



English Policy

St Mary's Church of England (A) Primary School keeps children safe by ensuring and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care: all policies support the most current "Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance" and "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

'There can be no more important subject than English in the school curriculum. English is a pre-eminent world language, it is at the heart of our culture and it is the language medium in which most of our pupils think and communicate. Literacy skills are also crucial to pupils' learning in other subjects across the curriculum.' Michael Wilshaw – Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted March 2012

1. Intent

At St Mary's we believe that a good quality English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion. One of our priorities is helping children read and develop their all-important comprehension skills. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts and purposes. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening and who can use discussion to communicate and further their learning.

We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge-base in Literacy, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. We believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society.

2. Implementation

These aims are embedded across our literacy lessons and the wider curriculum. We have a rigorous and well organised English curriculum and framework, that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. Following the Pathways to Write Programme, we use a wide variety of quality texts and resources to motivate and inspire our children. Teachers also ensure that, when applicable, cross curricular links with topic work are woven into the programme of study.

The National Curriculum (2014) for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At St Mary's we begin our English Curriculum using the Little Wandle programme, Letters and Sounds Revised. Our Reading Buddies scheme introduced in the Autumn term of 2018 goes from strength to strength with children looking forward to reading to a buddy, or hearing fiction and non-fiction texts read to them by older children. Our school library is full of books which children supervise and monitor the borrowing of across the whole school. Each classroom has age appropriate books in their books corners and feature a range of fiction and non-fiction.

At St Mary's, we identify children who need support and provide intervention in the most effective and efficient way that we can. We run intervention reading groups led by our reading champion, Mrs Dicks. Furthermore, we are fortunate to have parents and helpers who come in regularly to hear children read. Most children on the SEND register have reading and comprehension as one of their targets. Teachers plan and teach English lessons which are differentiated accordingly to the particular needs of each child. We help each child maximise their potential by providing help and support where necessary whilst striving to make children independent workers once we have helped to equip them with the confidence, tools and strategies that they need.

We run parent information sessions on reading and SATs for Year 2 parents and a SATs meeting for Year 6 parents so that they understand age-related expectations. These sessions are always very well attended by parents.

Marking is rigorous in English and across the curriculum, with regular verbal feedback and spelling corrections to help children correct and consolidate their work. Regular English book scrutinies are carried out by the current English leads (Miss Rhiannon Rhodes and Mrs Claire Higgins) to check all teachers are following our marking policy rigorously.

We love to celebrate success of all learners and strive to help all children achieve their goals. Reading is celebrated in classrooms and around school at St Mary's, where our bright and colourful and topical displays celebrate children's writing, their favourite books and reading reward schemes. In addition, our literacy curriculum is enhanced annually through World Book Day.

3. Impact

The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. With the implementation of the writing journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children are becoming more confident writers and by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar to them and the teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills.

Termly assessment is undertaken using NFER Assessment papers. Each year we have children achieving at a greater depth in reading and writing at the end of KS1 and are working hard to emulate that at the end of KS2. We hope that all the new literacy initiatives outlined above will help continue to boost children's learning and progress.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross curricular writing standards are beginning to improve and skills taught in the English lessons are being transferred into other subjects; this shows a move to a consolidation of skills and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and grammar objectives.

We hope that as children move on from St Mary's to Secondary School: their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.

4. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum 2014 we use this as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English within a cross curricular approach linking literacy units with topic themes.

In the Foundation Stage (Reception) children should be given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and in possibilities for communication
- take part in a daily phonics lesson
- begin to read and write in response to activities both planned and child initiated

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2)

Year 1

Teachers should build on the work from Early Years Foundation stage making sure pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using phonic knowledge and skills. Children should follow a structured programme of phonics, (at St Mary's we follow Little Wandle, Letters and Sounds Revised) which underpins reading, writing and spelling of all words. Children should learn to read through using a consistent scheme to develop their phonic knowledge. Children will at the same time hear, share and discuss a wide range of quality books to develop their love of reading and to broaden their vocabulary. Pupils who have not yet met their ELG for literacy should continue to follow the schools EYs curriculum to ensure a thorough understanding of language skills for their age through rigorous and systematic phonics catch up. Children will be given opportunities to develop their oral vocabulary, to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds and to find and transmit information.

Year 2

Children should be able to read all common graphemes and read unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge. Fluency will improve as reading skills develop. Children will be able to read independently and retell stories they have read. Writing and reading skills will be developing at a pace, they should be able to spell correctly many words covered in Year 1 and make phonetically plausible attempts to spell words they have not learned. Letter formation should be clear and follow the schools handwriting policy. At this stage teaching staff will ensure that children have rigorous catch up programmes to ensure that pupils who have struggled with reading, writing and spelling have the opportunity to achieve age expected levels. Comprehension skills will be developed during year 2 so pupils can speak, write and discuss texts with their class.

