

English

Policy and Guidelines

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1. Overview

The English policy is based upon the [National Curriculum in England's English Programs of Study for Key Stages 1 and 2](#). This policy outlines the adaption of the National Curriculum in England to meet the needs of the students of the Swiss School in Singapore.

2. Rationale

Mastery of language facilitates communication and expression of thought, beliefs, concepts and feelings. Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.

3. Goals and Aims

- That all children will be taught the necessary skills to use English effectively, confidently and accurately to the best of their ability.
- All children will feel confident reading and writing in a variety of contexts, for a range of purposes and for different audiences.
- All children will be encouraged to explore language experiences for the purposes of communication and enjoyment.

4. Inclusion

Our teaching policy is one of inclusion. However, a student arriving at the school may be withdrawn from the class to help develop the foundations of English language learning and they will be included back into the class as soon as possible.

5. Guidelines for Speaking and Listening

English speaking and listening skills are fundamental not only for the effectiveness of teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum, but also for the emotional development of the child.

Students of every age need to be taught to express themselves orally in an appropriate manner, adapting their style to the purpose and audience. This will occur during informal activities such as sharing their news and thoughts, and discussing their work; as well as in more formal presentations, debates and performances.

6. Guidelines for Reading

Reading is an essential skill for lifelong learning and has a direct effect upon progress in many curriculum areas. From Primary 1, students are taught the skills of reading and are encouraged to develop an enthusiastic, independent and reflective approach to reading. In Kindergarten, a love of stories, poems, nursery rhymes and information books is encouraged.

In all grades students will be taught reading skills:

- Through a balanced reading programme.
- Via a range of texts.
- In modelled, shared and guided reading situations.
- Through individual reading experiences.
- By gaining understanding of what words look like and how to decode them from our spelling and phonics programme.

The students will read from a wide range of texts, written by a variety of authors, for a variety of different purposes. This includes fiction, non-fiction, poetry, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, signs and symbols.

6.1 Shared and Modelled Reading

The teacher reading texts aloud demonstrates not only the importance of reading, but the skills necessary for successful reading through:

- Familiarisation of book language and structures.
- Introduction to new words and ideas.
- Role modelling good expression and intonation.
- Voicing questions and answers about the text, thereby developing the student's comprehension skills.

6.2 Guided Reading

Under the guidance of the teacher, a group of children read, talk and think their way purposefully through a text. In this context, the teacher will have many opportunities to teach specific objectives as they arise, thereby deepening the students' understanding of the text.

6.3 Reading Experiences

At all stages, children are given advice and guidance about the books they could choose to read. At school, children may be listened to when reading individually by a range of audiences including the teacher, support assistants and other students. The books they take home to read are suitable for their personal stage of development in reading and nurture a love of reading.

By supporting children through reading *with* them, parents can often be an invaluable help in this approach. We encourage the parents of our students to read with children at home, discussing the story or text with them, asking their child to make predictions about outcomes or events in the text. Parents and teachers are encouraged to make positive and encouraging comments about their child's reading.

7. Guidelines for Writing

Reading and writing are closely connected. When children learn to read and write, they learn how literary and factual texts are written for different purposes and different audiences.

7.1 Shared, Modelled and Guided Writing

In writing, children learn about the structure and grammar of written language as well as learning about handwriting and spelling.

The skills and strategies that are involved in learning to write include the ability to use processes such as drafting, editing, proofreading and publishing. Writing also involves the skills of using well-structured sentences, a varied vocabulary, accurate spelling and grammar as well as neat, legible handwriting.

Students, from the beginning of Primary 1, are taught the skills of writing and given opportunities to practice what they have learnt by writing a range of different texts. This includes non-fiction texts such as reports, letters and recounts; and fiction texts including narratives and poetry.

8. Guidelines for Spelling

Students are encouraged to become confident writers, using ambitious vocabulary that enhances the quality of their written work. Alongside this, accurate spelling is increasingly emphasised and the skills taught using a variety of complimentary strategies. At the Swiss School we teach using English spelling strategies.

