**SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School**

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| English Policy2025-27  |



**Our Mission**

**‘At SS John and Monica’s we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other**

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### **1. Introduction**

At St. John and Monica School, we value English as a fundamental part of our curriculum. It is central to every subject and provides the foundation for success in all areas of learning. We are committed to developing the skills of spoken language, reading, and writing to ensure that our pupils are confident communicators and lifelong learners. Through high-quality teaching, we aim to foster a love of language, empower students to express themselves clearly, and equip them with the tools necessary for academic and personal success.

Our English curriculum is aligned with the National Curriculum (2014) and designed to meet the needs of all our students. It recognises the importance of fluency in reading and writing and provides a structured approach to develop these skills systematically. We ensure that our teaching of English supports children in becoming literate, independent, and confident individuals who can engage with the world around them.

### **2. Aims of the English Curriculum**

• To develop fluent, confident readers and writers who are able to access and enjoy the full curriculum.
• To equip children with a rich vocabulary and a love of language that will support their academic success and personal growth.
• To foster creativity and imagination through engaging and purposeful writing tasks.
• To ensure that children can communicate clearly and effectively in both spoken and written language.
• To celebrate diversity in language and culture, ensuring inclusivity for all students, including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
• To provide a structured, progressive approach to the development of English skills, ensuring that all children can achieve their full potential.

### **3. Reading Intent**

Reading is at the heart of everything we do at St. John and Monica School. We believe that developing a love of reading and the skills to read fluently is essential for success in all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to read widely, from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and to develop their comprehension and critical thinking skills. We are committed to ensuring that every child becomes a confident, fluent reader, with a love for reading nurtured from the very beginning of their education. We prioritise early reading to ensure children develop strong phonics skills and build a foundation for reading success across the curriculum.

### **4. Phonics**

To support our reading vision, we use Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) as our chosen phonics programme. This systematic synthetic phonics programme is designed to teach children to read by recognising phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters or combinations of letters). It is a carefully structured approach, validated by the Department for Education, which supports all learners, including those with SEND and English as an Additional Language, in their journey to reading fluently.

Phonics is taught daily, starting in Reception, and continues through Year 1 and beyond. The ELS programme ensures consistency in teaching and assessment, with every child given the opportunity to keep up rather than catch up. Children receive targeted support if needed, through interventions and additional practice.

For more information on our phonics approach, please refer to the detailed Phonics Policy available [here](https://www.stjonmon.bham.sch.uk/curriculum/subject-areas/english).

### **5. Reading at Home/Wider Reading**

Children are encouraged to read regularly at home, and we place great emphasis on the importance of parental support in fostering good reading habits. Each child has access to books matched to their reading ability, using book bands. Once children are ready, they progress to being 'free readers,' allowing them to choose books independently. This practice nurtures a love for reading and empowers students to take ownership of their learning.

**Home Reading Diaries**

To further support reading at home, children are provided with a Home Reading Diary, where they and their parents can record what they have read each week. This allows teachers to monitor progress and ensure that reading is taking place regularly. Parents are encouraged to comment on the child's reading experience, including thoughts on the book, new vocabulary learned, and areas for improvement. Teachers review the diaries to track reading progress and offer additional guidance as needed.

Currently, the Home Reading Diary is a traditional physical diary, but in the future, the school plans to transition to an online system using **Boom Reader**. This platform will allow parents and teachers to interact more easily, providing a digital space for tracking reading, setting goals, and ensuring that communication about reading progress is consistent and accessible. This change will streamline the process for both teachers and parents and provide a more efficient method of monitoring reading at home.

In addition to their home reading, children visit the school library each week, where they can choose books for pleasure and explore a variety of texts that spark their interest and curiosity.

### **6. Shared Read Model/Approach**

In addition to supporting reading at home, we also follow the Shared Read model in school, which is designed to engage children with high-quality texts in a collaborative and interactive way. Shared Reading encourages children to read together with an adult or peer, allowing them to explore and discuss texts in depth. This approach supports the development of key reading skills, including predicting, clarifying, summarising, and questioning.

During Shared Read sessions, teachers guide students through the text, modelling effective reading strategies while encouraging active participation. Children are prompted to predict what might happen next in the story, helping them develop inference skills. They are also encouraged to clarify unfamiliar words or phrases, building their vocabulary and comprehension. Summarising key events or information in the text helps children to synthesise their understanding, while questioning the content encourages deeper thinking and engagement with the material, making them more confident in their ability to think critically about texts.

