



# St. Teresa's Catholic Primary English Policy



## Policy Statement

### Our Mission:

To create confident and independent learners who have the skills and knowledge needed to be the best that they can be and who serve each other in a loving Catholic community.

### Our Intent:

We aim to deliver a high-quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of Literacy skills is central to improving a child's life chances. Teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills they have acquired in a range of contexts. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school. Teachers use inspirational ideas to engage children in work providing memorable experiences, bringing topics to life through real life contexts. Curriculum coverage and impact is carefully monitored by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all staff are delivering the quality English curriculum in line with our overall intent.

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability and background have appropriate differentiated access to the English Curriculum. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used from across the curriculum adapted appropriately to the needs and learning styles of pupils.

The use of IT is embedded throughout the English Curriculum with a view to making children confident, competent and creative users of information and communication technology.

Vocabulary is at the heart of what we do in English and is integrated throughout all curriculum areas by our 'golden thread' of vocabulary.

## National Curriculum 2014

The National Curriculum clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a Primary School.

The English programme of study is based on four areas;

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

The National Curriculum is divided into 3 Key stages; Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

The National Curriculum gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key stage under the following headings;

- Spoken language
- Reading -
  - Word reading
  - Comprehension
- Writing -
  - Transcription,
  - Spelling,
  - Handwriting and presentation,
  - Composition,
  - Grammar and punctuation

### **Our Implementation:**

#### Spoken language

Developing strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English at St Teresa's Catholic Primary School. Teachers place a high emphasis on spoken language and plan for the discrete teaching of skills as well as incidental learning opportunities. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to allow them to internalise language patterns and understand how language changes in different situations. This enables our children to understand and manipulate language for different purposes and audiences. To do this teachers provide authentic contexts, giving children opportunities to use a range of spoken language. Teachers provide a range of purposeful opportunities through role play, drama and discussions. The strong emphasis on spoken language is evident in Early Years and continues throughout the

school; Key Stage Two take part in regular debates and discussions as well as drama and role play. Teachers model the use of Standard English, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken English.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be *'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'* (p10)

They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

Many of the children who attend St Teresa's Catholic Primary School come from ethnic minority backgrounds, some of which have English as an additional language and others that do not have a language-rich environment. For these children we recognise that oracy is fundamental and we provide additional support to support them in early speaking skills.

## Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should;

- develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- use accurate spelling and punctuation
- be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions regularly for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

Talk for Writing is used from Nursery to Year 4.

## Composition

Effective composition involves forming, articulation and communicating ideas and organising them coherently. At St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, the children are given opportunities to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model. Where ever possible, children are encouraged to write in response to an enriched curriculum for example using theatre and educational visits, workshops and visitors in school and using real life experiences. We aim to ensure that the children are writing for real audiences and purposes so that they can develop into confident writers.

## Transcription

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription and we want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers. We believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers need to spend less time in thinking about spelling to enable them to channel their energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

A balanced spelling programme includes:

- A sound knowledge of phonics
- An understanding on how words are built, word families and origins
- Developing a range of spelling strategies
- Providing opportunities to apply spelling strategies
- Knowing the rules and conventions *and* that there are often exceptions

We are following the programme of study from the National Curriculum given in Appendix 1.

At St Teresa's Catholica Primary School, we feel that children must be secure in their spelling of common exception words and this is stressed throughout all phases.

We also believe that having taught a spelling rule, children should be encouraged to investigate it in a variety of ways with the emphasis being on their ability to apply that rule. Whilst we still test spellings, we expect to see children's spelling knowledge applied in their written work. Teachers have access to a range of resources to enhance their teaching.

## Handwriting

Accurate letter formation is crucial for children to be able to record their ideas. From entry into school, we work on this to ensure that children have the mechanics for when they begin writing. In Early Years, we recognise the importance of children exploring mark making and the need to develop gross and fine motor control through Disco Door, Funky Fingers and scarf dancing. In order to ensure children form letters correctly, we believe that they should also have direct teaching of letter formation. A pre-cursive handwriting scheme is used in Class 2 and Class 3 and a cursive handwriting style is used consistently throughout Key Stage 2. All teachers have high expectations of handwriting and presentation in all subject areas and should adopt the handwriting style appropriate for their key stage when marking children's books.

