

English Policy



Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop the whole person

Written: September 2021
Date of Review: September 2023
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St. Matthew's Policy for English

SMSC Statement

At St Matthew's Catholic Primary School we recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive, caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the cultures.

Overview

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama - as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners.
- To encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard.
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstance and demands.
- To develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used.
- To enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama/role play activities.
- To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text level knowledge.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts.
- To help children enjoy writing and recognise its value.
- To enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction.
- To increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development will be developed through the teaching of English:

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by:

- Writing will be developed across the whole curriculum, including R.E. and P.S.H.E. which give a wealth of opportunities for writing.
- A sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences and use this as a stimulus for writing.

Pupils' moral development is shown by:

- Pupils will have opportunities to investigate and discuss ideas, offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues. This area will also be developed through Philosophy (P4C).

Pupils' social development is shown by their:

- Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Willingness to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively. Pupils are encouraged to read their work aloud in class and to present their work in a variety of ways - presentations and project work.

Pupils' cultural development is shown by their:

- Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage. Cross-curricular links are made during History, R.E. and P.S.H.E.
- Willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, musical, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities. This point links particularly well with Philosophy, as pupils are given this range as a starting point for discussion and enquiry. Pupils are then better equipped to start writing, as they have learnt so much through discussion.

- Interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Modelling Reading and Writing

It is really important for the teacher to model reading and writing during a lesson. A variety of reading techniques, sentence and word-level work should be incorporated within the teaching of English. Sentence level activities (predominantly punctuation and grammar) need to be embedded daily if children are expected to produce good quality writing. This is only achievable if it is modelled and given high priority. Copies of the statutory requirements for each year group on the teaching of Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling and Handwriting have been distributed to all staff.

Reading

All staff at St Matthew's Primary School are committed to the Reading development of our pupils. They understand and recognise the difference between *learning to read and reading to learn*. Teachers will initiate and provide reading experiences across the curriculum to include the basic requirements of decoding and retrieval skills, and further develop children's understanding of interpretation, organisation and choice of language features across texts. Staff will ensure that pupils engage in discussion about texts to encourage children to understand the main ideas, themes and differing viewpoints including their own, others', and that of the author. In addition to this and in keeping with National directives, teachers will continue to promote and encourage oral retelling and performance of key stories, poems and rhymes.

At St Matthew's, Reading is taught in many ways. Some of which include; Shared Reading, Whole Class Reciprocal Reading, Independent Reading for Pleasure and Home Reading.

We use Oxford Reading Tree for our Home Reading Scheme. However, this is by no means used exhaustively as a Reading resource. Teachers are trained to use and provide children with a broad range of Literacy resources including media for study purposes and cross-curricular links.



Approaches to Reading

When engaging children in reading, teachers need to be clear which aspect of the reading curriculum they are addressing. They will need to consider carefully the purpose of each session, the relevant learning objectives and the opportunities the selected texts provide to support this work. Discussion of the text also offers opportunities to underpin other aspects of the curriculum such as personal, social and emotional development.

In order to reinforce decoding in reading, teachers should refer to letters and sounds phonics lessons already taught so that children can experience how to apply their knowledge in the context of reading texts. Words, phrases and/or even whole sentences from a Big Book or other enlarged texts can be used to demonstrate this skill, as well as exploiting opportunities in the environment such as words in labels, captions and displays.

Developing Comprehension

One lesson per week should be dedicated to reading comprehension. Children should be encouraged to read for a deeper meaning (deductive and inferential). They should be taught to consider plot, character, and motive, as well as features of language such as vocabulary, figurative language and sequence. Teachers will model and encourage children to answer longer questions by justifying their answers. This concept can be achieved daily in all lessons through open-ended questioning techniques. Encouraging children to explain and justify their opinions further develops speaking and listening skills, whilst raising confidence and self-esteem.



Whole Class Reciprocal Reading

Whole class Reciprocal Reading at St. Matthew's is tailored to the specific needs and abilities of a particular class. In the session, the teacher guides the children through a text, prompting them to apply their knowledge and skills from the reading curriculum. The aim is to encourage and extend independent reading skills with new and increasingly challenging texts. These texts should be age appropriate and relevant to the interests of the class. Children will be given the opportunity to work with peers in their class to discuss, present and justify their responses to a text.

