



St Matthew's Catholic Primary School



English Policy

Introduction.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at St Matthew's school. To ensure the document remains relevant, practical and effective, it will be reviewed regularly.

Through English, the pupils will develop their skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. We believe it is every child's right to do this in a safe and secure setting, which offers them a variety of purposes to use their language skills and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings, in a stimulating environment through a rich and engaging curriculum. This is the right of all children, regardless of their gender or ethnic background.

Aims.

The main aims are as follows:

- At the earliest age, develop children's confidence as skilled communicators and, in turn, learn how to be attentive listeners.
- To acquire a rich and varied vocabulary for use in both spoken and written forms.
- To foster an ethos that both reading and writing are essential skills to thinking and learning across all curriculum areas.
- To ensure pupils have access to a solid foundation of phoneme/ grapheme correspondence, through a daily systematic synthetic phonics programme (Sounds-Write).
- From the earliest age, for pupils to see the value in both reading and writing and to enjoy doing it.
- To provide stimulating and purposeful writing opportunities for pupils to be creative writers and to express themselves in writing with confidence.
- To enable pupils to become independent writers, and communicate meaning in narrative and non narrative forms.
- To enable pupils to use the planning, drafting and editing process to improve their written work and sustain their writing of fiction, non fiction and poetry.
- To develop a secure understanding of grammar, knowledge of linguistic conventions and spelling rules for reading and writing and spoken language.
- To enable pupils to develop legible handwriting in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed.
- To offer opportunities for children to access their own information through the use of non fiction and non literary texts as well as ICT based information sources.
- For pupils to use ICT as an effective means of communication and an effective tool for learning.
- To respond to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- To respond to pupils' written work with positive feedback that allows them to move their learning forward.



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Statutory Requirements.

Reception.

In Reception, the heart of our English curriculum is our phonics programme. All staff are trained in the 'Sounds Write' programme and have a consistent use of gestures and language when carrying out any work. When the children are ready, they are taught that letters are symbols for sounds and are introduced to them at a pace of 3 sounds per week. From the very first day of Reception the children are taught the skills of blending (for reading) and segmenting (for spelling) using the taught sounds and symbols, as well as how to change words by manipulating their sounds. The children are also taught common exception words. This programme is rigorous and consistent.

The children are offered a variety of texts in large groups and carry out listening comprehension daily, on a 1:1 basis and independently. The children read in small groups as part of their daily phonic sessions. We expose the children to weekly listening comprehensions exercises which introduce them to the skills that are needed to be a confident and competent reader, and are imperative later in school life.

Children learn to write sounds in order (for words) and then to break the flow of speech into words for phrases and sentences. They will then use their skills creatively in purposeful contexts during their child initiated time, as well as adult directed tasks. The children begin to learn how to improve their writing through the use of the 'Red Review' and what it means to edit and redraft a piece of work.

Children mark make on both a large and small scale using a variety of materials to do so and are taught correct letter formation skills weekly, which correspond with the phonics programme.

Year 1

In Year 1, the children continue with the rigorous 'Sounds write' phonics programme which extends both their reading and writing development. At this point it introduces the children to different spellings for the same sound to build their knowledge and competence.

They further their knowledge of punctuation and sentence types whilst also broadening their vocabulary through continued group reading. Children read in small groups and advance their comprehension abilities through undertaking specific and planned out tasks at the appropriate level. The children are given frequent opportunities to begin the editing and redrafting process, using the 'Red Review'. They develop the skills needed for handwriting and learn how to organise their ideas in writing. Continued development of oral skills and simple grammatical structures are taught in Year 1 also.

The children continue to be exposed to a variety of shared texts on a daily basis, as well as given the opportunity to read for pleasure and in small groups for guided reading sessions.



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The children are taught the skills of reading comprehension through whole class listening comprehension, which follows the whole school approach.

Year 2

In Year 2, the pupils continue using the phonics programme 'Sounds Write' to deepen their knowledge of blending and segmenting. At this point the children also move on to looking more in depth at spelling rules and patterns and more grammatical features are introduced as well as more sentence types and specific sentence structure. This will be applied to their writing over a variety of genres. In Year 2 the editing and redrafting process becomes clearly ingrained and the children are given ample opportunity to improve their writing based on teaching provided by the class teacher, through the use of the 'Red Review'.

