

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING



ST. URSULA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

"With God at the heart of our St Ursula's family, we welcome all as we learn and grow together"

Autumn 2024

Policy Statement for English

St. Ursula's Catholic Primary School

Reading Vision

At St Ursula's Catholic Primary School our vision is to inspire children to read for pleasure and enjoyment. Our vision is to inspire children to read for pleasure and enjoyment. We want our children to be confident readers with a thirst for knowledge who have good independent thinking skills and can develop their own interests through reading. Our aim is to provide an environment that encourages children to ask questions and explore the world around through adventure, story and language.

It is essential that our children possess strong independent thinking skills and can develop their own interests and ideas through reading. Our aim is to provide an environment that encourages children to ask questions and explore the world around them through adventure, story and language without barriers.

Writing Vision

At St Ursula's Catholic Primary School we encourage our children to write for a variety of purposes from early years to year 6. We want our children to enjoy developing skills in a wide variety of writing genres. We aim to do this through the use of high quality and engaging texts, imaginative and varied cross curricular planning and teaching which brings the experience to life for the children. As a school we want to encourage children to write about the world they know and the wider world they have yet to discover.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

At St Ursula's we encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. Opportunities for spoken language are integrated through the specific teaching of English, along with activities across the whole curriculum. Children will be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers.
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge.
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary.
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings.
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas.
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s).
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others.
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

READING

“Home-School” reading

All children at St. Ursula’s have access to a library as well as a wide variety of recently purchased texts in their classrooms. In EYFS (Reception) and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2), children will be banded into ability groups (colours) and will select a book to read at home. They are highly encouraged to read at least 5 times a week and receive certificate and other rewards for doing so.

In Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6), children select a book to read at home. Throughout the key stage children are guided using a colour coding scheme to make it easier for them to choose an appropriate book. There are a wide range of texts in the library grouped by reading age and understanding so that children are able to choose texts that not only interest them but are appropriate to extending their independent reading skills. The children will be assessed regularly to inform whether they are ready to move to a different coloured band. This allows readers of all levels to excel and does not limit children to a model of having to complete levels in sequence that may reduce enjoyment in reading. We trust children and guide them to make choices based on challenge and interest. The children are required to read at home each day. A reading record is maintained for the parents, pupil and teacher to write comments about the child’s reading. “Home–School” books should be paid for if lost or damaged (voluntary contribution).

Shared Reading

Shared Reading takes place during lessons and provides opportunity for teachers to model reading strategies, expression, intonation, skills of skimming, scanning and reading for inference. During shared reading the children have the opportunity to experience texts of greater richness and complexity than they may otherwise have access to. The resources for shared reading include a wide range of texts from a variety of genres including poetry, biographies, modern fiction, non-fiction and texts from our literary heritage.

Guided Reading / Whole Class Reading

Guided Reading takes place outside the English lesson. In KS1, children are placed into reading groups according to ability. Each reading group (of around 6 children) will read a book matched to their ability with a teacher for around 20 minutes once a week.

In KS2 reading is taught through whole class reading sessions, the teacher is able to model the skills needed for independent reading whilst supporting the children in developing the various skills required to support their understanding of the text. Teachers can assess the children’s developing reading, along with their understanding of the text through questioning and discussion. Teachers record the progress of children with targets from the new National Curriculum as part of half-termly assessment cycle and make notes to support their judgements for pupil progress meetings.

ENGLISH LESSONS

In KS1, children will have 3 English lessons per week in addition to daily 30 minute phonics lessons and Guided Reading sessions. English work is usually book based and will often link with the children’s Creative Learning Curriculum or Science focus. All genres including Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry texts will be covered in each term. The children will develop their overall comprehension skills and begin to make links between the different areas of their learning.

In KS2, English is taught for 5 hours of the week, usually one hour per day. The National Curriculum Overview (2014) sets out the targets that are to be taught over each half term. Each class focusses on a specific text every half term (See the Long Term Planning Overview) carefully chosen to challenge the reader and improve vocabulary. The books represent the children of St Ursula's with a mixture of genres aimed to engage all groups of children and allow a reading culture to flourish. The texts also link in with the Creative Learning Curriculum topics for each year group. For example when Year 3 are reading Greek Myths by Marcia Williams in their English lessons, in the afternoon they will be learning about Ancient Greece in CLC. This allows our children to make links within their learning which in turn deepens and broadens their educational experience.

The learning objective is shared at the start of the lesson. One lesson per week focuses on the teaching of SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar). This then feeds through into the other reading and writing sessions throughout the week.

WRITING

Shared/Modelled Writing

During shared writing sessions the teacher models the process of writing. This involves the teacher writing as the children observe, the teacher verbally explaining the process of writing, the teacher scribing ideas from the children, the teacher modelling ways to plan, compose, structure, sequence, edit and refine writing. During shared or modelled writing, the teacher also is able to link SPAG objectives in the context of writing.

