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English Curriculum Policy

St. Mary's Catholic Academy.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy. It has been written in light of our school priority of improving writing throughout school, embedding a love of reading and enhancing handwriting skills.

At Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, we provide all children with the lifelong skills to develop a love of language by ensuring each child is confident and competent regardless of gender, ethnicity or social/economic background. Our aim is to ensure that all staff teach English in the most effective way possible through the implementation of the English programmes of Study in the National Curriculum. This English policy is further supported by:

- Teachers ongoing long, medium and short-term planning
- Uniquely mapped curriculum, drawing on strengths of high-quality literature.
- The use of phonics bug to teach synthetic phonics to promote early reading and writing
- Resources to support the delivery of grammar, punctuation and spellings

We will achieve this by ensuring all pupils:

- Develop understanding of the spoken word and their capacity to express themselves effectively in a variety of speaking and listening activities, matching style and response to audience and purpose
- Develop key skills in all areas of language including speech (Use of Talk Boost to promote this in Early Years)
- To ensure that all pupils use discussion in order to learn, using good spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Write in ways appropriate to an intended audience and/or for the intended purpose
- Be able to use and transfer the skills that they are learning, in order to read and write competently throughout the range of subjects taught in school by using a cross curricular approach where themes are linked to R.E. or Foundation subjects (history, geography or science)
- Produce well-presented work using good, legible handwriting (following Martin Harvey whole school handwriting scheme – please see handwriting policy on website) including the use of current standards of technology and take pride in the presentation of all of their work.
- Develop reading skills so that they become proficient, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and responsive to a variety of texts.



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- Develop reading skills so that they can analyse and extract meaning from increasingly challenging texts.
- Read a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction with confidence, fluency, enjoyment and understanding to enable them to develop preferences and make informed choices.

Aims/Objectives

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

Our aims are:

- To recognise the social and educational importance of standard English but also respect the linguistic background of every child.
- To provide a wide range of learning opportunities to further the development of speaking and listening skills.
- To provide a wide range of cross curricular learning opportunities, both within and outside the English lesson, to further the development of reading and writing skills across the school.
- To include a full range of teaching styles and manage various groupings of children.
- To work in a positive, challenging environment where ideas are shared and all contributions are valued and used as learning opportunities.
- For pupils to agree and review attainment levels and personal learning targets with their teacher and parents, (at Parent/Pupil Conference, Parent consultations and Structured Conversations) to promote partnership and progress in attainment.
- To regularly assess progress towards learning objectives in order to facilitate target setting and enhance levels of achievement.

Early Years

English in Early Years is based upon the Foundation Stage profile strand of Communication, Language and Literacy. Communication and Language is a 'prime' area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Literacy, a specific area (reading and writing) requires effective communication. Communication, Language and Literacy depend on being competent in a number of key skills, together with having the confidence, opportunity and encouragement, support and disposition to use them.

The area of communication and language encompasses speaking, listening and understanding. This needs to be evidenced and promoted in different situations and for different purposes for example during role play, during snack times, game play and carpet time in class. Children should also have access to a wide range of exciting stories that develop vocabulary and imagination, the opportunity to retell stories independently, the skills to read simple texts as well as the environment to write for a variety of purposes.



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To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in communication, language and literacy, practitioners will give particular attention to:

- Providing opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other.
- Incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning
- Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction texts.
- Giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs, rhymes, role play and practical experiences.
- Planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books.
- Providing opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script.
- Providing time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one to one and in small groups, with awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children for whom English is an additional language.

Phonics

Phonics is delivered in Class 1 and Class 2 (FS, YR1 & YR2) on a daily basis for up to thirty minutes. The Pearson's Phonics Bug programme is followed to ensure consistent teaching of synthetic phonics with jolly phonic actions used to secure the children's knowledge of sounds in a kinaesthetic approach. (Please see phonics progression for further information on the teaching and progression in phonics). These daily lessons develop skills such as blending and segmenting in preparation for early reading and writing.

Grammar

Weekly grammar, spelling and punctuation lessons are delivered and then followed up by children applying the skills they have learnt to their independent writing. All classes will have extra based sessions for extended writing tasks, quiet reading/story time, listening skills and discussion, drama activities, handwriting skills and spelling investigation.



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Reading

We aim to promote and encourage a love of reading for all children throughout the school. Striving to ensure a balanced mix of approaches to reading so that our pupils achieve the skills required, a positive attitude, confidence as well as interest and a life-long love of literature. Teachers read the spine books recommended by Pie Corbett, to ensure children are enriched with high quality vocabulary. Each class also has a class novel that they read to the children to not only engage their imagination but to also immerse children into literature and to give them the opportunity to predict and infer what could happen next. Children in KS2 have reading challenges where they are inspired to read for pleasure and to develop a rich breadth of literature and genres. As a school we assess children using a benchmark assessment to determine whether children are ready for the next reading band in line with their age and understanding.

Children follow a whole school reading scheme which include 'The Oxford Reading Tree', 'Phonics Bug' and 'Collins' books which correspond to their phonic understanding. Reading books are changed in EYFS/KS1 up to three times a week and parents are encouraged to listen/share reading with their children on a regular basis to support their development at home. We believe reading to children on a regular basis sets the children a good example, models good reading skills and introduces high quality writing to them. Each year group will hold a selection of graded reading material for those who require a structured approach. All classrooms will have a collection of books selected for suitability of their age group.

Guided reading

Guided reading takes place in addition to English lessons throughout the school. Teachers work with a focused group each day to improve the quality of reading and comprehension ensuring that each group is given at least one teacher or teaching assistant directed sessions per week. Groups who are not working independently are given tasks appropriate to their level. Tasks may include activities relating to texts already read or preparation for texts to be studied.