Children continue to broaden their vocabulary through shared reading as well as independent reading and begin to use more complex comprehension skills. By this point, most children will be confident and fluent readers and so the approach of whole class guided reading becomes the primary route to extending comprehension skills. (Any child who is not yet fluent will still receive 1:1 reading sessions)

They will further develop their handwriting by looking at letter joins and will establish good handwriting habits.

Years 3 and 4.

Over the course of these two year groups, children become independent and enthusiastic readers, who read frequently for pleasure. Children will discuss and justify their views about books, plays and poetry that they have read. The whole class guided reading approach continues throughout this age phase, taking on a more child led basis. Time and opportunity are given to the children to apply the specific comprehension skill they are focusing on, as well as sound teacher models. Vocabulary continues to be built throughout these sessions, exposing the children to words in texts which they may not have seen before.

Children continue to build upon their knowledge of grammatical features and word classes by moving away from phonics sessions and into stand-alone grammar sessions that are consolidated during English lessons. Phonics sessions are provided for any children that are not yet confident in any of the key skills, and this consistently follows the 'Sounds Write' programme which they have already been exposed to.

The children develop their own writing by looking at and unpicking high quality examples discussing why certain features are used, then editing and improving their own texts through the use of the 'Red Review'. The children continue to work on joining their handwriting accurately. Children develop their spoken language in a variety of situations including debate, formal presentations and drama.

Years 5 and 6.



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Year 5 and 6 children continue to access stand-alone grammar sessions, building on taught spelling rules and features of writing, all of which are applied and consolidated in English lessons. Children continue to read for pleasure as well as having access to a range of high quality, specifically chosen texts, for their taught reading and writing sessions, which impacts on all of their literacy skills. Whole class guided reading continues throughout this age phase where children are consolidating and honing their taught skills.

The children continually draft and edit their work, making reference to these chosen texts to improve word choices and writing structure and are given opportunity to rewrite and improve their writing through the use of the 'Red Review'.

The children confidently join their handwriting accurately and fluently, and reflect upon the presentation of their written work.

Organisation and Methodology.

The National Curriculum states that English is a core subject and that all children should be given the opportunity to improve their fundamental skills, knowledge and concepts of:

- Spoken Language
- Reading, both word reading and comprehension
- Writing; spelling, composition, handwriting and spelling and grammar.
- Vocabulary Development.

All pupils at St Matthew's school take part in a daily English lesson, which covers the programmes of study that are set out in the National Curriculum. Through well planned units, the children cover narrative, non fiction and poetry which incorporate aspects of all the aforementioned skills, knowledge and conceptual areas for development. This ensures that the children build skills and understand the process of reading through to writing. Teachers take into account cross curricular links, as well as the needs and interests of the cohort to provide a fully engaging and enjoyable literacy journey for the children.

In classes, the children are taught as individuals, in small groups and in whole class situations. Key skills are tackled in a systematic but varied way, so pupils acquire a wide range of strategies that they are confident to apply independently. Various approaches are adapted and integrated to meet the individual needs of the pupils.

Staff use a combination of ability and mixed ability groups for different purposes which are well thought out and planned to meet specific objectives.

Spoken Language.

A range of interactive teaching strategies, which allows the children to be exposed to varied and quality language are utilised to further spoken language skills which impacts on reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.



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Spoken Language is developed through:

- Listening to stories
- Discussion of stories and language used
- Story telling
- Describing and listening to events and experiences
- Verbalising and explaining their thinking
- Class discussion and debate
- Speaking and listening to varied audiences including peers, teachers and other adults.
- Speaking and listening in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.
- Drama/ role play activities
- Reading aloud
- Presentations
- Collective Worship, Mass and assemblies

Reading

Reading is split into two main focus areas which are, word reading and reading comprehension. Staff use a variety of techniques to ensure both areas are covered fully throughout the year, through well thought out units of work.

Reading is developed through:

- Systematic and consistent phonics teaching throughout EYFS and KS1.
- Shared whole class reading.
- Listening comprehension sessions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants carrying out regular guided reading sessions which are used to teach reading and develop comprehension skills as well as allowing the children to read aloud.
- Whole school access to levelled home reading books.
- Use of targeted reading comprehensions schemes – Cracking Comprehension
- Pupils having access to a wide range of literature and non-fiction texts in classrooms and libraries.
- The use of ICT based reference materials in the form of educational television, video, computers and tablets.
- Providing a print rich environment with interactive displays in order to stimulate pupils' reading.
- Sessions of independent reading where pupils have the opportunity to read, share and discuss enjoyable texts with their peers and adults.
- The involvement of parents both in and out of school, ensuring there is a home school commitment to the encouragement and value of reading.
- Visits to the library



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- Daily story time for all pupils.
- Children having the opportunity to read their work aloud regularly in class and assemblies.
- Encouragement of reading for pleasure.
- Whole school reading reward scheme.
- Extra-curricular reading clubs.