Children gain most from Reciprocal Reading when they have already developed a sound understanding about how texts work and when they have considerable experience of listening to and talking about texts. Reciprocal Reading sessions can also offer a good opportunity for children to practise their developing phonic knowledge skills in age appropriate texts that are carefully chosen. Where the focus is on phonic skills, the

teacher's role is to support and prompt children to decode, recognise and say words as they read.

Children will have a whole class Reciprocal Reading lesson every day. Early on, new readers will be focused on the application of phonic skills and word recognition, but as they grow in confidence and skill, the emphasis will shift to comprehension skills. The teacher makes an important decision at the planning stage about the focus of the session, and this decision is largely determined by close observation of what the children know, understand and can do.

Children will be regularly assessed by the class teacher during all Reading sessions to determine their reading level/ability and to target any individual or whole class weaknesses. Teachers will use our school swipe sheets and the ORT Home Reading Assessment Guide to help them with their judgements and future planning.

Where needed, children will also be given access to Reading interventions with teaching assistants on a 1:1 basis or in small groups to further develop their skills and address any gaps in their learning.



Independent reading

At St. Matthew's, teachers recognise the value of all forms of reading.

- Children will be encouraged to read daily for pleasure and enjoyment
- Have the opportunity to return to familiar texts that they have read during shared reading or reciprocal reading sessions
- Can pursue favourite authors or types of books
- Can learn to select texts that match their interests and ability
- Be encouraged to: look, think and predict before reading
- Be encouraged to: read on and back, predict, clarify, decode unknown words, make mental pictures and use all cueing systems during reading
- Reflect on, share and respond to text either informally by talking about it or by choosing to engage in a written activity that involves returning to the text after reading.

Reading for Pleasure

The importance of developing a love of literature and developing healthy reading habits and behaviours is integral to the curriculum. All teachers at St. Matthew's have awareness and knowledge of the impact of enjoyment on pupils' reading attitudes and

attainment. All classes have their own Reading Area which is well stocked with fiction and non-fiction books. Activities are planned throughout the school year to promote reading for pleasure, for example, World Book Day, Story Barn trips, reading clubs and class reading reward systems. A class novel is also chosen every half term. The class teacher will read this text to the children for 10 to 20 minutes every day to promote reading for pleasure and a healthy reading attitude.

Home Reading

Children will be provided with an appropriate home reading book and a reading diary so that children's reading can be monitored in school and at home. Children must have their reading diary signed every day by their parents and weekly by the teacher or TA. This is part of our homework policy. It is the class teacher's responsibility to monitor that children are reading regularly at home and to liaise with parents when this is not happening.

In Early Years

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. Pupils are at the very early stages of reading development and as such they will hear nursery rhymes and stories read to them and will be immersed in lots of modelled reading behaviour by the Early Years Practitioners.

At KS1

At KS1 pupils are emergent and developing readers and will mainly focus on decoding using phonic strategies as required by the 2014 curriculum, but will also be taught what the words they are decoding mean and how they contribute to the meaning of the whole text. Those pupils still experiencing difficulties will continue development through Intervention and SEND support where appropriate.

Key Stage 2

As KS2 pupils become more fluent and independent readers and decoding becomes more automatic reading process. Those pupils still experiencing difficulties will continue development through the 'Letters and Sounds' systematic, synthetic phonics programme and through other intervention programmes where appropriate. Pupils will use their on-going learning of spelling patterns and grammatical knowledge to read unfamiliar words with increasing accuracy. They will read different texts for different purposes and begin to develop higher order reading skills in order to engage fully and respond effectively to texts. They will learn about inferential thinking, stating preferences and opinions and to

justify them. They will learn about different viewpoints, in a text including their own, and will give consideration to the writer's craft.



Spelling:

At St. Matthew's RC Primary School we recognise the importance of spelling and we aim for our pupils to become fluent and effective writers; accurate spelling is a means to that end. The key to supporting our pupils to become confident spellers lies in teaching the strategies, rules and conventions systematically and explicitly, and helping pupils recognise which strategies they can use to improve their own spelling. The systematic teaching of phonics including a balanced spelling programme of learning to spell is vital.

