St Mary's
Catholic Primary School





English Policy

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ENGLISH POLICY

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Mission Statement

To love God above all things, by learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence, worthy of our God-given gifts.

1. Rationale

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we understand that English is both a subject in its own right and a medium for teaching the wider curriculum. 'Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects' (pg.11, National Curriculum). With this in mind, we strive to develop the necessary spoken language, reading, and writing skills so that children express themselves creatively and imaginatively, and communicate with others effectively. We want to ensure that all children are equipped with the essential tools to become enthusiastic and independent learners whilst at St Mary's and beyond.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Our English Curriculum develops pupils' ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and across a wide range of experiences and text types. Pupils are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Pupils use their knowledge, skills and understanding of the Spoken Language across a range of situations.

2.2 Our objectives in the teaching of English are:

- to provide a well-planned and resourced curriculum
- to ensure that objectives set for pupils are clear, realistic and obtainable; and in line with the New Curriculum of 2014
- to provide purposeful and real experiences to develop English skills;
- to encourage the use of discussion, debate and drama, to explore ideas;
- to enable pupils to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage pupils to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to be role-models for pupils on how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands, taking into account the correct use of Standard English;
- to develop pupils' love of reading, encouraging pupils to read for enjoyment
- to help pupils to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to teach pupils to adapt their writing depending upon, context, purpose and audience
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or nonfiction;

- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work;
- to enable pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

3. Teaching and Learning Style

3.1 At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop all pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding of the English Curriculum. Daily lessons include a focused spelling, grammar or punctuation activity, which leads into a whole-class reading or writing focus. Children are exposed to high-quality model texts and are encouraged to discuss, interrogate and embed these in their own work. Pupils are encouraged to apply the skills of English across all areas of the curriculum.

3.2 In EYFS and Key Stage 1 phonics is given a dedicated daily time outside this hour and is delivered through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised,* which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. Additional keep-up support lessons are given to pupils, who are identified as needing further support, taught by a fully trained adult. These lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning. Additionally, if any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

3.3. Guided Reading is taught as a separate session outside of the English lesson, beginning in EYFS to Year 6, in small daily groups. Guided Reading is highly-valued and children practise reading skills, comprehension skills and group discussion. The questioning and discussions that take place during the course of these sessions promote, strengthen and lead to the acquisition of higher order reading skills. Children are also taught the metacognition of reading and a range of strategies that enable them to be confident, comprehensive readers. This is further developed in a weekly whole-class reading lesson.

3.4 In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all pupils by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies: differentiated group work; beginning at the same starting point before encouraging children to develop and extend their ideas. Teaching assistants also work alongside the teacher to support pupils' learning and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

4. English Curriculum Planning

4.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the 2014 English National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

4.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum for English details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in English that we teach to each year.

4.3 Our medium-term plans consist of English Overviews and link closely to each year groups' theme. Each term consists of a range of narrative, non-fiction and poetry genres, which allow children to be exposed to a range of texts and write for many different purposes. Key objectives and texts are indicated on these overviews as well as suggested texts for whole-class reading and cross-curricular learning.

4.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This plan contains the focus for Spelling, Handwriting, Grammar and Punctuation, daily reading and writing outcomes and Exciting Writing. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught, including key questioning. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. These plans are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and English leader on a weekly basis.

4.5 Planning for English builds upon the pupils' prior learning. All children of all abilities are given the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, and there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

5. The Foundation Stage

5.1 In the Foundation Stage, we relate the English aspects of the pupils' work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

6. Spoken Language

Children at St Mary's are taught to speak clearly, fluently and confidently to a range of audiences. All adults in school model Standard English and have high expectations when conversing with children so that pronunciation is accurate. All children are given regular opportunities to participate in a range of discussions and performances such as, assemblies, masses, poetry performances and presentations to parents and other year groups. This helps children to develop their listening skills, give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives whilst also asking and responding to questions posed. At St Mary's, we strive to give children the tools to become eloquent individuals, who can confidently express their ideas and opinions.