An essential aspect of learning spelling is to have a secure, broad phonetic awareness and then understanding which letter and/or letters that relate to certain sounds is therefore a teaching priority. A structured, quality phonic and alphabet programme is included in the weekly timetable.

Fry Sight Words and High Frequency Words are taught in conjunction with phonic knowledge to enable students to spell words with irregular or uncommon spelling patterns.

The teacher will help students identify spelling errors to improve their spelling. In the Upper levels, a range of dictionaries are available in each classroom and students are taught and encouraged to use them.

Students therefore need to learn the following strategies in order to expand their knowledge of spelling:

- To recognise and learn common, high frequency words to build up a strong vocabulary.
- To develop an understanding of the structure of words and sound patterns in words.
- To use dictionaries and thesauruses to select, broaden and check their words.

As part of our spelling policy we are adopting the **Say/Write/Check** method of learning spellings. Students will:

- **Say** the word to notice the beginning, middle and end sounds
- **Write** the word, saying the sounds and/or letters aloud
- **Check** the structure of the word to ensure they have written it correctly. If not, then the process should be repeated or students can check the spelling with a dictionary or teacher.

9. Presentation of Student Work

- Use blue or black pens for writing or grey pencil for younger students.
- Crossings out are to be with one neat line – no correcting fluid (in general).
- Write the date and title in full.
- Underline the date and title with a ruler.
- Use sharp pencils (and crayons) for diagrams.
- Use a ruler for drawing straight lines.

10. Support Teaching in the English Department

10.1 Definition of English Support

Students who have just arrived in Singapore with limited exposure to the English language, and may require additional support in order to adapt and integrate smoothly into their learning environment. Adequate support is provided to such students so that they may achieve their potential across the curriculum.

10.2 Target Group

New students, weak or struggling learners

10.3 Level of English Support

10.3.1 Integrative

During the classroom lessons, assistant teachers would work closely with the new students to help them cope with their lessons.

10.3.2 Additional lessons

Apart from the integrative lessons, students will also receive two support lessons in addition to their main lessons.

These lessons are taught in smaller groups by an English Support Teacher to assist them in improving their English language skills.

These additional support will be ongoing for the duration of first year until the teacher decides that the student is ready to integrate into their regular English lessons. Sustained support, greater than one year, will be decided upon individually by the administration.

10.4 Procedure

10.4.1 Evaluation

During the first week of the school year, new students will be observed and assessed accordingly during their English lessons in the four core areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

After this assessment, the support teacher will then be able to identify the areas concerned and thus, determine the required level of support that each student will need in order to improve in their English language skills

10.4.2 Parent Information

The respective teacher will notify the parents by sending a letter containing the necessary information. Existing students: June and December.

English support will tentatively start in the beginning of the school year and subsequently (new students join from the moment of the confirmation through the parents). Parents will be informed regularly.

10.4.3 Further Evaluation

A further assessment will be carried out towards the end of the school year to ensure that the student is developing the required language skills and knowledge according to the individual's abilities. However, the English Support students will not receive a mark for English in the report card during their first year at SSiS. The students will receive a Learning Report from their respective teachers, which will provide an overview of their progress in English.

11. Assessment

The teacher will give both formative and summative assessments.

11.1 Assessment for learning (AfL) - Formative Assessment

Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

On-going teacher assessment of the student's oral skills will occur to identify areas requiring additional support and practice.

11.1.1 Kindergarten

English is taught through topics, based around the ones they learn in their German classes. The students get chances to play, explore, engage in art and science activities as well as listen to stories, sing songs and share their ideas and experiences. They are assessed on their speaking and listening skills including their general comprehension and ability to communicate orally.

11.1.2 Primary 1 to Primary 6

Students will receive comments on their reading and written work. They will receive personal targets for further improvement and future development.

Regular spelling tests will aid identification of the words the student needs to practice further.

In P4 to P6 Dictation tests will aid in developing listening skills, phonetic awareness and application of spelling words.