By using a range of high-quality texts, we aim to develop a rich understanding of language and literature, as well as foster a love for reading. This approach complements the phonics programme and provides opportunities for children to apply their reading skills in meaningful, real-world contexts, reinforcing their ability to become confident, independent readers.

### **7. Reading and Writing Integration**

At St. John and Monica, we recognise that reading is not only fundamental to becoming a fluent reader but is also central to the development of writing skills. To support this, we follow the Literacy Counts approach, using a carefully selected range of high-quality texts as a stimulus for writing. These texts provide inspiration and serve as vehicles for students, allowing them to explore different writing styles, structures, and genres.

By engaging with these texts, children gain a deeper understanding of language, which they can then apply to their own writing. This process encourages them to mimic the language, tone, and techniques used by authors, helping them to develop their creativity and technical writing skills. Whether it’s analysing sentence structure, exploring vocabulary choices, or examining narrative techniques, the integration of reading and writing strengthens both skills in tandem.

Through this approach, we aim to inspire children not only to read with comprehension and enjoyment but also to express themselves clearly and confidently in writing, using the rich texts they encounter as a springboard for their own work.

### **8. Writing Approach**

Writing is central to our curriculum at St. John and Monica, and we are committed to developing confident writers who can communicate effectively across a range of genres. Our approach to writing is structured around the Literacy Counts model, which includes the stages of Immerse, Analyse, Plan, and Write.

#### **8a. Immerse**

In the first stage, we immerse children in a wide range of high-quality texts. These texts are carefully selected to engage students and inspire their writing. By exposing them to a variety of genres, styles, and voices, we help children develop a deep understanding of how writing works. This stage is all about sparking imagination and building a love for writing while allowing children to explore different ways of structuring and conveying ideas.

#### **8.b. Analyse**

Following the immersion stage, children begin to analyse the texts in detail. We guide them to identify key features such as sentence structures, vocabulary choices, characterisation, and the use of literary devices. This analysis helps children understand what makes writing effective and how they can apply similar techniques to their own work. By focusing on the mechanics of writing, children are equipped with the tools to improve their own writing style.

#### **8.c. Plan**

After analysis, children are encouraged to plan their writing. This step involves brainstorming ideas, organising thoughts, and mapping out the structure of their work. Whether it’s planning the sequence of events in a story or outlining the key points for an argument, we emphasise the importance of clear and thoughtful planning. This stage helps children to focus their ideas and ensures that their writing is coherent, well-organised, and purposeful.

#### **8.d. Write**

The final stage is the writing process itself. Children use the skills, techniques, and ideas they’ve gathered during the previous stages to produce their own work. We encourage them to write with confidence, drawing upon the features of successful texts that they’ve studied. Throughout this stage, teachers provide ongoing feedback and support, helping children refine their writing and encouraging them to take pride in their work.

By following the Immerse, Analyse, Plan, and Write structure, we ensure that children are not only taught the technical aspects of writing but also given the opportunity to express themselves creatively and thoughtfully. This process fosters a love of writing while building the essential skills required for success across all areas of learning.

#### **8.e. Daily Sentence Accuracy**

As part of our writing curriculum, we place a strong emphasis on Daily Sentence Accuracy work, following the approach outlined in Literacy Counts. This daily practice is designed to improve students' grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and overall writing precision.

Through short, focused activities, children engage with a range of sentence types and are encouraged to write and edit sentences accurately, ensuring they develop a solid understanding of language rules and conventions.

The key aim of Sentence Accuracy work is to build confidence in constructing well-formed sentences, enabling children to apply these skills across all types of writing. The practice involves frequent repetition, allowing children to internalise correct sentence structures and language patterns. This daily engagement helps them recognise and use key grammatical features with increasing fluency.

Cognitive science research highlights the importance of working memory in the learning process, particularly when it comes to writing. Writing tasks require children to hold multiple pieces of information in their working memory – from grammar rules to vocabulary choices and sentence structures – which can be overwhelming. Regular sentence practice helps reduce the cognitive load by allowing children to consolidate these concepts and techniques, making them more accessible when it comes time for more complex writing tasks.