## Reading

Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. It also provides them with a wealth of experiences that they may not otherwise have. Real books are used throughout the school and children are encouraged to develop a love of reading from an early age. In order to do this, we select quality texts that we feel will engage and interest our children, we have fostered good home school reading links, and we plan specific reading events throughout the year including reading-based workshops and links with a local published author. The library is bursting with new texts that have been selected to include a variety of character types and storylines. Teachers use texts to plan literacy units with an aim of developing children's reading knowledge and experience.

For a child to develop as a reader, they need both word recognition and comprehension skills and we teach these in conjunction with one another from their first day at school. Teachers follow a comprehension overview to show the progress of reading skills for each year. Their teaching incorporates a variety of activities to effectively develop the different skills. Children participate in shared reading and guided reading and have opportunities to read independently.

Children follow The Oxford Reading Tree scheme of reading books throughout the school and as a result, are exposed to wide variety of reading genres taken from fiction, non-fiction and poetry. In Key Stage 1, the children also read Read, Write Inc books and Phonics Bug texts.

Whole Class Reading is used in Key Stage 2 to provide children with the opportunity to read a range of texts and authors. The sessions are delivered regularly and focus on vocabulary and the development of specific reading skills.

## Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance children's vocabulary, develop their understanding of grammar and their use of punctuation arise naturally from reading and writing. The National Curriculum places high importance on these skills and at St Teresa's Catholic Primary we have adapted our teaching to reflect this. We follow the programmes of study set out in the curriculum and in Appendix 2.

In order to ensure children's development in these areas we teach aspects vocabulary, grammar and punctuation through discrete lessons and embedding it into writing and reading. Where possible, we use a range of strategies and resources to ensure the lessons are creative and engaging.

## Phonics

We follow the Read, Write Inc programme and ensure all children have the opportunity to work through all six phases.

Children take home a phonics reading book that is carefully matched to their phonic ability. This will be a book they can read independently. They will also be given an Oxford Reading Tree book that is shared with an adult at home.

At the end of Year 1, all children take the Phonic Screening test and this allows us to monitor how successfully phonics is being taught and address any issues that arise. For those children who do not pass at the end of Year 1, intervention ensures their needs are addressed early on, to ensure children make accelerated progress.

See separate Phonics Policy

## Homework

At times there may be opportunities to develop skills and understanding of English through additional activities, some of which may take place at home. Weekly homework is set for children from EYFS to year six.

It is expected that children should be given spellings to learn at home that are then tested in school.

Key Stage 1 - a mixture of National Curriculum spellings and Common Exception Words.

Key Stage 2 - a mixture of the National Curriculum spellings and the spellings on the year group words lists (in appendix)

St. Teresa's also gives pupils access to LEXIA where appropriate. Homework is expected to be marked and praise and reward incentives used.

Children are encouraged to read as often as possible to an adult at home.

## Assessment

Assessment is carried out using the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust Steps. Year 2 and Year 6 also use the TAF statements provided by the government.

### Formative Assessment

Teachers integrate the use of formative assessment strategies such as effective questioning, clear learning objectives, the use of success criteria (marking ladders) and effective feedback and response in their teaching.

## Summative Assessment

National Curriculum tests are used at the end of KS1 and 2; teachers use past and sample papers to inform their assessments as they prepare pupils for these assessments (Reading and SPAG).

From Year 2, the children complete an NFER reading test at the beginning of the year. Up to and including Year 4, children complete Hot and Cold tasks. At the beginning of each unit, children are asked to complete a Cold Task which is used by the teacher to inform planning. At the end of the unit, the children complete a Hot Task to highlight the progress they have made over the unit, giving the children a sense of achievement and inform the teacher if there are still weaknesses in a particular area.

All assessments and teaching inform teachers' understanding of a child's ability in English and this is recorded in a Pupil Progress document. Test scores are kept in the shared area, the test booklets are kept in an English folder.

There is a separate Marking and Feedback Policy used to inform high quality feedback and pupils' responses.

## Our Impact:

St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School has a supportive ethos and our approaches support the children in developing their collaborative and independent English skills. Our English curriculum and high-quality teaching ensure that all children experience challenge and success in English. Regular and ongoing assessment informs teaching, as well as intervention, to support and enable the success of each child. These factors ensure that we are able to maintain high standards in English, with progress and achievement in writing and GPS at the end of KS2 being significantly above the national average and in the highest 20% of all schools.

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