Writing

Writing is divided into two main sections, which are transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them into writing).

Transcription- phonics and spelling.

In St Matthew's, phonics is taught through the rigorous and consistent 'Sounds Write' scheme on a daily basis to all of EYFS and KS1. As a team, we have attended training and worked together to ensure consistency of language and gesturing across both key stages. The children are introduced to sounds and symbols from the very beginning of Reception and continually work on their blending, segmenting and sound manipulation skills throughout the rest of their school life. The sessions are taught on a whole class basis so that every child has the same exposure to the same sounds and the same time. Any children that are pinpointed as at risk of falling behind or disadvantaged are swiftly targeted for 'pre teach' and intervention sessions in order to facilitate each child's progress. The sessions provide children with the opportunities to both read and write on a daily basis.

Any children leaving KS1 that are not secure with code knowledge or the skills of blending, segmenting and sound manipulation, will still receive rigorous phonics sessions by intervention with a trained member of staff.

By the end of KS1 and into KS2, the children receive specific and targeted spelling lessons where by they are taught spelling patterns and rules and are provided the opportunities to use and apply these strategies in their own writing.

Transcription- Handwriting.

Children are taught correct letter formation from EYFS which is continued on through KS1 and KS2. In late KS1 the children focus on specific letter joins and how to tackle this fluently. See handwriting policy for detailed teaching sequence.

Composition.

The teaching of composition revolves around equipping the children with the correct skills needed to shape their own ideas, then being able to confidently communicate and organise them for the writing process. Through composition, the children are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing as well as enabling them to use or improve their vocabulary and grammar, whilst also being aware of the audience, purpose and context of their writing.



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Composition is developed through:

- Weekly grammar teaching
- Regular use of the punctuation pyramid.
- Over writing a good example of text (James Clements CPD)
- Teachers providing a wide range of purposes for writing.
- Teachers providing a wide range of opportunities to practise forms for writing, including narrative, poetry, non-narrative and play scripts.
- Providing opportunities to write for a range of audiences.
- Teaching pupils the main rules and conventions of written English.
- Teaching pupils to self evaluate and to use the plan, draft and edit process to improve their work.
- Teaching pupils to apply a range of spelling strategies in order to become independent and accurate spellers.
- Teaching pupils to use a legible style of handwriting and making them aware of the importance of clear, neat presentation in order to communicate effectively.
- Teachers use working walls as a tool to help pupils with the reading to writing process.
- Use of drama in order to build and structure ideas.

English and the skills of literacy are seen as the primary mode through which pupils access other areas of the curriculum. The links between the skills learnt in English which are applicable to other subjects are made explicit to the children. Throughout the key stages, homework is also used to assist progress within the English curriculum.

Planning.

Planning for English is carried out at three levels within St Matthew's school:

- Whole school planning (Long term)
- Year group unit planning (Medium term)
- Individual teacher's weekly planning (Short term)

Each year group's unit planning is developed from the Teacher's choice of high quality, age appropriate texts. Both planning and the chosen texts relate to the term's topic of work, which results in each unit or work having a very clear focus, allowing children to have a purpose for their writing and allowing for planned incidental writing across the curriculum and intentionally widening the children's vocabulary at the same time. Topics are linked in the Teacher's short term planning.

Assessment and Recording.

We have a consistent approach to monitoring and assessing the learning taking place within English. This allows us to track individual pupils' progress to inform future planning, teaching and reporting.



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Each child has the BCCET writing assessment tool at the front of their English books which the staff are to use on a regular basis to assess and plan from to closely monitor the daily progress we see.

During assessment week, each teacher will carry out summative assessments on a half termly basis, following the NFER assessment scheme. Year 5 and 6 will use past SAT test papers to both gain an over view of progress, whilst also preparing pupils for their end of school assessments. Teachers will then analyse their results in order to target particular children to ensure progression is made. Any children receiving specific English intervention will have their progress monitored on intervention record sheets, which will be seen by the English lead regularly.

Assesment of Writing.