In line with spelling directives from the 2014 curriculum, a balanced programme of learning would include five main components:

- understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological);
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words;
- practising and assessing spelling;
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading;
- building pupils' self-images as spellers.

At St Matthew's we use Spelling Toolkits to help with the teaching and learning of spelling. Spelling homework is given to all children in Y1-Y6 following the spelling toolkits. The children are tested weekly on their spellings to check for progress. Spelling words are differentiated to cater for the needs of the children in the class.

Spelling shed is used at home to promote the learning of spellings through games.

Teaching and Learning of spelling

Children will begin learning phonics/spelling in Reception following letters and sounds. Alongside this, children will learn a number of common exception words throughout the year. Children are given the common exception words to learn at home over the course of the year. Years 1 and 2 continue to follow letters and sounds during phonic lessons to support the spelling of phonemes taught.

The teaching of phonics plays a vital role in children's ability to spell so great emphasis is placed on the teaching of phonics. Phonics sessions take place daily for 20 minutes and are tailored to the children's needs and abilities.

Alongside this Years 1 and 2 will use the spelling toolkits to teach expected spelling patterns in line with the National curriculum.

Teaching of phonics will continue in key stage two where applicable, then children move onto learning spelling patterns and rules.

Spellings may also be taken from the key vocabulary for Mathematics, Science and other curriculum subjects. Learning these key words (and their meaning) supports learning across the curriculum.

It is important that spelling mistakes within the children's writing are identified and appropriate teaching/intervention is put in place. In line with our marking policy, spelling mistakes are identified and noted on teachers weekly planning. Any spellings that are frequently misspelt must be the focus of attention so that the correct spelling is learned. It is important that we do not discourage children from trying to use more adventurous vocabulary by over correcting spellings. All children are provided with spelling journals which help to support the children with their writing. In these journals children will attempt to spell a word they find difficult and teachers will correct the spelling of this word in the child's spelling journal. Journals will travel with the children throughout their time in school.

Home Learning

Children need regular spelling practise at home as well as at school. Spelling practice is included in Home Learning activities.

In Early Years children are given phonemes, Tricky and High Frequency words and word games to practise and play games with at home. In the rest of the school children are also given spellings to take home and practise following the spelling toolkits. These words may also include topic vocabulary, words with spelling patterns, or words that are frequently misspelt in children's writing. Spelling strategies and rules should be taught prior to spelling lists being sent home to learn.

Children throughout the school are also provided with Spelling Shed logins so that they can access Spelling Shed at home and in school. Spelling Shed allows children to practise age related spellings, spelling patterns, phonetic spellings and teacher tailored spellings in a fun and engaging way.



Assessment

Assessment of pupil progress is on-going and forms part of the class teacher's formative assessment. In addition to this, pupils are tracked on our Phonics tracking sheets and 'I Know My Letters & Sounds' book. At the end of Year 1 all children take the Phonics Screening Check as part of the government statutory requirements to track phonological development. Formal summative assessments are carried out at the end of KS1 and KS2 and years 3, 4 and 5 complete NFER assessments termly.

Writing

Writing at St. Matthew's is taught and celebrated in a range of ways. It is taught daily across the school and through a range of subjects. We aim, wherever possible, to create cross-curricular writing opportunities, as we believe that in order for children to see themselves as successful writers they need to be involved in writing for a purpose.

We follow the National Curriculum (2014) which ensures that a range of genres are covered, including narrative (e.g. extended stories, stories by the same author, myths and legends, adventure stories and traditional stories), non-fiction (e.g. persuasive texts, non-chronological reports, information texts, recounts, reports and letters) and poetry (e.g. rhyme, nonsense rhymes, shape poems, acrostic and descriptive poetry). Genres are taught and learnt considering the purpose, form and audience.

Throughout each unit, the links between reading and writing are made explicit - we read as writers and we write as readers. The progress throughout each unit of work shows the transition between reading as writers (focusing on structure, characterisation, and language features etc...) to writing as readers (word play, describing, composition, planning, editing, revising etc...).

Integral to the process of writing is speaking and listening. 'Talk for writing' is essential to enable children to articulate their thoughts, retell stories, orally create new stories and orally rehearse what they are going to write and re-read what they have written. This underlines and runs alongside the writing process.

