



## **RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL LOCAL PROCEDURE FOR:**

### **English**

#### **INTENT**

This policy is linked to and derived from the overarching curriculum policy.

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the English taught at Radlett Lodge School and takes into account the special educational needs of the pupils whose diagnosis falls within the autistic spectrum. We believe that a broad and balanced English education is the entitlement of all children, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, class, aptitude, or disability.

The policy reflects the consensus of the whole teaching staff and implementation is the responsibility of all teaching staff.

#### **THE NATURE OF ENGLISH**

Pupils at Radlett Lodge have a broad range of learning disabilities in addition to their autism. The teaching approach is differentiated to reflect this wide range, to make English taught entirely relevant to the individual. Wherever possible, concrete, and visual materials are used.

At Radlett Lodge, we recognise and accept the importance of language and communication, that is essential in all aspects of the pupil's life and is interrelated to everything they do. All our pupils with autism, will present with impairments affect the area of communication, imagination, and social understanding as well as sensory processing. Developing communication skills is therefore seen as a priority for our pupils and as such is always a fundamental part of all teaching across all subjects.

#### **AIMS**

- To ensure that English is an enjoyable, fun experience for all pupils.
- To allow pupils to reach their potential in the most appropriate form for spontaneous communication, verbally or non-verbally.
- To teach pupils to work co-operatively together in turn-taking, socialisation, and joint attention activities.
- To enhance social and independent living skills.
- To develop and support the acquisition of Learning to Learn skills.
- To enable pupils to stay safe and manage risks.

- To help pupils in transference of practical English skills to other areas of daily living.
- To enable pupils to develop a positive attitude towards Language and Communication.
- To use language to receive and communicate meaning in a purposeful context.
- To read for information, understanding and for pleasure.
- To develop a functional method for communicating in writing.
- To develop pupil's ability to make choices.
- To produce a range of learning environments to generalise and maximise opportunities for language/communication.

## ENTITLEMENT

Key Stage 1 (Infants/Juniors): Years 1-4
Thematic Curriculum – Learning through play – Mixture of adult led, and child led learning – learning to learn curriculum
Key Stages 2,3,4 - Years 3 to 11
Thematic style curriculum with half termly topics covering National curriculum themes differentiated for our pupils: Stories and poems with familiar settings and those based on imaginary or fantasy worlds. Traditional folk and fairy stories. Non-Fiction texts including diaries, autobiographies, biographies, letters, reference and information materials, newspapers, magazines, articles, leaflets, brochures, and adverts. Stories and poems from a range of cultures Stories, plays and poems with patterned language.
Key Stage 5 (Post 16): Years 12 to 14
Preparation toward adulthood– accredited awards (ASDAN and AQA unit awards)

All pupils at Radlett Lodge are offered a full and balanced National Curriculum that is heavily differentiated to accommodate additional learning difficulties as well as the limited understanding in social communication and flexible thinking for pupils with autism.

Pupils work within their Key Stage age range and are sub-divided into groups according to their needs and functional ability. Work is differentiated according to the needs of the individual and is reflected in the pupils EHCP Outcomes.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The schemes of work alongside the 'Learning to Learn' curriculum form the basis of the content of the English curriculum. It is implemented in the following ways:

- Through carefully monitored short-term and long-term objectives.

- Through independent work when a pupil can practise a learnt skill.
- Through everyday real-life or engineered real-life practical situations which enable a pupil to generalise a concept.
- In 'integrated schemes of work' where pupils can extend all forms of their vocabulary and reading and writing skills.
- Teachers plan sequences of lessons over an appropriate time, which enable students to build on their learning and use a topic themed approach that stimulates the teachers and student's creativity, whilst allowing for a range of learners' abilities.

A four-year overview of planning is used within each pathway to ensure that there is progression throughout a child's time at school and that each phase builds on the previous one, whilst providing sufficient repetition to build depth of understanding.

All teachers are expected to adapt and modify the Schemes of Work to suit the individual interests of pupils, current events, and their own teaching style. This may mean that some of our pupils may be taught elements of the programmes of study at earlier or later stages in an age-appropriate way.

Teachers will choose activities and differentiate for groups/individuals depending on previous learning, and maturity.

Pupils working at Radlett Lodge stages 1 and 2 will be working on similar targets across all subjects that focus on engagement, interaction, early communication and learning to learn.

To support the acquisition of generalisable skills English is additionally delivered through:

- Educational visits in the local area
- cross-curricula topic work
- independent living skills
- everyday practical activities where reading and writing can be applied and generalised e.g., writing a shopping list, reading signage/instructions
- 1:1 teaching
- Use of a multi-sensory curriculum (including using the sensory room)
- Observation, exploration and experience of objects and events
- Visits from external experts/groups
- small group work and discussion

The schemes of work are based on the use of a shared text for each class group. This may be fiction or non-fiction and includes a variety of genres. Each key stage has set schemes to follow so that pupils cover a variety of texts in the school year and across their educational career.