At Lower Key Stage Two (Years 3-4),

Teaching staff plan for the different age groups in their classes. We use the National Curriculum expectations as our guide to plan differentiated learning. We also follow Pathways to Write as our main structure for teaching English. By lower KS2 pupils can usually read, write, spell and speak with fluency and confidence. Teaching further develops pupils as writers and readers through an engaging and well planned curriculum. Children who have yet to be confident in any aspect of literacy are given structured catch up to fill identified gaps in understanding. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught weekly at set times to ensure accuracy and confidence. As fluent readers, our pupils are encouraged to know well known authors, to be able to talk about writers and their styles. Children are given planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

At Upper KS2 (Year 5 and 6)

By the beginning of Y5 pupils should be able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age appropriate interest level, with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They should be able to read most words effortlessly. Pupils should be able to summarize and present a familiar story. They should be reading regularly, silently for pleasure and information. Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly. Their grammar and punctuation should be broadly accurate. By Y6 pupils will have a love of language be knowledgeable about different forms of written language and be able to write and read to a high standard. The National curriculum sets out the breadth and range of the English curriculum. Teachers find imaginative and creative ways to fulfil the high expectations so

pupils leave St Mary's as confident and articulate young people well prepared for secondary school.

5. THE GOVERNING BOARD

Reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision through analysis of data. Governors monitor aspects of English that are linked to the SIP.

The link governor for English is Mrs Emma Furnival.

The curriculum lead for English across the school is currently Miss R Rhodes (Class 4 Teacher) and Mrs Higgins (Class 1/2 teachers).

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

6. SUBJECT ORGANISATION

The English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum 2014. The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum.

For some aspects of learning children are grouped according to ability. For some sessions they are in mixed ability groups so they can learn from each other and support one another with the aim of achieving targets.

Shared reading or paired reading may take place between mixed Key Stage groupings.

Text based approach

Class teachers have access to high quality texts as a basis for their literacy work in class. The texts are used as a read aloud story which are chosen as good examples of literature with content which can be used to initiate grammar and types of writing e.g. letter writing to a character, play writing using a section from the text, drama – acting out a scene, journalistic writing and non-fiction – finding out more about an aspect discussed in the text.

7. APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

The Four Strands of Speaking and Listening - Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction, and Drama - permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils. A very important aspect of developing these skills is that they are a part of the ongoing process of raising reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. Some of the activities the children are involved in:

In Key Stage One and Foundation Stage

Children communicate their interests in 'Show and Tell' sessions, children present information to other members of the class. During these sessions the children are encouraged to ask and answer questions. Children will also communicate ideas and listen to others during circle time, role play, with a talking partner and during class learning activities.

In Key Stage Two

Children also use cross curricular opportunities e.g in PSHE lessons to discuss thoughts and feelings. The children are encouraged to develop their own views and opinions, whilst considering and respecting the views of others through, for example, debating topical issues. They will take part in various 'talk for writing' activities, particularly in literacy lessons. Drama

is used across the Key Stages to explore ideas or texts. Children are involved in preparing power point presentations to support collective worship and topic work.

8. APPROACHES TO READING –

Children are taught to read mainly through a combination of phonics (Little Wandle) and individual reading. The children are introduced to guided reading when they are ready. The reading scheme books in school are sorted phases as defined within the Little Wandle Program. All the books within our reading scheme are fully decodable and the children are not introduced to a phoneme until they have become familiar with it. Throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, the children select books which have been grouped into the phases from the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds program. After that stage the children are classed as a 'Free Reader' and choose their own book from a range in their classroom. Free reading books are graded by teachers into age appropriate stages, to add continued support to children beyond the reading scheme. Reading books are taken home with a reading record in which the parent/carer can make comments. This reading record is our home /school link and staff record comments after a guided reading session and when they hear a child read independently. Some children may be identified as needing more regular reading sessions and will receive extra support. The adult may make a comment in the child's reading record. Year 2 children and upwards are able to record their own reading sessions in their reading records.

Shared reading takes place within the class and may be through guided reading, whiteboard, from a Big Book, a class set of books or a photocopied extract. Children will be encouraged to read aloud in order to gain confidence and learn to use expression in a supportive environment. Every child from Year 1 upwards takes part in Guided Reading. Weekly guided reading sessions are supported by Pathways to Read where possible. Many of our bespoke implemented guided reading skills are also used in regular English lessons. Guided reading sessions provide the opportunity for a focused look (using the assessment focuses for reading) at a particular text (different from those taken home) with the scaffolder teaching of an adult. There is a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts read in guided sessions.

