

Policy for English		
Date of policy:	Spring 2018	Committee: Curriculum and Standards
Next review:	Spring 2020	

Together we Achieve, Together we Believe, Together we Care

Achieve: Together we will be the very best that we can be.

Believe: Together we will live, share, experience and celebrate our Catholic faith.

Care: Together we will be a safe, caring community where we value ourselves, respect and care for others and all of God's creation.

Aims:

- To promote positive attitudes to Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening
- To develop children's ability to become confident users of language: both oral and written
- To nurture a lifelong love of Reading
- To provide all children with a solid understanding of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammatical rules to provide a secure foundation for their next phase of education
- To ensure clear and consistent teaching across the whole school

English Skills – Writing composition, Grammar & Punctuation

In order to create meaningful and memorable learning experiences, our English skills lessons are planned around high-quality, engaging class texts, which usually have cross-curricular links to other current topics. Through our text-based units, we cover a range of writing skills and styles, in line with the National Curriculum guidance for each year group. Grammar and punctuation skills carry a heavy emphasis and are taught in context, using the class text as a high-quality model. Children learn Grammar rules and practise these skills through their English lessons and are then given opportunity to demonstrate Mastery of these skills by applying these in their independent writing, both in English and in other curriculum areas.

We encourage children to be reflective and independent learners through teaching them how to edit and make improvements to their work. Children are provided with success criteria for all writing, which lists skills and features that they need to include in their writing so that they understand how to be successful. After drafting an extended piece of writing, children are taught how to re-read their work to check for errors, and how to self-assess against the success criteria. This process is taught by teacher modelling and adult intervention where required. We also provide opportunities for children to peer-assess and give feedback to each other. Children are given opportunities to edit and make improvements to their work based on teacher, peer or self-assessment. Resources such as word mats, age-appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses are readily available for children to access in all classrooms to aid this process.

Teaching of Grammar & Punctuation, practising of writing composition skills, and planning, editing & redrafting work is completed in children's English Skills books. Writing that has been completed and edited independently may go into the Writing Assessment books, used for teachers to complete assessments of unaided work. Teachers will provide children with a writing target each time a piece of assessed writing is completed, which will then be worked on in subsequent English lessons. These targets will be shared with parents at Parent's Evenings and in school reports.

Reading

In order to build a lifelong love of reading, children need to be exposed to texts that engage and excite them. We have a well-resourced library where children are able to select a Banded Reading book, matched to their current reading ability, but also a "Free Reader" book. Children are free to select any Free Reader book that is of interest to them; Free Reader books include picture books and non-fiction texts as well as books from popular series or by well-known authors. Our Banded Book system also includes novels by popular children's authors so that children are engaged as well as challenged by their Banded Reading Book. To foster a culture of Reading for Pleasure, we involve children across the school in choosing new books to buy for the library, and encourage them to recommend books to their peers.

Children are introduced to a range of authors and different text types through the whole-class texts used in English lessons, and also through Guided Reading. Reading Skills can be reinforced when using the class texts, but are taught through Guided Reading. Guided Reading is taught in all year groups, and each group of children will study a text which is pitched to be slightly more challenging than their current independent Book Band level. Each Guided Reading session is focussed on one of the Reading Focuses (RFs) against which pupils are assessed. In some sessions, children will read with an adult, where verbal modelling and teaching of these skills takes place, and in other sessions they may complete independent tasks practising these RF skills previously taught. Some groups may complete comprehension activities, for example First News comprehension, which feature a range of questions linked to all of the different Reading Focuses. We also use some digital resources, including Oxford Owl eBooks and Lexia.

Speaking and Listening (including Drama)

Opportunities for Speaking and Listening permeate the whole curriculum across the school. Pupils are given various opportunities for Speaking and Listening across the curriculum, through practices such as talking partners, group and class discussions/debates, reciting rhymes, poems, songs & stories, role play and drama. During these activities, children are taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English, develop their answers and justify ideas with reasons, ask questions to check their understanding, develop their vocabulary, negotiate or persuade others, evaluate and build on the ideas of others, give well-structured descriptions and explanations, and develop their understanding by speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. In addition to this, children are provided with opportunities to showcase their speaking and drama skills through readings and

performances, including Class Assemblies, reading in Mass or Church and Christmas, Easter or end-of-year productions.