7. Reading

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the reading curriculum ensures that pupils' vocabulary and language is developed throughout all key stages, so that they learn to read fluently and with

understanding. They are immersed in high-quality texts and we aim to foster, in all our children, a love of books so that they become readers for life.

We know that reading is a powerful tool of learning. It facilitates independence in the quest for knowledge and allows the reader to share experiences, which would otherwise not be encountered. It is a necessary requirement for communication in society. We recognise the need to raise pupils' attainment in reading.

The school uses a variety of reading books to enhance the teaching of reading:

- Books matched to children's phonic knowledge from *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*
- Oxford Reading Tree
- Range of interesting and stimulating texts

The school aims to help children to:-

- gain mastery of the basic mechanical skills of reading and to develop this, through the use of progressively more challenging texts, so that each child achieves the highest level of reading attainment;
- develop and use appropriately, the higher order reading skills, styles and strategies which contribute to the overall comprehension of texts, both fiction and non-fiction;
- express themselves creatively through the study of literature and poetry;
- read with accuracy, fluency and the use of expression;
- develop a love of literature and become a willing, independent and thoughtful reader;
- understand the value of information texts as an aid to make critical judgements;
- understand and value other cultures through literature and develop knowledge of the world;
- provide reading targets that can be responded to on an individual basis over a short period of time.

8. Writing

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, our writing curriculum allows children to develop their writing skills through composing, planning, drafting and editing. They are taught to appreciate and apply ambitious vocabulary, develop a strong understand of spelling, grammar and punctuation and create and shape sentences and texts. It is important to that we give children the opportunities to be creative, imaginative writers, and enable them to write for a range of purposes.

We follow the 'Talk for Writing' process in EYFS and Year 1. The aim is for the children to orally retell stories first - to help them develop their vocabulary base and understanding of story structures before they then apply this to their writing. Children in Year 2 and beyond write frequently, at length, in English lessons and in wider areas of the curriculum. This encourages children to apply their English knowledge in all lessons and high expectations are set when writing across the wider curriculum

We aim to:-

- enable children to become proficient readers as soon as possible, as reading and writing skills are dependent on each other;
- help children gain important speaking skills which are necessary to develop as a writer;
- provide opportunities for children to explore and develop knowledge of the wide range of functions and formats of the written form and help them to make appropriate choices in vocabulary and style according to intended purpose and audience;
- use the broad curriculum to support English;
- provide focused reading and writing targets that can be responded to over a short period of time;
- encourage children to read back their writing to themselves, to a partner or to adults;
- ensure children write for a variety of purposes and audiences so that they see a worthwhile purpose for writing, using written texts as models for their own writing
- promote drafting and redrafting on a realistic basis, relating often to a target;
- ensure children see that writing can be fun and that they experience praise and constructive criticism so that they gain confidence in themselves as writers;
- encourage children to write as a reader and for a reader, using the 'language of books'.
- have fortnightly timetabled 'extended writing' lessons, which will be referred to as 'exciting writing'

9. Punctuation and Grammar

Discrete spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons are taught across both key stages, usually at the beginning of the English lesson. This enables children to be familiar with the vocabulary needed and then apply this in their lesson. Vocabulary is also taught daily, alongside focused tasks, to enable all pupils to learn new words and use these in context.

Approaches should:-

- be investigative, reflective and encourage curiosity, interest and respect for all forms of language;
- value children's previous knowledge, both implicit and explicit, and build on this;
- address structures and pattern at word, sentence and text level;
- relate directly to the way in which language choices can be made to tailor a text to the audience and purpose;
- establish positive attitudes and guide children towards a greater understanding of how the English language system works and why.
- Follow the National Curriculum appendices

10. Phonics and Spelling

The teaching of phonics at EYFS and Key Stage 1 is delivered through daily sessions of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is supplemented by the Curriculum spelling requirements as set out in the English curriculum for each year group. At Key Stage 2, spelling is taught using the English curriculum. Additional intervention phonics work is delivered by trained staff to identified and targeted children.

St Mary's School recognises:-

- that children move through developmental stages in learning to spell and that teaching methods will vary depending upon a child's stage of development;
- the importance of mastering conventional spelling in order to clearly convey meaning in writing;
- the importance of promoting an ethos of curiosity and interest in words;
- the need to encourage children to develop independent strategies as quickly as possible.