Individual 'Work with Teacher' and 'Independent Work' (using the TEACCH approach) are also implemented within classes so that each child can work on specific targets within their own abilities.

### TRANS-DISCIPLINARY WORKING

The Speech and Language Therapist assesses, designs and implements individual communication objectives in close liaison with the class teachers, parents and other professionals, LSAs.

The Occupational Therapist may be included in assessment and the design of individual programmes for pupils whose oro-motor functioning is impaired. The OT may also be asked to contribute to advice regarding the posture of pupils when working at tables, specialist writing tools for those with fine motor difficulty or specialist resources for those with visual perceptual difficulties.

### COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

A limited ability to communicate is an inherent deficit in young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Teaching communication skills is therefore a fundamental aspect of all areas of the curriculum taught at Radlett Lodge and should underpin all teaching. All students should have a means to communicate and have opportunities throughout the day to do so, using their preferred method of communication.

Within English sessions, resources that encourage commenting skills as well as requesting skills should be made available for specific activities.

### SPOKEN LANGUAGE

At Radlett Lodge School, the greatest emphasis is placed on developing a means of communication whether it is through speech, signing, AAC or the use of symbols, photos, or objects of reference. Communication is a high priority across the curriculum and across all settings.

Teaching follows a developmental pattern from non-intentional communication to the social rules of conversation. Relevant programmes of study for speaking and listening are taught by a variety of approaches to maximise motivation and opportunities.

Effective teaching will be based upon:

- The use of language (to include augmentative communication) appropriate to the understanding of the pupil.
- The best models of spoken language via staff.
- Appropriate processing time being given for the pupil to respond.
- Fostering positive interaction, considering any constraints compounding the two-way process e.g., encouraging eye contact.

- Reinforcing speech with visual cues such as symbols, photos, or objects of reference.
- The use of real life and functional situations to provide meaningful context.
- Fostering and motivating environments.
- The use of a variety of approaches including the use of computers, iPad, music, singing, movement, and a multi-sensory input.

## PHONICS

All pupils in RLS primary classes will access phonics teaching of a government accredited synthetic phonics programme. The programme will be adapted to suit the needs of our students including using finger-spelling alongside the verbal pronunciation of phonemes. All pupils will be encouraged to develop grapheme / phoneme correspondence over time and to blend and segment phonetically regular words. All pupils will be encouraged to learn the correct letter formations to represent the phonemes as they are taught. At secondary level, pathway 1 students progress on to the Adventurers curriculum developing independence and life skills, pathway 2 students will continue to access phonics.

## READING (INCLUDING SPELLING)

All pupils at RLS are given access to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction reading material. These materials include carefully banded books from a range of appropriate reading schemes including Rhino Readers, Oxford Reading Tree, and Bug Club. Staff check for understanding of the text and monitor that a range of texts are read.

For pre-reading pupils, a range of activities build up picture, symbol and then word processing skills. Reading skills are taught through the school phonics scheme and through a whole word approach where appropriate, recognising that some pupils with autism find it difficult to learn to read through a phonics scheme and they may find it easier to sight read. However, teaching through phonics has several benefits such as developing imitation skills, strengthening awareness of letter sounds and developing oro-motor functioning. Both phonetic and sight-reading students will be supported to develop their reading and comprehension skills.

As reading skills emerge, a social sight vocabulary is focussed upon. A functional vocabulary of food items, names, places and day to day curriculum areas and activities is built up.

Effective teaching will be based upon:

- Creating meaningful, motivating and age-appropriate contexts being particularly aware of pupil's experiences and comprehension levels e.g., an awareness of hyperlexia, dyslexia and the use of personalised reading books.

- Giving opportunities to experience a range of symbols and texts for information and pleasure.
- Reinforcing the written word with symbols and photos and other communication aids.
- Presenting and referring to the written word across a range of contexts and environments to aid generalisation e.g., a pupil's name on a book, their timetable, and their peg etc.
- The use of real-life and functional situations to provide meaningful and motivating contexts e.g., labels or instructions in a cookery session, following a shopping list.

## WRITING

Developing an understanding of the importance of the written word as a means of communication is a complex task for pupils with autism. Copying work, transferring skills learnt and communicating in the form of the written word present problems for our pupils.

It is recognised at RLS that some of our pupils may never develop the skills necessary for writing while others may become competent at writing and spelling.

At RLS we endeavour to develop the use of writing skills for a purpose e.g., for practical situations such as compiling shopping lists, making a job rota, completing a form. Early writing activities are encouraged with attention paid to skills such as using a correct pencil grip. As pupils progress, they are taught correct letter formation, line placement with suitable spacing as well as grammatical rules.

At RLS, when teaching sentence construction, we follow the Colourful Semantics approach. This is a very visual strategy, recommended by Speech and Language therapists, to be effective for autistic students. It is often used in conjunction with Widget communication in print text and symbols to promote understanding of vocabulary and support word reading.