Teacher led Guided reading is a whole class approach to reading with the focus on key skills for reading:

- Literal skills (answers can be directly lifted from the text).
- Deductive skills (the text does not directly give the answer but we can work out the answer from the information given).
- Inferential skills (the text does not directly tell us the answer but we can work things out by considering the hints and clues in the text in light of our own knowledge and experience).
- Evaluative skills (giving personal opinions, often about whole texts, or successes of author in creating mood, character).



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Handwriting

A consistently high standard of presentation and handwriting is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. A whole school scheme has been implemented fostering terminology such as BBC (Bottom in the back of your chair) and TNT (tummy near table). Handwriting is displayed in all classrooms with key vocabulary to demonstrate to children the progression of their handwriting as well as understanding different handwriting 'families' such as the coat hangers. (Please see our handwriting policy on our website for further information). Cursive writing is encouraged and taught at the end of Year 2 / Early year 3. Letter formation videos have also been placed on our school website to enable parents to assist correct letter formation at home. (Please find out letter formation QR code scanner for more information – videos can be found in the video resource centre)

Writing

Throughout the school we have a uniquely mapped curriculum, using high quality texts and literature to inspire children (which includes the teaching of nonfiction texts as well as fiction and poetry) to help our children in many ways:

- To help make sense of and understand the world.
- To express themselves.
- To help develop speaking and listening skills.
- To develop their vocabulary.
- To develop writing.
- To become life long, confident story tellers.

The children listen to stories and texts, imitate these through actions and key vocabulary, innovate them thinking about clear grammar and vocabulary points and then invent their own version of a known story. Help is given to the children at every stage, allowing children to apply what they have learned into their writing. Story maps are created as a visual aid to assist the children in retelling. (Please visit our video resource centre for examples in our FS1 and Year 1 class of children retelling Handa's surprise)

Some Talk for writing tools are used and developed through the school as it is a powerful way of enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading, analysing and then writing their own version. It builds on three stages as mentioned above –

1. Imitation – learn a text and the language (key rich vocabulary) Retell this orally
2. Innovation – adapt a model text with ideas of their own
3. Invention – Children create their own text using the language and skills that the model text taught them building in extra grammar and punctuation that has been taught throughout.

The writing process involves pupils being immersed in a text or genre; discussing ideas and vocabulary; teachers modelling and analysing good examples; pupils talking through their ideas with



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their partners and (where appropriate) verbally rehearsing their sentences; pupils are encouraged to read through and check their work, both independently and with a partner and finally Teachers demonstrate how to edit and redraft work, giving pupils the time to do the same as part of the natural process of writing.

Extended writing sessions both in literacy, Come & See and cross curricular subjects are embedded within our timetable to ensure children can apply the skills taught in literacy to the wider curriculum. This not only enriches their knowledge and understanding but ensures children can apply their skills to a range of topics and themes.

Writing is assessed on a termly basis looking at the 'hot tasks' children have produced through the teaching of English. This will be tracked using our whole school tracking system of 'insight'.

Spelling

We aim to develop our pupil's ability to become confident writers, with the self-esteem necessary to believe in themselves as competent writers. Spellings are taught progressively, using appropriate teaching methods for different stages of individuals basic skills. The systematic teaching of phonics in EYFS and KS1 encourages children to begin to see spelling patterns and phonic families. This progresses further in KS1 and KS2 where spelling strategies and rules are taught.

In EYFS and Year 1, spelling is taught alongside the learning of graphemes and digraphs. Children initially master spelling their names before moving on to applying the sounds they have learned in their own independent writing e.g. map, cat, dog. Emphasis is placed on children 'having a go' at applying the sounds that they have learned rather than achieving the correct spelling. There is also a great focus on children learning how to spell high frequency irregular words such as; the, so and are.

From year 2 onwards all children have weekly spelling lessons, following the No Nonsense Spelling Scheme. They focus on a particular spelling pattern, learning the rules around the pattern, analysing words and their meaning, using and applying their understanding, and then practicing and rehearsing spelling independently. Words banks are used across the curriculum to support children to use adventurous and technical vocabulary in their writing. Children also have access to spelling support displays in the classroom on the working literacy walls.

SEND and equal opportunities

Our school aims to provide children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities with a curriculum that allows for appropriate differentiation. This may be by outcome, task, resources, support, interest or ability groupings as appropriate. Opportunities will be planned for children with SEND to work on their targets for reading, writing, spelling and handwriting within the English session. These targets will be reviewed regularly through mentoring meetings and AFA guidance. Intervention groups include the use of talk boost, language steps, ECAT, as well as 1:1.



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Children with EAL

We ensure that children who have English as a second language are given extra support, as necessary, in class from teachers or peers, to enable them to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the English Programmes of Study.

Parental involvement

At St. Mary's we recognise that parental involvement is vital to the development of each child's English. We acknowledge that a strong home/school partnership actively promotes children's progress and achievement.

Reading at home is vital – initially with an adult and then increasingly independent. Reading at home with parents, grandparents, brothers/sisters should be seen as an enjoyable activity which fosters a love of books. Reading and the enjoyment of reading is fundamental to our philosophy and the key to success in school.

EYFS, KS1 and KS2 each child has a reading profile on dojo to enable parents/carers to work with school and communicate the progress that is being made.

In KS1 and KS2, there is an expectation that children will read at home each evening, either from the school reading scheme or their own choice of reading book if they have progressed beyond the school scheme.

Homework is also an important part of developing children's quality writing in order to meet the expectations described in this policy. (Please refer to the homework policy and remote education policy for more details) Policy updated December 2020



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