Good writers:

- enjoy writing and find the process creative, enriching and fulfilling;
- read widely, recognise good writing, and understand what makes it good;
- are aware of the key features of different genres and text types;
- learn about the skills of writing from their reading and draw (consciously or unconsciously) upon its models in their own work
- have 'something to say' (a purpose) and know how to say it for the specific audience;
- know how to develop their ideas;
- know how to plan and prepare for writing;

- make informed choices about what they are writing, as they write (for example, about vocabulary, grammar, text structure, etc.);
- understand how to reflect upon, refine and improve their own work;
- can respond to the constructive criticism of others.

Talk for Writing

At St. Matthew's we use the Pie Corbett Talk for Writing approach to teach pupils to become confident, imaginative and effective writers. This is a whole school approach starting in Reception and continuing to Year 6. Talk for Writing follows 3 main phases when teaching a genre - Imitation, Innovation and Independent application.

Imitation

During this first phase the children will learn and orally retell a text or part of a text that has been chosen by the teacher. The children use pictures and actions to help them to remember and orally retell the text. After learning the text the children will begin to look at language, patterns, structure, comprehension and key features of the text. The text is analysed and boxed up with the children during this phase. All of this first phase is underpinned by rehearsing key spellings and grammatical patterns. Short-burst writing is used to practise key focuses such as description, persuasion or scientific explanation.

Innovation

Once students are familiar with the model text, then the teacher leads them into creating their own versions. A new subject is presented and the teacher leads students through planning. With younger pupils, this is based on changing the basic map and retelling new versions. Older students use boxed-up planners and the teacher demonstrates how to create simple plans and orally develop ideas prior to writing. Ideas may need to be generated and organised or information researched and added to a planner. Shared and guided writing is then used to stage writing over a number of days so that students are writing texts bit by bit, concentrating on bringing all the elements together, writing effectively and accurately. Feedback is given during the lessons as well as daily using some form of visualiser so that students can be taught how to improve their writing, make it more accurate, until they can increasingly edit in pairs or on their own.

Independent Application

Finally, students move on to the third phase, which is when they apply independently what has been taught and practised. Before this happens, the teacher may decide to give further input and rehearsal. Students are guided through planning, drafting and revising their work independently. It is essential to provide a rich starting point that taps into what students know and what matters so that they're writing is purposeful. Writing may be staged over a number of days and there may be time for several independent pieces to be written. With non-fiction, students should apply what they have been taught across the curriculum. The final piece is used as the 'hot' task, which clearly shows progress across the unit.



Writing is taught in a range of ways:

Modelling Writing

The teacher talks aloud the thought processes as a writer. They model strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model writing skills such as punctuation, rehearsal, proof reading, editing, word selection, sentence construction and paragraphing.

Shared Writing

This is a collaborative approach in which the pupils contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to write. The teacher models and teaches specific writing skills and there is the opportunity for discussion to choose the most effective or suitable ideas.

Guided Writing

The teacher or other adult works with a group on a carefully selected task appropriate to that group's needs and targets. This will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process rather than writing a complete piece.

Independent Writing

Children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text type in their own writing. They are encouraged to plan, draft, write, edit and assess their work, applying the skills they have learnt throughout the unit of work on that particular genre.

The Teaching and Learning of Writing

In the early years emergent writing is encouraged through the use of different writing materials, including felt tipped pens, crayons, chalk, sand, magnetic letters, big brushes, water, paint and computers, as well as writing in the role-play areas, such as postcards, menus, invitations, labels etc... Alongside this, children take part in activities to encourage and develop gross and fine motor skills necessary to write in a legible script. Daily phonics lessons build their phonic and spelling knowledge to enable them to sound out words and spell high frequency words correctly.

As children progress throughout the school, they are given many opportunities to write independently and to apply the skills they have learnt and practised in shared and guided writing. Wherever possible, writing is made meaningful by being planned for a specific purpose or in response to a particular experience.

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation is planned and taught as an integral part of each unit of work. The objectives are carefully matched to the unit of work to enable them to be taught and learnt within a meaningful context.