Colourful Semantics learning sequence

**Who**

**Who doing**

**Who doing what**

**Who doing what where**

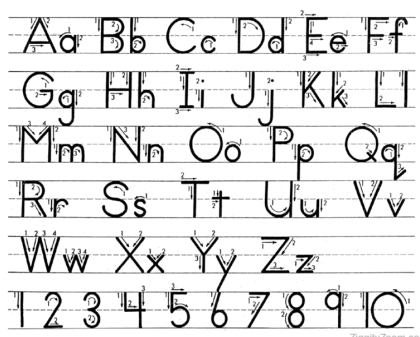
**Who doing what where when**

**what like / to who / whose**

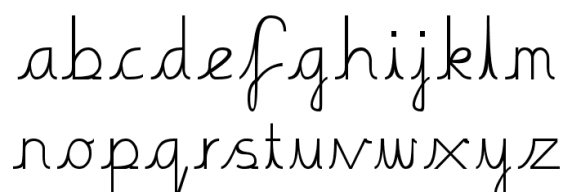
## HANDWRITING

Typically developing pupils find it difficult to learn cursive writing after learning to print individual letters. For pupils with autism this is even more difficult as they have difficulty applying skills already learnt to new concepts. However, after an in-house pilot study (run from January 2016) it has been decided that our students mostly fall into two categories – they are either too well-established in their current writing style to implement change or cursive is just too difficult for them to understand e.g. they don't recognise the individual letters with the lead in/out's. Therefore, the outcome is that as a school we will follow a more functional handwriting pattern will be followed (like 'Comic Sans' font) that supports print used in everyday life but that pupils who show an interest/ability in cursive writing to then be taught it.

Whole school handwriting format



Cursive font (used if necessary)



Effective teaching will be based upon:

- Creating meaningful, motivating and age-appropriate contexts.
- Providing a variety of experiences and equipment which allows pupils to explore making marks on paper, composing and recording work e.g. the use of corn flour, play dough, sand in which to make patterns and letters in addition to 'writing' implements such as chalk, pens, pencils and crayons.
- Cross-curricular opportunities being used to provide real purposes and audiences for writing.
- The best models of writing via staff.

## IMPACT

We know the English curriculum is effective if:

- In classroom observations and learning walks, pupils are actively engaged in their learning in a way that is most appropriate to their individual needs.
- Teachers are able to demonstrate the progress that students in their classes have made through discussion, formal reporting and progress meetings.
- There is evidence of appropriate interventions and approaches to support individual students to access the curriculum.
- All staff are confident talking about what students are learning and able to engage students with enthusiasm and creativity.

- Visitors comment on the learning 'buzz' around the school when they visit – noticing the joy in learning.
- Parents report that their students are happy to come to school and notice (and have been informed about) the steps of progress their students are making, big or small.
- Theory and practice matches – what is on paper being evident in classroom practice.
- Students remember and demonstrate what they have learnt over time and in some cases being able to explain this to others.
- Students achieve aspirational goals and are keen to take the next steps in their learning journey.

### ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH AT RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL

Individual objectives, including methodology and criteria for success are drawn up for each pupil by the class teacher, in conjunction with other professionals and support staff. All staff working with a pupil are responsible for recording and assessing these objectives at least weekly on a sheet a recording sheet. It is the class teacher's responsibility to monitor and amend these objectives when they are achieved. The development and progress of these objectives will be reported on at the pupil's EHCP Annual Review.

Evidence of English is available on work sheets and in work books, when appropriate and through the use of videos and photographs.

Pupils are first assessed at the end of a 12-week baseline period. From this point forward teachers are required to complete assessment 3 times per year (at the end of each term). They will then discuss progress with the Deputy Principal at termly progress meetings.

### RESOURCES

- Each class has a range of resources including a class computer, software and a set of class iPads.
- Real-life materials and equipment are used as resources to enable the pupil to transfer skills and generalise concepts.
- A small school library with a range of books including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays, scented books, touch/feel books, picture books, home-made books with symbols and photos and reading books corresponding to the colour reading bands.
- A selection of books and published resources from the Oxford Reading Scheme, Twinkl Phonics, Bug Club and Rhino Readers.
- Audio stories.
- A bank of communication resources e.g. dressing up clothes, games, puzzles
- A store of big books and resources for teaching.
- A store of story sacks with props and symbols to support stories.
- Speech and Language resources to supplement the curriculum and to support individual programmes.



The Radlett Lodge School Local Procedure for English should be read in conjunction with:

NAS POLICIES:

Quality of Life (QoL) Framework Policy  
Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy  
Supported Home Learning Policy  
Remote Learning Policy  
SEND Policy

RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL LOCAL PROCEDURES:

Curriculum  
Teaching and Learning  
Post 16 Education  
Careers  
Infant and Junior Curriculum  
Marking and Homework