Through Daily Sentence Accuracy work, we aim to support children in developing the fluency and automaticity needed for confident, independent writing. This practice ensures that children not only understand the rules of grammar but can also use them consistently and effectively in their writing.

#### **8.f. Metacognition in Writing**

At St. John and Monica, we believe that developing metacognitive skills – the ability to think about and control one's own thinking processes – is crucial for becoming a successful writer. Our approach to writing includes a strong emphasis on metacognition, which helps children reflect on their writing, set goals, and improve their work independently.

A central component of our metacognitive approach is teacher modelling. Teachers consistently model their own thinking during writing lessons, demonstrating how to plan, revise, and edit writing in real-time. This process, known as "thinking aloud," allows students to see how experienced writers approach the task, break down challenges, and make decisions about structure, style, and language.

By emphasising teacher modelling, we help children develop their own metacognitive strategies. For example, students are encouraged to ask themselves reflective questions, such as "Does this sentence make sense?" or "How can I make this paragraph clearer?" This approach not only reinforces writing skills but also fosters a growth mind-set, encouraging students to view writing as a process that can be refined through thought and effort.

Research in cognitive science shows that metacognitive strategies can enhance writing because they allow students to actively monitor their work, make adjustments, and learn from their mistakes. By fostering these skills early, we support students in becoming more independent and confident writers who can self-assess and continuously improve their writing over time.

### ***8.g. Spelling***

Discrete spelling lessons are taught weekly in Key Stage 2, focusing on strategies such as syllable recognition, word roots, and contextual application. Regular testing ensures retention and application of learned strategies. In KS1 regular practise of spellings are linked to the phonological awareness of the children and outlined in our phonics programme.

### **9. Fluent Handwriting Expectations**

At St. John and Monica, we believe that fluent, legible handwriting is an essential skill that supports both academic success and personal expression. Fluent handwriting allows children to focus on the content of their writing, rather than struggling with letter formation, and fosters pride in their work. We expect all students to develop a consistent, cursive style of handwriting as they progress through the school.

Our handwriting expectations are guided by our Handwriting Policy, which outlines the key stages of development, from early mark-making in Reception to the fluency expected in Key Stage 2. Children are taught to form letters correctly from the outset, building muscle memory and confidence. As children progress, they are encouraged to join their letters and write with increasing speed and fluency. This is achieved through regular, focused handwriting practice, ensuring that children are able to write clearly and legibly across all subjects.

We understand the importance of fine motor skills and the role they play in handwriting development. As such, children receive targeted support where necessary to strengthen their hand muscles and improve their control. The emphasis is on developing a natural, consistent handwriting style that can be sustained throughout their education.

For more details on our handwriting expectations and the steps we take to support students in achieving them, please refer to our Handwriting Policy.

### **10. Assessment in Reading and Writing**

#### **10.a. Assessment: Reading**

At St. John and Monica, assessment is a key component in monitoring and supporting children's progress in reading. We employ a combination of formative assessment (AfL) and summative assessments to track students’ understanding and skills development across reading.

Formative Assessment for Learning (AfL) is used continuously in reading lessons through observation, questioning, and discussion. Teachers assess students' comprehension and fluency through regular checks, such as one-to-one reading sessions, comprehension tasks, and whole-class discussions. This allows us to identify individual strengths and areas for improvement, enabling targeted support during lessons. Additionally, we encourage peer assessments and self-reflection, which help children develop a deeper understanding of their own reading journey.

Summative assessments are carried out at key points during the academic year to assess students' overall progress in reading. These include formal assessments, such as reading tests or comprehension exercises, which provide a clear measure of achievement. These assessments are aligned with the National Curriculum expectations and help us gauge students' reading fluency, comprehension, and ability to decode unfamiliar words.

Assessment outcomes are carefully analysed by teachers and the senior leadership team. This allows us to identify trends, areas requiring further focus, and next steps for teaching. Based on this analysis, we adjust our reading provision and provide any additional support necessary to ensure all children reach their full potential in reading.

#### **10.b. Assessment: Writing**

In writing, we adopt a comprehensive approach to assessment that combines both formative assessment (AfL) and summative assessments, with a particular focus on moderation and setting clear, measurable outcomes based on National Curriculum (NC) objectives for each year group.