Independent reading takes the form of 'quiet reading' - in classes 2 and 3. In Class 1 children are given regular opportunities to read, look at and share 'classroom' books. Class teachers regularly read to their own class regularly using the class chosen text. In KS1 short stories are read.

9. APPROACHES TO WRITING – including spelling

Class teachers are responsible for the planning and implementation of English in the National Curriculum and to promote high standards in literacy, by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop a love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation and in Reception /KS1 phonics work. They base this on the appropriate 'Little Wandle' or National Curriculum age appropriate grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation. The children are grouped according to ability.

KS1 and 2 have spellings taken from the National Curriculum and their own errors in written work, which they record in word books (Year 5 and 6) and are tested periodically.

Year 3 and 4 use spelling rules and patterns and support for spelling depending on their stage of learning. Spelling errors in written work are identified by the teacher and the children practise the chosen spelling errors three times at the end of their work.

Year R and 1 have daily phonics sessions following the Little Wandle progression framework.

English lessons are planned according to the revised framework to include all the assessment focuses. With careful use of AFL, next steps are regularly identified and shared with the children. Little Wandle and emergent writing form the basis of early literacy lessons leading on to the VCOP approach suggested by Ros Wilson. Classroom resources e.g. word banks linked to topic themes, common words and alphabet lines and VCOP pyramids are available to support young learners with the writing process.

Children in Key Stage Two have regular extended writing sessions where they can put into practice the skills learnt. At least once a term, children in Key Stages 1 and 2 have an extended, unaided writing session where they can put into practice the skills learnt. These pieces are assessed according to set criteria, which are shared with the children.

Classes 1 and 2 – Phonics books are sent home to parents and children are periodically tested in school through regular phonic assessments.

Class 3 – 10 spellings are given linked to spelling rule/pattern. Extra activities are utilized to support the teaching of these rules and pattern, ie put the spelling into a sentence.

Class 4 – The spelling rule is sent home and the children are periodically tested on these and new words – applying the new spelling rule to unfamiliar words.

Handwriting

The school uses the cursive writing scheme. Pupils practise handwriting in spelling books with the appropriate lines to support cursive structure. The amount expected increases throughout the year groups.

10. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for children to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. They will encourage children to work on their writing targets across the curriculum to maintain a high standard of writing content across other subjects. At St Mary's there is a real focus on writing for a purpose to encourage children to understand the real world necessity of being able to write with cohesion and accuracy.

11. THE USE OF COMPUTING

Opportunities to use computing to support teaching and learning in English will be planned for and used as appropriate. Access to technology can often be a helpful way to bridge ability gaps for SEN children.

12. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment and Marking Policies which incorporate guidance from Assessment For Learning (formative assessment). Marking sheets and developmental marking in books is key to the premise that children will improve most effectively if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge). Effective assessment techniques can increase both motivation and self-esteem. Short term assessments are made as part of every lesson and involve sharing learning objectives with pupils. Daily plans are adjusted accordingly. Extended writing opportunities measure progress against key objectives, and individual targets are set accordingly. Children are assessed using NFER testing is conducted half-termly. Optional SATs materials are used twice a year in February and June to support ongoing assessments. Assessment information is collated on the whole school tracking system and progress is carefully monitored. The school sets end of year targets and make predictions based on end of KS1 data and National Expectations.

13. INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in all aspects of English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment.

Academically able children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided within lessons. Books are purchased to support individual need to develop reading for pleasure. More-able writers are given opportunity to research and follow their interests. The scheme followed – Pathways to write has built in mastery development work for these pupils.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

The wealth of support programmes are used with children matched to need. TA support is directed to help children identified. Some children may receive teacher led intervention depending on need.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

14. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADERS:

The Subject Leaders (Miss R Rhodes and Mrs C Higgins) are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

Monitoring and evaluating English:-

- pupil progress
- provision of English (including Intervention and Support programmes)
- the quality of the Learning Environment;
- the deployment and provision of support staff
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- purchasing and organizing resources
- keeping up to date with recent English developments
- monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of the teaching
- reviewing samples of work regularly in staff meetings and lead moderation of English
- regular lesson observations/learning walks
- Pupil voice questionnaires

15. PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

We value parental involvement in their child's development of English and promote a whole school partnership in the following ways:

- reading record book
- homework tasks
- inviting parents to hear readers in school - subject to relevant DBS checks and COVID allowances.
- regular Parents' consultations; sharing successes and targets
- updates about methodology and new developments – e.g. in newsletter
- involvement in national/local events e.g. World Book Day
- our FOSMS (Friends of St Mary's School) supports English through providing enrichment funding to buy outside speakers, funds transport to theatres and for authors to come into school to work with our children

