



## SSMJ POLICY FOR

# Vocabulary

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*Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be.*

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“Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be,”

### **Vocabulary Policy September 2023**

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## **The purpose of studying vocabulary**

This policy has been designed in line with educational research, including the principles and recommendations contained within:

- Bringing Words to Life (Beck, et al., 2013)
- Closing the Vocabulary Gap (Quigley, 2018)
- EEF – Improving Literacy Series & 5 a Day Strategies
- Bridging the Word Gap at Transition (The Oxford Language Report, 2020)
- Why Closing the Word Gap Matters (The Oxford Language Report, 2018)
- Reading Framework (DFE July 2023)

### **Intent:**

At St Michael & St John's, we follow the National Curriculum 2014 and Early Years Foundation Stage 2023 (Prime Area). As such, the development of vocabulary and language is a priority as it underpins all learning. At our school, our intent is:

- For children to be able to speak fluently and confidently
- To broaden the working vocabulary and language comprehension of children to be in line with, or above, national averages/expectations
- To interact socially in informal and more formal situations
- To develop emotional literacy – to support expression of emotion and management of emotion
- To understand academic vocabulary in order to fully access the curriculum
- To use subject specific vocabulary to make progress in all subjects
- To develop a wonder and love of words and language

At St Michael & St John's, teachers:

- Enhance pupils' vocabulary naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.
- Teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than 1 meaning.
- Pay attention to increasing pupils' vocabulary, ranging from describing their immediate world and feelings to developing broader, deeper and richer vocabulary to discuss abstract concepts and a wider range of topics, and enhancing their knowledge about language as a whole.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

- With faith at the heart of our curriculum we recognise the importance that children are given the opportunity to develop vocabulary to support this. Key vocabulary is identified throughout Worship, RE (Driver words) and Catholic Socialist Teaching/PSHE sessions and displayed around the room. Great care is used to explain/give context to older words and associate it with current words used.

### **Implementation:**

Vocabulary is taught across the whole curriculum. The importance of vocabulary development is recognised within school and evident in classrooms and lessons.

Teachers identify the vocabulary that they are going to teach at the planning stage. These words are identified on the medium term plans. Some vocabulary needs to be pre-taught and some is taught as the children come across it during the topic. Teachers follow the teaching strategy below to introduce new vocabulary to their children. All vocabulary that is introduced is embedded within the topic and children then have the opportunity and are encouraged to use this subject specific vocabulary. Teachers focus on teaching words that are of high value, words that children will have the chance to use in their everyday lives as well as in that specific topic. Sometimes words that are taught have naturally arisen due to children's wider reading. Teachers will pick up on these words in order to continue to increase the children's vocabulary.

The criteria for identifying these high value tier 2 words can be taken from Beck et al Bringing Words to Life.

### **Criteria for identifying Tier 2 words**

- Importance and utility  
Words that are characteristic of written text and appear frequently across a variety of domains e.g. *categorise* ranges broadly as most things can be categorised. Similarly, *technique* is widely useful, such as someone's technique for remembering telephone numbers.
- Conceptual understanding  
Words for which students understand the general concept but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept e.g. children understand that things can be in the way, but *hindrance* is a sophisticated way to express that idea. Similarly, that there is enough of something is recognised by young children, but that there is *sufficient* is a more mature way of expressing the idea.
- Instructional potential  
Words that are more than one dimensional, and offer a variety of contexts and uses to explore e.g. *aid* doesn't mean much more than 'help'; in contrast, *establish* is similar to *start*, but it also means 'to put on a firm basis', as in to establish a business

or form of government or to establish a reputation. *Establish* also means 'to put beyond doubt' as in to establish a person's innocence.

An example of tier 2 vocabulary can be found in Appendix 3. This list is not absolute and may be amended or added to as it develops through practice.

### **Teaching strategy to introduce new vocabulary**

1. Say the word (focus is on pronunciation).
2. Clap the word (focus is on syllables).
3. Read the word (focus is on word reading).
4. Act the word (focus is on the definition).
5. Shout the word (focus is on pronunciation)..
6. Whisper the word (focus is on pronunciation)..
7. See the word in a sentence (some words will have more than one-word class, which needs explaining to children).
8. In some cases, children will orally produce a sentence with the word in and then write it down.

Other teaching strategies are then used to explore vocabulary further, including, but not restricted to: semantic mapping, shades of meaning, word of the day, exploring synonyms and antonyms, working out the meaning in context, exploring the etymology and morphology of the word.