The school aims to develop pupils' knowledge of:-

- sound – symbol relationships;
- high frequency words;
- regular patterns in words;
- word structure;
- high interest words associated with topics and specific curricular areas.

The school aims to teach a variety of strategies. These include:-

- listening and pronunciation skills;
- phonological skills, rhyme and structures phonics linked to handwriting;
- multi-sensory – looking – saying – listening – doing;
- spelling rules;
- mnemonics as a memory aid;
- focus on the visual shapes of words – identifying roots; looking for words within words; grouping words according to spelling patterns; making connections between graphically related words;
- identifying and highlighting high frequency words in a variety of texts;
- use spelling lessons to pupils' growing understanding of grammar;
- investigating the origins of words;
- games to encourage skill.

11. Handwriting

At St Mary's, we believe that teaching handwriting is extremely important as it aids writing for all areas of the curriculum.

The school aims ultimately for pupils to develop a fast, flowing, attractive, legible, cursive, personal hand and to achieve this is aware of the need for a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the whole curriculum and key stages.

During the Foundation Stage the school aims to develop:-

- gross motor skills, especially those related to posture and balance;
- fine motor skills through art and other activities;
- a language to talk about shapes and movement and pattern.

We see the development of these skills as crucial for all future development.

As children learn letter shapes, alongside letter sounds, we aim to help children:-

- learn the letters of the alphabet and their formation;
- hold a pencil correctly;
- form from left to right; top to bottom;
- correct orientation and formation of letters;
- consistence and appropriateness in size and spacing;
- a pride in presentation;
- ease the transition from printing to joined up style.

Left-handed children should be given extra attention to ensure they develop a fast, fluent hand and begin at the left hand side of the page. Cursive script is used from Reception.

12. Contribution of English to Teaching in other Curriculum Areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The pupils' skills in reading, writing and spoken language enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

12.1 **RE**

As a catholic school, RE is at the heart of the Curriculum and provides unique opportunities for the development of English through both written and spoken activities. Children are often taught Extended Writing through the R.E. topic. Gospel values are reflected through the texts that we use and the ethos that we promote.

12.2 ***Mathematics***

The teaching of English contributes significantly to pupils' mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

12.3 ***Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship***

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

12.4 ***Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development***

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts bring them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together, and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

12.5 ***Computing***

Pupils use the skills of English when writing programs, designing logical steps and using a range of software. ICT is also used to promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text levels.

12.6 ***Wider Curriculum***

Writing opportunities in wider curriculum lessons are carefully planned by teachers across both key stages. English medium-term plans provide teachers with high-quality texts that can be used in these lessons.

13. English and Inclusion

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. Assessment against the National Curriculum Outcomes allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

14. Assessment for Learning

14.1 Ongoing assessment of English is seen through highlighting individual writing assessment grids, ticking group reading assessment statements and updating the school Assessment Tracker half-termly. The short-term assessments that teachers make, as part of every lesson, helps them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide pupils' progress. Pupils are also encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

14.2 Teachers use the school's Assessment Tracker to formatively assess every half term. Assessments measure progress against the key objectives and allows a judgement to be made against Age Related Expectations (ARE). These assessments are used to help teachers plan for the next unit of work.

14.3 Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, they are able to set targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

14.4 Moderation takes place termly to validate teacher judgements. The moderation takes place with other schools as part of the Tolkien Group. The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is

in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the QCA and the DCSF.

14.5 Staff are keen to improve their subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development.

15. Monitoring and Review

15.1 The leadership of the English curriculum is the responsibility of the subject leader, who:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping them informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Headteacher a termly Subject Evaluation Form (SEF), which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in English and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the pupils' work, and to observe English lessons across the school;
- will provide guidance and support on the implementation of policy;
- will stay up to date on developments;
- will ensure staff are aware of resources that may support the teaching of English;
- will monitor implementation and planning;
- will monitor the standards in books
- will liaise with outside agencies and other English Leaders;
- will moderate the assessment of reading and writing.

15.2 A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of English.

15.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.