

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

English Policy



“Doing our best for God”

Signed: *Karen Pearson* (English Lead)

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'If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.'
Stephen King



Purpose of Study

'English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.'

(DfE National Curriculum 2014)

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum 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.

Governing Body

Regular reports on the progress of our English curriculum are made to the Governing Body via the Link Governor to the Staffing and Curriculum Committee. This policy will be reviewed every year, and in light of statutory changes to the National Curriculum.

The Requirements of the National Curriculum

In Key Stage 1 and 2, English is a core subject that is taught daily. In addition to English lessons, children have regular opportunities to apply English skills across the curriculum with the same high expectations used within English lessons. It is expected children maintain their standards of literacy in their writing within wider curriculum subjects. The programme of study at key stage 1 and 2- through a rich teaching sequence- focuses on the 3 key elements as outlined in the National Curriculum.

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
- Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

The long term plan for English ensures that there is a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry across the terms which incorporates the objectives from the three elements. Teachers' short term planning breaks down further the objectives that will be taught, the resources and activities that will be part of the lessons.

EYFS

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught English skills through the Early Years Framework - Communication and Language - working towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year. Children develop competence in the spoken word and listening and extend and enrich their vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.

Writing

Audience and Purpose

Throughout the writing phase, children are immersed in a range of texts that support the genre being taught

They are given opportunities to write in a wide range of ways:

- character descriptions
- setting descriptions
- narratives
- diary entries
- letters (formal and informal)
- reports
- instructions
- explanations

- recounts
- persuasion
- poetry

Grammar and Punctuation

Children are taught specific objectives for their year group as well as revisiting those from previous years. Objectives are set out in the long term overviews

Spelling

In years 3-6, we follow the No Nonsense Spelling programme which offers an accessible, clear progression in the teaching of spelling. The focus of the programme is on the comprehensive *teaching* of spelling, which embraces knowledge of spelling conventions – patterns and rules; but integral to the teaching is the opportunity to promote the *learning* of spellings, including statutory words, common exceptions and personal spellings.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are essential tools for all areas of the curriculum, as talk underpins learning and thinking. At St Bernadette's, we provide our pupils with many, varied contexts for talk across the curriculum. Teachers create opportunities within English lessons to explicitly teach the skills of speaking and listening. All our pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of speaking and listening through group discussion, debate, presentation, paired and group interactions and drama. Speaking and listening is used as a tool to assess our pupils' understanding in all areas of the curriculum and to enable our pupils to share their thinking and learning together.

Handwriting

Children have short handwriting sessions during the week as outlined in the Handwriting Policy. Handwriting begins in EYFS with mark- making and all pupils are given access to a wide range of pencils, pens, felt tips and crayons with which to hone their fine motor skills. We follow National Curriculum guidelines and children are taught cursive writing. Cursive letter formation is consistent in all classes including working walls.

Working Walls

Working walls are an important part of the learning process as they provide children with a form of continuous provision that they can refer to throughout the journey. These should detail the purpose for writing, vocabulary, skills being taught and modelled examples. During the process, the working walls should be referred to regularly and often. Key parts of the working wall should remain after a learning journey so children are reminded and encouraged to use these skills in other writing.

- Modelled Writing - Teachers model writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the children to utilise in their own work.
- Shared Writing - Teachers use the ideas from the children to create shared pieces of writing. This enables the children to see the Writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.

Reading

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. At St Bernadette's, we want every child to leave school as a passionate and confident reader with a passion for literature. Reading is a habit and that habit needs to be grounded in what we do at school, therefore reading underpins every subject area that we teach.

Phonics

In EYFS/Year 1 we use The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonics Programme (2021) in its entirety as a consistent, systematic high quality, whole school approach to teaching phonics. This begins almost immediately as children enter Reception and is carried through until at least the point where children can read almost all words fluently. See the Phonics Policy for further details.

Whole Class Shared Reading

Children from Year 2 to Year 6 take part in whole class shared reading sessions using a range of high quality texts. We use VIPERS to develop reading comprehension skills which include:

- vocabulary – learning to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning as well as developing their understanding and use of figurative language
- inference -
- prediction
- explanation
- retrieval
- Sequencing (KS1) summarising (KS2)

We use quality texts that are age appropriate but challenging, as the reading of these texts is scaffolded and/or modelled by the teacher, sessions will focus on a specific skill, with all children having access to a copy of the text and any written work completed in their shared reading books.