Throughout the school Teacher judgement is deemed the most accurate way to assess writing progress. Specific, targeted teaching of particular aspects of genres, coupled with the plan, draft and edit approach leads to children producing and independent final piece of writing for each unit taught. Staff then mark this against detailed year group writing expectations to gauge whether the pupils are emerging towards or working at their age appropriate level; or are writing at a greater depth. Pupils requiring assistance will be targeted through intervention.

Pupils in EYFS are assessed against the Development Matters document and are deemed to be on track or not on track for their age range at the end of the Reception year.

All teachers then take part in a collaborative moderation of their teacher judgements against colleagues of the same year group from different schools, to assure quality of assessment.

Assessment of Reading.

Each week all children will be involved in several whole class guided reading sessions in which the teacher will focus on a specific comprehension skill. By the third session of the week the children should be taking more of a lead of their annotations and unpicking of the key text, giving the staff time to formatively assess, they are then able to compare that to their particular age related expectations.

On a half termly basis the children will complete a reading assessment task following the NFER scheme.

Year groups 3- 5 take part in the optional SATs tests, this, together with teacher assessment is used to target specific groups of children for support, whilst also preparing the children for their SATs tests at the end of Year 6.

In each year group the 20% of children that are at risk of reading failure are closely monitored. They receive daily intervention and are formatively assessed throughout each session. The English lead will then monitor all intervention to ensure quality provision and progress.



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Assessment of Speaking and Listening.

Speaking and listening is assessed in a variety of ways in an informal manner, which is usually through another aspect of the curriculum:

- Shared text work
- Independent and collaborative work
- Group and whole class discussion
- Debate and presentation
- Drama activities
- Independent play activities.
- Peer to peer communication

Assessment of Phonics and Spelling

During daily phonic sessions all staff make formative assessments of the children throughout to inform their teaching for the next day. Any children in each year group that are not on track with 'Sounds Write' teaching are then assessed using the diagnostic tool, which informs teachers of exactly what skill it is they need to further develop, and targeted intervention then commences.

Throughout Year 1 and 2, the teachers perform more formal assessments at the end of each half term. After both formative and summative assessment, children in EYFS and KS1 are provided with the essential help they need to continue to progress.

In KS2 children are tested regularly on a spelling pattern focus. The spelling pattern will be learned regularly at school during a grammar lesson and then sent home to practise and consolidate.

Ability and needs of the children are taken into consideration when this is being carried out.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher, Deputy Head and English lead monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of English in the school by:

- The monitoring of short term planning.
- Book scrutiny
- Monitoring of assessment data and writing assessments.
- Teacher consultation about target children and groups.
- Observation of Teaching and Learning.
- Regular Learning Walks.
- Practice and coaching sessions.
- Monitoring of intervention.

Cross Curricular Literacy Opportunities.



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Teachers are skilled at taking advantage of opportunities to make cross curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply skills and knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

The Use of ICT

Opportunities for ICT to support the teaching and learning in English will be planned for and used as appropriate.

Inclusions

It is our aim to ensure that all children achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. Through assessment and monitoring we will identify which children or groups are under achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will also be identified and suitable learning challenges put in place.

Intervention Programmes.

Children are identified through the rigorous monitoring and assessment that teachers and senior leaders carry out and their needs are addressed through individual SEND support plans and a range of intervention strategies and programmes put in place. Some of which include:

- Spellodrome
- Sounds Write
- Reading plus

Pupils with Special Needs

Pupils with diverse learning needs are provided through:

- Teacher planning for pupils participation
- Setting high expectations
- Providing opportunities for all to achieve.
- Creating effective learning environments
- Setting learning targets
- Liaison with SENDCO and the development and delivery of appropriate IPs
- Liaison with outside agencies, eg, speech and language
- Appropriate intervention
- Allowing pupils access to specialist equipment and approaches where necessary
- Continuous consultation with and involvement of parents.

Equal opportunities

Regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background, all children have the right to equal access to the English curriculum that we provide.



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The Role of the Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator will:

- Target development issues, on a whole school basis, through staff meetings and designated INSET days.
- Keep staff informed of new initiatives and updates.
- Provide support, if staff have particular needs or concerns.
- Give guidance to support staff as to their role during the teaching of English
- Monitor planning
- Monitor assessment and report on progress and attainment
- Oversee and monitor end of Key Stage and end of year assessments
- Co-ordinate the purchase of resources and be responsible for their organisation
- Provide practice and coaching sessions to staff in 'Sounds Write'

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