Independent work

As laid out in the medium term plans, the children have extensive opportunity to write independently to explore and practise the skills introduced in the Shared Writing sessions. In KS2 the children have one exercise book for their English written work, one exercise book for their Handwriting practice and a separate exercise book for their SPAG and reading comprehension. Children in KS1 have a separate Handwriting and Grammar book.

Differentiation

Teachers' planning takes into account children of all abilities. Children receive scaffolded support, for example through the use of word banks and writing frames, prepared by the teacher. Teaching assistants are often able to support specific groups of children as they work. Children are challenged with extension work and targeted questioning from teachers and teaching assistants.

Writing Initiatives

Children from Early years to Year 2 are taught to hold pencils correctly and sit in the optimum position for handwriting, they practise letter formation before writing simple sentences, linking them together to form narratives. Children begin to learn grammar terms in Year 1 and are taught to use adjectives, noun phrases and a range of punctuation to improve their work. This continues throughout Year 3 to Year 6. Children are taught to use vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation to help them improve their writing. All classes have access to dictionaries and thesauruses to help them edit and improve their work. In KS2 they also use the 'Descriptosaurus' to support creative writing for stories, which includes lists of words and phrases useful for enhancing description in their work.

VOCABULARY

We ensure that we provide a 'language rich' environment for the children by modelling and encouraging the use of mature vocabulary – dedicating time to explore and explain these more complex and sometimes unfamiliar words. These words, sometimes referred to as 'tier 2 words', are not necessarily specific to subject domains but require students to have a developed vocabulary in order to comprehend the meaning of the word. In addition to this, these words are often integral to a students' comprehension of exam questions and core subject knowledge.

Spelling tests

In the KS1, spelling is mainly taught during phonics sessions and is assessed as such in daily spelling practices. In KS2, spelling rules are taught during the weekly SPAG session. The teaching of spelling is also integrated throughout the day across the curriculum.

Children from Year 1 to Year 6 are provided with a list of words to learn as part of their homework based on the statutory list from the new National Curriculum using the online learning resource 'Spelling Shed.' They are given a week to learn and practise those words and are encouraged to use a variety of methods to learn them including the Look Say Cover Write Check method. In KS2, these words are tested during a short spelling test each week where children are able to assess what they have remembered and the words they need to continue to practise.

HANDWRITING

Writing tools

Children from Nursery to Years 3 and 4 use pencil and work towards achieving a pen licence. At which point they use blue handwriting pens. This is dependent on the child having the correct grip and showing they have the correct joining and size of letter formation.

Handwriting

In KS1, handwriting is taught twice a week. The teacher models the correct formation of letters/words and the children write in their own lined exercise books. In KS2, the Nelson Handwriting Scheme is used to support lessons. Handwriting is taught to children in Years 3 and 4 on a regular basis, and is regularly used as morning work in Year 5 and 6. The teacher models handwriting techniques on the board and the children practise the skills independently. They also use handwriting textbooks to support the practice of particular joins. Appendix 1 shows how each letter is formed and joined, using the correct shape, size and spacing. Those children who have not achieved fluent handwriting receive extra sessions outside of lesson time to ensure progression.

Handwriting progression:

By the end of Reception:

- Children are expected to hold a pencil correctly
- Children are expected to be able to form most letters correctly
- Children should be confident writing their names

By the end of Year 1:

- Children should be expected to form all letters correctly with minimal reversals.
- Children should be able to write letters of the same size and letters should be sitting on the lines neatly.
- The children use either large or medium sized lined exercise books.

By the end of Year 2:

- All children should be able to form all letters correctly with no reversals.
- Children's writing should be neat and uniform in size.
- The children use either medium or narrow sized lined exercise books.

By the end of Year 3:

- The children are expected to be able to form, join and sit each letter on the line correctly.
- Their handwriting should be consistent in size and spaces between words should be consistent.
- The children use purple handwriting exercise books with 3 guiding lines

By the end of Year 4:

- Children should use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Children's handwriting should increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

By the end of Year 5

- The children are expected to increase the speed of their handwriting and continue to ensure that all their handwriting is joined, legible and fluent.
- Children should be able to choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and decide whether or not to join specific letters.
- They should be able to choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task e.g. pen for English and pencil for Maths.

By the end of Year 6

- The children are expected to write in a legible and fluent style, with the correct joins, size and spacing.

ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Teachers continually assess children's reading and writing against the statutory requirements from the National Curriculum. Towards the end of each half term, the pupils' work is judged as emerging, expected or exceeding national expectations for their year. This is then used to inform the data used at PPM (Pupil Progress Meetings) where the teachers and head teacher will monitor progress and analyse areas for improvement. This will help the teacher to inform planning, interventions and target setting for pupils.


