- The children should not talk to each other.
- Music such as Mozart can be played to enhance concentration.

**Ethos - Ros Wilson identifies 5 elements of a positive ethos:**

- 1) Creating a positive atmosphere
- 2) Creating a securing atmosphere
- 3) Creating an atmosphere where children feel they have some control
- 4) Creating an atmosphere within which children feel successful
- 5) Creating a framework for children to work towards known, achievable goals

**Teacher input:**

- During the Big Writing session the teacher may wish to model writing themselves.
- Steps to success will be agreed – sometimes with input from the children and at other times the focus from the teacher.
- The teacher should give children time targets.
- The teacher should give children reminders about the use of connectives, openers and punctuation where appropriate.

**Assessment of Writing:**

- Writing will be assessed using the Ros Wilson Big Write Criterion Scale. This Scale has recently been updated (January 2015) to reflect the changes to the curriculum.
- Levels of writing should be discussed with the children so that levelling becomes part of their normal vocabulary.
- Ros Wilson suggests a range of ways in which children can look analytically at work and improve it in a motivating and celebratory way- spot the difference, goal scores, uplevelling etc.

- We aim that Children's writing will be assessed each half term using the Criterion Scale. These assessments will form the basis for tracking children's progress through the year and will be kept in the 'purple' writing file. The assessments will be from across the genres.
- The writing assessments will be passed onto the next class teacher .
- All children should know what they need to do next in order to improve their writing. This may be as an individual target.
- Children should be able to talk about their writing with an adult.

### **Speaking and Listening**

- It is vital that children develop a 'writing voice' as well as their community voice. This is based on the principle that:  

'If a child can't say it, they can't write it'
- Roz Wilson and Pie Corbett stress the importance of 'patterning'- repeated use of language to enable children to then transfer this and use it in their writing.
- Children are always encouraged to orally articulate sentences before they write them down.
- They are also expected to read back their work orally to check it says what they think it says.

### **Handwriting**

- Children learn to form letters with 'flicks' in Foundation Stage.
- They are then taught to join their letters.
- Charles Cripps is the style we follow.
- Sassoon font is the preferred ICT font.

*See separate Handwriting Policy.*

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

- Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding.
- We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English teaching to ensure that all our children can access the curriculum and engage in a way that is appropriate for them.

## **8. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES**

- 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 & understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

- Standards expected in discreet Literacy lessons will be applied to other curriculum areas in that the level of children's literacy should be evident across all subject areas.

## 9. THE USE OF ICT

- ❖ Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in Literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate.
- ❖ Some of our interventions for Literacy are computer based. These include Rapid Write, Rapid Read and Nussy.
- ❖ As a whole school we subscribe to Reading Eggs. Each child has their own username and can access the site from home. Reading Eggs is a structured programme that tracks children's progress and delivers activities in a fun, interactive way.

## 10. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Record keeping and assessment in English is kept in line with the whole school policy on assessment.

**Foundation Stage:** Children are assessed against Development Matters statements leading into the Early Learning Goals for Communication, Language and Literacy that forms the Foundation Stage Profile. Progress in phonics is assessed on an on-going basis and continues into KS1.

Formative assessment, carried out by the class teacher, is an integral part of their role and is used on a daily/weekly basis to inform future planning. It involves identifying children's progress against teaching objectives, determining what a child has already achieved and moving them on to the next stage of learning. Marking is done in line with 'next steps': this helps the child to know how progress can be made.

Optional SATs and Teacher Assessment are used to assess children's levels termly for Years 3 – 5. Children's levels are entered into a whole school tracking system termly.

Formal, assessments are carried out at the end of Key stage 1 and 2 when the children complete their SATS testing. Optional SATS are undertaken in Y3/4/5. End of year NFER reading tests are carried out in Year 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and these are recorded year on year to build a clear picture of each child's reading performance and alert us to any problems. A Single Word Spelling Test is also used year on year (from Year 2 to Year 6) and this too is an indicator of performance and alerts attention to a lack of progress.

There are also teacher assessment records for reading, writing, speaking and listening, which are completed at the end of the summer term. These assessments are carried out in order to supply the new class teacher with information concerning the pupils in that class. . Children's levels are entered into a whole school tracking system.

Parents receive an annual written report ('next steps' for reading, writing, speaking and listening are indicated on children's end of year reports) and are invited to two formal parental interviews throughout the academic year. Regular reviews and discussions are held with children to discuss their targets to enable them to move to the next stage in their reading and writing. Verbal feedback is given frequently.

### **Phonics Screening Check in Year 1**

Throughout our teaching of synthetic phonics from Foundation Stage, we ensure that practise of decoding pseudo words is built into our phonics sessions. A mock Screening Check takes place in Year 1 during the spring term to identify any weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Parents are invited in to discuss their child's learning and progress in phonics and advice is given about how they can support this learning at home.

Those children who do not pass the Screening Check receive additional support during Year 2 to boost their phonic ability.

## **11. INCLUSION**

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

We regard ourselves as flexible and responsive to the special needs of all children. We endeavour to meet their individual needs while promoting and developing high expectations for all.

We make every effort to ensure that the literature we provide for our pupils is non-sexist and non-racist. We treat boys and girls as equals and provide positive role models.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

## **MOVEMENT**

### *School Specific Identity*

Because of Research based evidence and our own experience (over 20 years) of improvement in children's development and performance we include in our curriculum in Y3, 4, 5, 6 an average of 20 minutes of whole class 'Movement' per day. In other classes the provision is discrete. (Class programmes will vary)

*"For far too long, teachers have concentrated upon the psychological problems of the child, or the socio-economic environments, instead of asking the question: Does this child have the 'equipment' he needs to succeed at the educational level asked of him, and the methods imposed on him?"*

*A.E. Tansley Educationalist*

'Equipment' being the maturity of the central nervous system and the coordination of eyes (tracking for reading etc.), ears (auditory processing), limbs (for flow of postural movement and coordinated movement along with functioning motor planning), fingers, toes (for fine motor control and dexterity) and brain hemisphere function (for linked right - left hemisphere functioning and avoidance of 'mid line' developmental problems).

The programme we are following is based on a special 'movement' school programme to inhibit primitive reflexes devised by Sally Goddard Blythe of the INPP, Chester. We supplement this work with postural exercise, general movement, warm-ups and bi-lateral integration exercises. We developed our Movement programme with strong conviction of the benefits for our children and have assimilated other good practice. If children's learning equipment is developed then their self-confidence, happiness, interest and progress improves and standards rise.

## **12. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER:**

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- ❖ Monitoring and evaluating Literacy:-
  - pupil progress;
  - the quality of the Learning Environment;
- ❖ Taking the lead in policy development
- ❖ Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- ❖ Purchasing and organising resources
- ❖ Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments

## **13. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We value highly parental involvement in their child's development of literacy and promote a whole school partnership in the following ways:

- Reading record book
- Homework tasks to which we have a whole school approach
- Regular parents' evenings; sharing successes and targets
- Involvement in national/local events e.g. World Book Day
- Updates about new developments e.g. in newsletters

#### **14. CONCLUSION:**

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

Marking Policy

Assessment and Record Keeping

Responding to pupils' work / Feedback / Marking policy

Special Educational Needs Policy

ICT Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Other Literacy Policies that relate to and supplement the English Policy are:

Spelling and Phonics Policy

Handwriting Policy

Reading for Pleasure Policy

Whole School Grammar Scheme of Work

All the Literacy Policies were updated during the Autumn term 2014 to reflect the changes to the National Curriculum and are working documents.