Spelling

Spelling is taught in dedicated sessions 4 times a week in Years 2 to 6. Children are assessed half-termly and grouped according to their current gaps in their knowledge of spelling rules, except in Year 2, where the Year 2 Spelling rules are taught to all children who have passed their Phonics Screening Check. A different spelling rule is taught each week and children take home a list of words from this rule to be tested the following week. At the end of each half term, children are tested on a selection of 20 words from all words learned this half term to ensure rules have been retained. We follow the Rising Stars Spelling Scheme and also teach strategies from Making Spellings Memorable for children to practise their spellings.

Phonics

At our school we know how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to give your child the best start. Reading together at home is one of the simplest and most important ways in which you can help your child. To support your child in becoming an effective and confident reader we hope to work with you on the first step which is to develop their knowledge of phonics and enable them to decode the different words they may come across.

We follow the *Letters and Sounds* phonics programme which is delivered through six phases of phonic teaching (see below for more details). Qualified teachers assess children regularly to determine which phase matches their stage of reading development and all children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 are placed into small groups which suit their needs regardless of their age or year group. Children receive five sessions of 15 minutes focussed phonics teaching every week. The progress of all children is reviewed frequently and individuals are accelerated through the programme or offered additional intervention as required.

Phase 1: Children explore and experiment with sounds. They learn to differentiate between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration (this will start from birth through to nursery and EYFS).

Phase 2: To introduce grapheme/phoneme (letter/sound) correspondence (this normally starts in nursery or EYFS). Children learn that words are constructed from phonemes and that phonemes are represented by graphemes. They have a knowledge of a small selection of common consonants (C) and vowels (V), they start with *s, a, t, p, i, n* and begin to put these letters together to read and spell CVC words.

Phase 3: Children are taught that there is one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes which will enable them to read and spell simple regular words. Most children will work at this stage in EYFS. Children link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. They hear and say sounds in the order they occur in the word and read simple words by blending the phonemes from left to right. They recognise common digraphs (e.g. *th*) and they read some high frequency words.

Phase 4: Children learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants, they learn to segment and blend adjacent consonants in words and apply this skill when reading and spelling. Children will move from CVC words (pot, sheep) to CVCC words (pots) and CCVC words (spot) and then CCVCC words (spots).

Phase 5: Children are taught to recognise and use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes and spelling the phonemes already taught (most children will learn this during Year 1). Children will use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes (e.g. the 'c' in coat and city). Children are taught to recognise an increasing number of high frequency words automatically although their knowledge and skills gained through understanding phonics will be the prime approach to reading and spelling.

Phase 6: Children will develop their skills and fluency in reading and spelling, creating an increasing capacity to read for meaning. Children will apply their phonic knowledge to recognise and spell an increasing number of complex words. They will read an increasing number of high and medium frequency words independently and automatically.

Children complete a national Phonics' Screen Check' in June of Year 1.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught by class teachers in accordance with the school's agreed scheme of work— showing progression to cursive writing and expectations for all year groups. When children have secure letter formation and fluent cursive script, they will be awarded a "Pen Licence". The expectation is that once children have received a Pen Licence, they will complete all writing tasks in pen. High expectations are set of handwriting, and the same level of presentation in books is expected across the curriculum.

Assessment

The key principle of assessment is to track the progress of children and to inform planning and teaching. A range of formative assessments are carried out in every lesson and on every day in order to assess children's understanding against the lesson objective. In addition to this, summative assessments are gathered and shared with SLT.

Children's writing is assessed through ongoing teacher assessment, informed by the examples of independent writing recorded in the children's Writing Assessment books. Children are given detailed teacher feedback and receive a new writing target each time they complete an independent piece, which will then be a priority in all follow-up writing until this is achieved.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is assessed through termly tests in Years 2 – 6.

Reading is assessed through ongoing teacher assessment and also termly tests.

Next review: Spring 2020