Signed: _____
Head teacher/


Signed: _____
Governing Body

11th December 2024

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t
u v w x y z

Letter families

For teaching letter formation

Letter family 1

Down and off in another direction

l i t j u y

Letter family 2

Down and retrace upwards

m n r b p h k

Letter family 3

Anticlockwise round

c a d o q g e f s

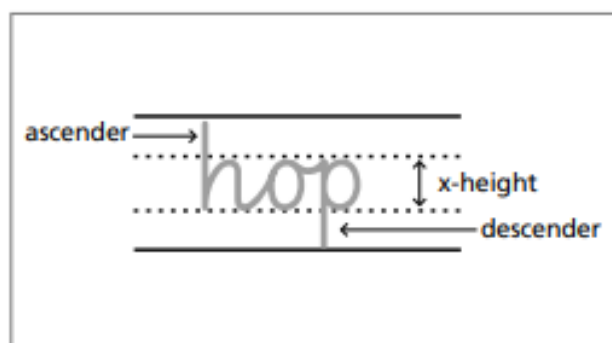
Letter family 4

Zig-zag letters

v w x z

THE JOINS

Joins between letters increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility. In *Nelson Handwriting*, the 26 lower case letters have been divided into five joining groups (which are not the same as the letter sets/families), according to the nature of the joins they require. There are four types of join and a set of 'break' letters after which joins are never made. (See pages 8–9 for details of the joining groups and letter sets.) The joins are taught in Pupil Book 1B and practice is provided in all subsequent books.



Joining

Joining letters is introduced midway through year one, and/or once children can confidently form and write letters correctly. This helps with spelling, as research tells us that seeing words as a whole, rather than a series of isolated letters, helps us memorise and spell words correctly. Joined writing also helps pupils write more, increasing the speed of writing and fluency. *Nelson Handwriting* teaches the four joins at the same time as teaching the letter sets/families.

The first join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 2 is made with exactly the same movement as a diagonal join from one letter to the start of the next.

in

Teaching the first handwriting join is linked to the letter sets/families:

- When the first diagonal join is introduced, from the bottom of a small letter to the top of the next, we teach the diagonal join to Set 1 letters first, e.g. *ed, eg, ac, as*.
- This is followed by the diagonal join to Set 2 letters e.g. *iu, ig, iy*.
- Then diagonal joins to Set 3 letters e.g. *ar, an, am, ap*.
- Finally the diagonal join to Set 4 letters e.g. *aw, ew, ex, ux*.

The second join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that the join meets the ascender halfway up the letter and then continues to the top of the ascender.

il

Teaching the second handwriting join is linked to letter families too:

- The second join, a diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of an ascender, is taught using Set 1 letters first, then Set 2, 3 and 4.
- For example to Set 1 letters *if, ef, uf*; to Set 2 letters *il, it*; Set 3 letters *ck, ch*.

The third join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 2 is a horizontal curve because the join is from the x-height of one letter to the x-height of the next.

og

Teaching the third join, the horizontal join from the top of one letter, across and to the top of the next, is also taught using letter families:

- The third join to Set 1 letters e.g. *wa, wo, fo*; to Set 3 letters *on, om*; Set 4 letters *ow*.

The fourth join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that it goes from the x-height of one letter to the top of the ascender of the next.



The fourth join is the join from the top of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

- To Set 1 letters e.g. *of, ff*; to set 2 e.g. *wl, rl*; Set 3 e.g. *ob, oh, ok*.

The break letters

Joins are never made after the letters in this group. No join is ever made to or from the letter **z**. A small space should be left after each break letter so that it is spaced as evenly as the joined letters.

The letters **e** and **s** have slightly varying forms because their shapes depend on the nature of the preceding join. Attention is drawn to these special cases in Pupil Books 1A, 1B and 2.

As the size of writing decreases, children should be encouraged to decrease the space between words. By the time children are using Pupil Book 1A this space should be the width of a lower case letter **a**, and the space between two lines of writing should be about twice the height of this letter.

Teaching the joined style

- In the early stages the correct movements are more important than the appearance of the writing. Children should be discouraged from forming writing with incorrect movements, even if they manage to achieve results that appear satisfactory. However, in later stages a more individual style based around *Nelson Handwriting* is encouraged.
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations. The *Nelson Handwriting* online teaching software is useful for this; you can also use whiteboards or flipcharts.
- Observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the teacher to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
- Talk the children through the process, using appropriate language.
- Encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought processes they are using as they write.
- Most children will need extra practice with making the joins. The Pupil Books and Resources and Assessment books provide ample material for this.
- Encouraging children to use the basic handwriting patterns both for practice and for decorative purposes is a valuable technique.