Formative Assessment for Learning (AfL) is embedded into every writing lesson. Teachers assess students' writing through regular observations, feedback, and targeted questioning. This ongoing assessment helps us understand how well children are developing key writing skills, such as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and creativity. Teachers provide immediate feedback and offer tailored support to address any misconceptions or challenges that arise, ensuring children stay on track in their learning.

Furthermore we use a structured assessment framework to evaluate children’s writing throughout the academic year. This framework is specifically designed for each year group and aligns with the National Curriculum expectations, covering key aspects of writing, including composition and transcription skills.

**Composition** focuses on students' ability to develop ideas, organise their writing effectively, and adapt their style to suit different purposes and audiences. **Transcription** evaluates their application of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting.

Teachers use this assessment framework periodically to assess the written outcomes children produce during lessons and tasks. These assessments provide a detailed understanding of each child’s progress, ensuring that their strengths are celebrated while identifying areas for development. The framework supports consistency across year groups and ensures that all students are assessed against clear, objective criteria.

The outcomes of these assessments inform teaching and planning, enabling us to provide tailored support or challenge for each child. This approach helps to ensure that all pupils make steady progress in their writing and achieve their full potential.

In addition to these assessments, we incorporate moderation within the school. Teachers work collaboratively to assess and compare students' work, ensuring consistency in grading and standards across year groups. This moderation process involves discussing and agreeing on the expectations for each writing task, ensuring that judgments are fair, accurate, and aligned with the NC criteria.

The outcomes from both formative and summative assessments are carefully analysed. This data informs the next steps in teaching, including planning for additional support, setting individual targets, and adjusting instruction to ensure every child makes continued progress. By setting clear, measurable writing outcomes based on the NC objectives, we ensure that students are developing their writing skills to the required standard and are ready for the challenges of the next academic year.

### **11. Marking and Feedback**

At St. John and Monica, we believe that effective marking and feedback are vital components of the learning process. They provide pupils with the necessary guidance to understand their strengths, identify areas for improvement, and take ownership of their learning journey. Our marking and feedback practices are aligned with the school’s Marking and Feedback Policy, ensuring consistency across all subject areas, including English.

Feedback is integral to the development of pupils' English skills, especially in reading and writing. Our approach is designed to praise students for their efforts and target specific areas for improvement, offering clear steps on how to move forward. We use a combination of verbal and written feedback to engage pupils in their learning process. This feedback is timely, clear, and constructive, encouraging a growth mindset where students are motivated to improve and reflect on their progress.

**Key Features of Our Marking and Feedback Policy:**

* **Formative Feedback**: Regular, ongoing feedback to guide learning. In English lessons, this may include comments on students' use of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and structure in writing. In reading, it might focus on comprehension skills, the ability to analyse text, and fluency.
* **Targeted Next Steps**: Specific areas for development are identified in feedback, with clear next steps for improvement. These next steps help students focus on particular skills, such as sentence construction, understanding new vocabulary, or improving their reading comprehension.
* **Verbal Feedback**: In addition to written comments, verbal feedback is a key strategy in the English classroom. Teachers engage in one-to-one discussions with pupils, offering immediate support and clarification of learning.
* **Peer and Self-Assessment**: Students are encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer feedback, helping them reflect on their learning and develop their metacognitive skills.
* **Celebration of Success**: We celebrate achievements in reading and writing, whether that is through verbal praise or highlighting examples of excellent work. This reinforces the value we place on effort and progress, helping students feel motivated and proud of their work.

Our marking and feedback practices are not only focused on correcting mistakes but also on fostering a growth mindset, where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. This approach is essential in helping children feel confident in their ability to improve, particularly in the key areas of reading and writing.

In line with the school’s Marking and Feedback Policy, teachers will ensure that feedback is actionable and that students are given time to act on the feedback in subsequent lessons. This promotes active learning and ensures that students are continually progressing and refining their skills. Regular review of feedback practices ensures they remain effective in helping students succeed in English.

### **12. Inclusion**

At St. John and Monica, we believe in providing an inclusive English curriculum that meets the needs of every pupil, regardless of background or ability. Our commitment to Quality First Teaching ensures that every child has access to a high standard of education, which is adapted to their individual needs. We recognise that effective, high-quality teaching is the foundation for success and that it should be differentiated to ensure all students can achieve their potential.