The teacher will regularly listen to each student read which will identify fluency and accuracy of reading and determine the level of book the student is encouraged to read. Alongside this, regular oral and written reading comprehensions will be used to identify the student's level of understanding.

For parents of students in KG, P1 and 2, feedback of their child's progress, attitude and attainment will be given during the parent consultation by the class teacher as well as a written report at the end the year. The English teacher will provide information for the class teacher to share. If the parents have any further queries about their child's progress and attainment in English, then they are encouraged to make an appointment with the relevant teacher(s) to discuss them directly. Any

concerns that the English teacher has will be addressed as they arise and parents will be approached if required at any stage during the year.

Students in Primary 3, 4, 5 and 6 will receive graded written tests at the end of a unit of work. This will occur as a reading comprehension and written task. The result of this, alongside the teacher's assessment level of the student's oral skills will form the basis of the twice yearly reported grade to parents.

11.2 Assessment of Learning (AoL) - Summative Assessment

Assessment of learning is any assessment that summarises where learners are at a given point in time. It provides an overview of what students have learnt in terms of both attainment and achievement.

11.3 Assessment Levels - Speaking and Listening

11.3.1 Kindergarten

Students talk about things that interest them. They listen to simple one step instructions and follow them accurately. They listen to each other politely and other students are able to understand what they are talking about. Sentences are either simple with few details, or overly elaborate and may not be totally related to the topic being discussed.

11.3.2 Primary 1

Students talk about matters of immediate interest with growing confidence. Their speech is becoming clearer with some correct pronunciation and tenses are used with increasing accuracy. They listen to others and usually respond appropriately. They convey simple meanings to a range of listeners, speaking audibly, and begin to extend their ideas or accounts by providing some detail.

11.3.3 Primary 2

Students begin to show confidence in talking and listening, particularly where the topics interest them. On occasions, they show awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail. In developing and explaining their ideas they speak clearly and use a growing vocabulary. They usually listen carefully and respond with increasing appropriateness to what others say. They are beginning to be aware that in some situations a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice are used.

11.3.4 Primary 3

Students talk and listen confidently in different contexts, exploring and communicating ideas. In discussion, they show understanding of the main points. Through relevant comments and questions, they show they have listened carefully. They begin to adapt what they say to the needs of the listener, varying the use of vocabulary and the level of detail. They are beginning to be aware of standard English and when it is used.

11.3.5 Primary 4

Students talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. Their talk is adapted to the purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. They use appropriately some of the features of standard English vocabulary and grammar. They begin to use standard English in formal and informal situations.

11.3.6 Primary 5

Students talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts, including some that are of a formal nature. Their talk engages the interest of the listener as they begin to vary their expression and vocabulary. In discussion, they pay close attention to what others say, ask questions to develop ideas and make contributions that take account of others' views. They begin to use standard English in formal and informal situations.

11.3.7 Primary 6

Students adapt their talk to the demands of different contexts with increasing confidence. Their talk engages the interest of the listener through the variety of its vocabulary and expression. Students take an active part in discussion, showing understanding of ideas and sensitivity to others. They are usually fluent in their use of standard English in formal and informal situations.

11.4 Assessment Levels - Reading

11.4.1 Primary 1

Students recognise familiar words in simple texts including the first 40 high frequency words. They use their knowledge of letters and sound-symbol relationships in order to read words and to establish meaning when reading aloud. In these activities they sometimes require support. They express their response to poems, stories and non-fiction by identifying aspects they like.

11.4.2 Primary 2

Students' reading of simple texts shows understanding and is increasingly accurate. They express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction texts. They use more than one strategy, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. They have a sight vocabulary of the first 100 high frequency words, all the initial sounds including sh, ch, th, and understand the difference between the English and German pronunciation, especially of the vowels and v and w, j and y. They use this knowledge to decode new phonetic words by sounding them out. Students understand rhyming patterns and use this to build up their knowledge of words.