In some instances, teachers will choose to focus on academic vocabulary, eg words that come up a lot through questions that children are asked, such as organise, identify, classify, purpose etc. A collection of these academic words can be found in appendix 2.

### **Impact**

The impact of teaching vocabulary in this way will ensure that new vocabulary is embedded in the children's language. By increasing a child's vocabulary, we are supporting the child in becoming an excellent reader, one that can read with understanding, and also supporting the child in becoming a fluent and coherent writer, one that can write with a variety of language that is fit for purpose and audience.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The teaching strategy identified above is used to teach new vocabulary that the teacher has planned for and is included on the medium term plan. By using this strategy, children learn new vocabulary by:

- Orally rehearsing it in different ways.
- Focussing on the correct pronunciation.
- Seeing the word and clapping syllables to aid with spelling.
- Putting the word into a sentence and understanding a word's word class and focussing on the definition.
- Exploring a word's etymology and morphology.

Children also get the opportunity to explore antonyms and synonyms to expand their vocabulary even further.

Teachers use dictionaries, thesauri and online resources to support the teaching of new vocabulary. The children also have access to some of these resources during lessons.

Across each classroom, vocabulary is celebrated, with subject specific vocabulary displayed around the classroom. The words that are displayed are referred to as part of the daily teaching process and are there as a reference point for our children.

### **Assessment:**

In EYFS children are assessed using the Early Learning Goals. Communication and language is a prime area and as such children cannot meet a 'Good Level of Development' without. Children are assessed using the Reception Baseline (RBA) on entry in Sept/Oct and then assessed regularly by staff throughout the year. Children's achievements are then tracked on an excel spread sheet and support the teachers final end of year judgement.

Children's attainment in vocabulary is assessed as part of the English assessments that teacher's make. Teachers use the Lancashire Learning and Progression Documents on an ongoing basis. These judgements then support the teacher in making a final English judgement for the end of the year in line with the Lancashire Key Learning document.

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Assessment is supported by use of the following strategies:

- Monitoring and observation;
- Differentiation;
- Quality questioning
- providing effective feedback
- Assessment

(See our teaching and Learning Policy for more detail.)

### **Planning and Resources:**

Teachers plan the vocabulary they are going to teach and identify this on medium term plans. Teachers use a range of resources to support the teaching of vocabulary, including online resources eg wordhippo, dictionaries and thesauri.

### **Organisation:**

Some vocabulary is pre-taught and some vocabulary is taught throughout the topic or unit of work.

### **Equal Opportunities:**

At SSMJ Primary school, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race, special educational need or disability. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure inclusion and also to maintain a positive ethos where children demonstrate affirming attitudes towards others. Support for specific individuals is well considered and planned for, with consideration given to how deeper learning and further challenge can be provided for and demonstrated by children who require further challenge.

### **Inclusion:**

All pupils are entitled to access the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs. To ensure inclusion, teachers use a range of strategies in line with the school's inclusion planning key. Independent tasks, as well as teaching, are also well-adapted to ensure full accessibility, as well as to provide appropriate challenge to different groups of learners. The school makes full use of additional adults who are deployed effectively to ensure that identified children are able to make progress in each curriculum area, according to their full potential.

### **The Role of the Subject Leader:**

The Subject Leader's responsibilities are:

- To ensure a high profile for vocabulary, with the support of all Subject Leaders.
- To ensure a full range of relevant and effective resources are available to enhance and support learning.
- To model the teaching of vocabulary
- To monitor for progression
- To monitor books and ensure that a wide variety of vocabulary is being used in all subjects.
- To monitor planning and oversee the teaching of vocabulary.

- To lead further improvement in and development of the subject as informed by effective subject overview
- To ensure that the teaching of vocabulary has a positive effect on all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have low attainment
- To ensure that approaches are informed by and in line with current identified good practice and pedagogy.

### **Online Safety**

In all subjects, as a school, we ensure children are provided with the opportunity to become the best they can be. This is through a progressive curriculum that inspires and innovates students to experience English in its greatest sense. At SSMJ, we understand Online Safety is paramount in an ever-changing world. We continue to ensure all children are safe in education and, following closely the Online Safety Policy, in English we ensure children are appropriate in their Conduct, Content, Contact and Commerce. This is also in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education Act.

### **Parents (Including Homework):**

We, at SSMJ, actively encourage the involvement of families and the wider community to help support the teaching of vocabulary. Parents and carers are involved with supporting their children with homework, including reading and writing tasks linked to all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers also discuss the importance of vocabulary development at parents' evenings and meet the teacher meetings.