Home Reading Books

Children have access to a wide range of home reading books to choose from. In EYFS/Year 1, children will continue with the Little Wandle reading books as well as a library book. From Year 2, children read from reading schemes including Collins Big Cat and Oxford Reading Tree before moving onto a wide range of popular fiction available for fluent readers. We continue to encourage parents to read with their children daily and record this in the reading diary.

Class Novel

Every class across the school is read to by an adult daily, fostering a love for reading through exposing the children to high quality literature. These texts are mapped out in our class reading spines, specifically designed by the English team to ensure exposure to a range of high-quality, diverse texts each year. Texts within each year group's book spine are chosen with the intention of opening up discussions around the language of books, whilst also reflecting diversity and ensuring a mix of modern and traditional literature, alongside quality poetry and non-fiction texts.

Dictionaries and Thesauruses

In class, our children regularly use dictionaries, thesauruses and a wide range of information books, both as hard copies and online, throughout the curriculum subjects and increasingly as they progress through school. During the writing process, children also have access to Descriptosauruses which help children expand their descriptive vocabulary, experiment with language and sentence structure and build up narratives based around settings, characters and creatures, so they can improve their creative writing.

Library

The library has a wide range of classic and new fiction books that the children can choose from for home readers and for silent reading in class. The Subject Lead ensures that the library keeps up with the latest titles to constantly engage children in reading.

Book Corners

Every classroom has a dedicated, well-resourced reading area containing a range of books and text types for children to access independently.

Assessment

At St Bernadette's we have a range of ways of assessing English:

- EYFS Profile
- Teacher Assessment
- NFER reading assessment (Year 2-5)
- NFER grammar and punctuation assessment (Year 2-5)
- Y2 KS1 SATS (optional)

The following are statutory assessments:

- Y1 Phonics screening
- Y6 KS2 SATS

In addition, teachers will assess children's writing using the year group objectives grid at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Regular staff meetings allow for whole school moderation of writing to deepen understanding of standards.

Marking and Feedback

Extended writing and SPaG books are marked according the Marking Policy. In longer pieces of writing, children will be given guidance on how to improve their writing against the year group objectives. Children are also expected to correct any misspellings, missed punctuation or incorrect grammar. This is highlighted in the margin using the marking codes.

| Marking Codes | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| LO ✓ | Objective achieved |
| LO → | Gaps in objective |
| LO? | Objective not achieved |
| ✓ | Correct answers |
| ? | Incorrect answers |
| VF | Verbal feedback |
| AS | Adult support |
| CL | Capital letter |
| sp | spelling |
| g | grammar |
| p | punctuation |

Intervention

Using tracking data, combined with teacher's knowledge of children's progress, children who are underachieving in reading are identified and placed into intervention groups. These programmes are intended to accelerate progress of individual children, identifying gaps in learning and providing targeted support for these children.

Inclusion

All of our pupils are provided with equal access to our English curriculum. We provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. Our pupils are taught challenging age-related content and it is our expectation that the vast majority of our pupils will achieve age-related

expectations at the end of each year and key stage. Where pupils have fallen behind their peers and cannot access age related content, class teachers will differentiate the curriculum to ensure those pupils are able to progress, succeed and catch up.

Rigorous, ongoing assessment for learning ensures that teaching and learning activities are aimed at the point at which these pupils can develop their understanding and skills. Pupils may be scaffolded through the provision of guided writing and reading, differentiated activities, carefully levelled reading materials, support from a TA, through the use of word-banks and place mats, differentiated success criteria and by differentiated expectations of outcomes during open ended tasks.

Our assessments enable us to quickly identify individuals or groups of pupils who are working below age related expectations. Steps are immediately identified to improve the attainment and progress of these pupils. In some circumstances this may require the involvement of the SENCo.

The Role of the Subject Leader

The English Subject Leader, along with the Headteacher, is responsible for maintaining and improving the standards of the teaching and learning in English through the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. This includes:

- Monitoring of pupil progress
- Pupil voice
- Analysing data
- Monitoring the provision of English in line with the subject monitoring policy
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and ordering resources
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments
- Analysis of SATs results to identify areas for development
- Checking that assessment for English is carried out in line with the school's assessment policy
- Long term plans of writing units, grammar and punctuation
- Moderation of writing – staff meetings, Catholic cluster

Other Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside other school policies including:

- Teaching and learning policy
- Assessment
- Marking and feedback policy
- Handwriting Policy
- Phonics Policy
- SEND policy
- Computing policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Acceptable use policy