Our approach to inclusion is built on the understanding that all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL), should be provided with targeted support to enable them to access and succeed in the curriculum. We use assessment data to identify groups of children who may require additional support or intervention, ensuring that no child is left behind.

#### **13. Targeted Intervention**

Once students’ needs are identified through assessment, we provide targeted interventions to support their progress. These interventions are planned in collaboration with the SENCo and are designed to address specific learning barriers. Some examples of the interventions we use include but are not limited to:

* Colourful Semantics: A strategy that supports language development, helping children with sentence construction, vocabulary building, and understanding grammatical structures.
* Precision Teaching: A focused approach to address specific learning gaps, where key skills are taught intensively and progress is closely monitored.
* Pre-teaching Concepts: Introducing key vocabulary or concepts before a lesson to ensure that children can fully engage with new learning.
* Small Group Interventions: Tailored support in small groups that focus on specific learning objectives, delivered in collaboration with the class teacher and SENCo.
* Spelling intervention: Revision of taught spelling rules.

These interventions are implemented to ensure that children receive the support they need to make progress. Assessment data is regularly reviewed to ensure that interventions are having the desired impact, and adjustments are made as needed to support individual progress.

#### **14. EAL (English as an Additional Language)**

At St. John and Monica, we are proud to celebrate the diversity of our school community, which includes a significant number of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL). We understand that for these children, acquiring proficiency in English is essential not only for success in English lessons but across all areas of the curriculum.

To support EAL learners effectively, we employ a range of evidence-based strategies to promote language development and ensure they thrive academically and socially. These strategies include:

1. **Scaffolded Learning**
	* Providing visual aids, sentence starters, vocabulary lists, and anchor charts to support understanding and communication.
	* Breaking down tasks into manageable steps to ensure students can access the curriculum at an appropriate level.
2. **Immersive Language Experiences**
	* Creating a language-rich environment where students are immersed in spoken and written English through classroom discussions, storytelling, and structured activities.
	* Encouraging incidental language acquisition through peer interaction and collaborative group work.
3. **Explicit Language Instruction**
	* Teaching key vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures explicitly to ensure students can confidently engage with new content.
	* Focusing on academic language relevant to subjects across the curriculum to support understanding in all lessons.
4. **Pre-Teaching Concepts**
	* Introducing key vocabulary and concepts before lessons to provide EAL students with a foundation of understanding, enabling them to participate fully in class discussions and activities.
5. **Cultural Inclusion**
	* Incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum and classroom discussions to foster a sense of belonging and encourage active participation.
	* Using bilingual resources, where possible, to help bridge gaps in comprehension.
6. **Targeted Interventions**
	* Implementing focused interventions such as small-group language development sessions and personalised learning plans to address individual needs.
	* Utilising programs like Colourful Semantics to develop sentence construction and comprehension skills.
7. **Peer Support and Collaboration**
	* Pairing EAL learners with confident speakers of English in peer mentoring or buddy systems to provide role models and opportunities for conversational practice.
	* Encouraging group work that allows EAL students to contribute meaningfully while developing language skills.
8. **Ongoing Assessment and Feedback**
	* Regularly assessing students’ language acquisition and adapting support based on their progress.
	* Using formative assessments to identify gaps and plan interventions that address specific learning barriers.
9. **Professional Development for Teachers**
	* Training staff in effective strategies for supporting EAL learners, including the use of dialogic teaching, questioning techniques, and scaffolding.
	* Encouraging the use of collaborative tools such as the Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework to monitor progress systematically.
10. **Parental Engagement**
* Working closely with families to create a strong school-home partnership.
* Providing resources and guidance to parents on how to support English language development at home while valuing and maintaining students' home languages.

By employing these strategies, we aim to support our EAL learners in becoming confident, proficient speakers and users of English, enabling them to succeed academically and engage fully in all aspects of school life.

#### **15 Conclusion**

At St. John and Monica, we strive to deliver a high-quality English education that empowers confident, literate, and creative individuals. By fostering a love of language and providing inclusive, engaging instruction, we ensure that every child reaches their full potential, developing the skills to navigate the world with curiosity, empathy, and confidence.

**Policy Consultation**: Spring 2025

**Review Date**: Spring 2027 (or earlier if legislation dictates)

**Person Responsible**: Mr A Ullah (English Coordinator)

Queries about the content of this policy should be addressed to Mr A Ullah