11.4.3 Primary 3

Students read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They read independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.

11.4.4 Primary 4

In responding to a range of texts, Students show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.

11.4.5 Primary 5

Students show understanding of a range of texts, selecting essential points and using inference and deduction where appropriate. In their responses, they identify key features, themes and characters and select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views. They retrieve and collate information from a range of sources.

11.4.6 Primary 6

In reading and discussing a range of texts, Students identify different layers of meaning and comment on their significance and effect. They give personal responses to literary texts, referring to aspects of language, structure and themes in justifying their views. They summarise a range of information from different sources.

11.5 Assessment Levels - Writing

11.5.1 Primary 1

Students will know the letter names and sounds of the English alphabet, with special consideration given to the vowel sounds as well as v and w, j and y. They will commence blending of the sounds to write CVC words and understand rhyming patterns which they will then be able to use to spell word families e.g. bat, cat, fat, sat. They will know the first 40 high frequency words and write them with increasing accuracy. Students' writing communicates meaning through simple words and phrases.

11.5.2 Primary 2

Students' writing communicates meaning in both narrative and non-narrative forms, using appropriate simple vocabulary, and showing some awareness of the reader. Ideas are developed in a sequence of sentences, sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops. Simple, monosyllabic words are usually spelt correctly, and where there are inaccuracies the alternative is phonetically plausible. The spelling of the first 100 high frequency words is correct and all the initial sounds including sh,ch,th,st.

11.5.3 Primary 3

The main features of different forms of writing are beginning to be used appropriately. Sequences of sentences extend ideas logically with relevant time connectives: (then, after that, next) and words are chosen for variety and interest. Simple and basic compound sentences (and, but, so) are used. Punctuation to mark sentences - full stops, capital letters and question marks - is used accurately. The simple present tense and past tense are recognised and students are aware of the -ed word ending and how to write simple plurals. Spelling of the first 100 high frequency words is accurate and the students use their basic phonetic knowledge to spell monosyllabic words.

11.5.4 Primary 4

Students' writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct especially the simple past tense and verb agreement. Irregular past tense words are learnt. Students choose words carefully so they are varied and interesting and can use a thesaurus to aid them. Simple and compound sentences are used with a variety of connectives and conjunctions. All high frequency words are learnt and used with increasing accuracy. Phoneme blends (e.g. ee,oo,oi) are used and the role of magic 'e' is understood.

11.5.5 Primary 5

Students' writing in a range of forms is lively and thoughtful. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose of the reader. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect. Students are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning. Spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to

regular patterns, is generally accurate. This includes the understanding of root words and the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Students are aware of homophones and usually select the correct spelling. They understand that there is more than one way to write a certain sound, e.g. 'ou' as in out and 'ow' as in flower. Full stops, capital letters and question marks and commas are consistently used correctly.

11.5.6 Primary 6

Students' writing is varied and interesting, conveying meaning clearly in a range of forms for different readers, using a more formal style where appropriate. Vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely. Simple and complex sentences are organised into paragraphs. Words with complex regular patterns (tion, cious) are usually spelt correctly and irregular words, especially irregular past tense verbs are usually accurate. A range of punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and speech marks, is usually used accurately.

12. Homework

Homework is set to support the learning in the classroom.

Primary 1

- 10 minutes over the week
- Reading and sound/word activities

Primary 2

- 20 minutes over the week
- Writing and reading activities

Primary 3

- 30 minutes over the week
- Writing and reading activities

Primary 4

- 40 minutes over the week
- Writing and reading activities reinforced by an English textbook and workbook
- All incomplete classwork

Primary 5

- 50 minutes over the week
- Writing and reading activities reinforced by an English textbook and workbook
- All incomplete classwork

Primary 6

- 60 minutes over the week
- Writing and reading activities reinforced by an English textbook and workbook
- All incomplete classwork

Failure to hand in homework or poorly completed work will result in an information being sent to the class teacher.

Persistent problems will be addressed by direct contact from the teachers to the parents.