Each year group is provided with an English Overview which gives detailed information about the genres and statutory requirements that each year group should be following. The overviews show progression with genres across the year groups. Teachers will use the overviews to plan daily Literacy lessons that are differentiated and tailored to a classes needs.

[Handwriting- See Handwriting Policy](#)

This is a key area of focus embedded within the curriculum, which has specific statutory teaching requirements for each year group. Handwriting is a means of expressing language. It is a physical way of expressing thoughts and ideas and a means of communicating with others.

Neat cursive writing is promoted throughout the school. Teachers and Teaching Assistants set high standards for handwriting and presentation at all times. The journey to neat cursive handwriting begins in Reception where children are taught to form letters using the entry and exit flicks. This is then practised and developed through every year group.

[Grammar and Punctuation](#)

There is a strong focus on SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) within the curriculum. Teachers will therefore give this the necessary time and attention regularly each week. SPaG is taught throughout lessons and the skills are then embedded throughout the curriculum. SPaG objectives for each year group are included in the English overviews. At the end of KS1 and KS2, the children will take their SATs which will include a SPaG test. Children in Years 3-5 will take optional NFER SPaG tests.

[English across the whole Curriculum](#)

Teachers are encouraged to draw on cross-curricular links to ensure that learning is meaningful and fun. The strategies of English may be permeated wherever possible across the whole curriculum and R.E. In addition, writing about real life experiences is crucial for the development of writing. The skills that children develop in English are linked to, wherever possible, subjects across the whole curriculum.

Children should be given the opportunity to write about real experiences wherever possible. What is more, such writing draws on cross-curricular links making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Some good examples include:

1. Diary entries/Recounts in relation to school trips, participation in extra-curricular activities.
2. Instructional texts linking to work completed in D.T. (E.g. How to make a vehicle).
3. Non-chronological reports linking to History/Geography/Science topics that are being studied in each year group. This may be extended to project work to be completed at home.
4. Persuasive writing linking to school initiatives that the children are aware of. For example, the importance of eating a well-balanced/healthy diet.
5. Posters linking to themed weeks such as 'Anti-bullying.'
6. Play scripts/character studies linking to R.E. (*Relate* aspect of the 'Come and See' plans).

Teaching English to children with special needs

English is planned to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of all children. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Pupil Profiles.

Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- Ensuring texts are matched to the needs and ability of the children.
- Daily support from Teaching Assistants who will deliver sessions to support these targets during the Literacy lesson.
- Reviews of progress, made by school SENCO, class teacher and teaching assistant, to make sure that targets are being met.
- Using visual and written materials in different formats.
- Engaging children with computers, other technological aids and taped materials;

Children who have English as an additional language will be supported in a variety of ways to ensure that they can access the English curriculum and develop a full range of language skills. This support will include:

- Assessment and monitoring of pupil progress by the class teacher, in conjunction with the SENCO
- Develop opportunities for the children to hear stories in their own language.

In addition, children recognised as '*Gifted and Talented*' are given extension opportunities that challenge and support their flair for writing. This is included on teachers weekly English plans.

Teaching Assistant Support

It is vital that Teaching Assistants have support and clear guidance in relation to supporting groups with word and sentence level work. Support should be given with phonic work for younger children and this should be carried out daily.

It is important for each teacher to share the group reading and writing targets with the Teaching Assistants and provide activities that support learning in these areas. Teaching Assistants should have access to copies of Pupil Profiles so that targets are worked upon regularly in consultation with the class teacher. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to provide resources/activities that match the ability of such children.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the coordinators to ensure policies are updated with the latest initiatives. Evaluation will include: effectiveness, ease of implementation, identifying any amendments needed and additions required to the policy as a result of legislation changes.

Teachers should ensure that they are confident with the subject matter and inform the English Coordinators of their training and support needs. The English Coordinators should ensure that they are well-informed of current ideas and developments in Literacy by attending appropriate courses and keeping up to date with new initiatives. They should disseminate gathered information to colleagues.

Linked Policies to supplement this English Policy:

Handwriting Policy - Miss Rush

Phonics Policy -Miss Rush

Appendix

Covid 19

A recovery curriculum was put into place and followed last year (2020) to close gaps in the children learning due to lockdowns. This academic year (2021-22) English overviews have been planned to highlight and include critical content in all year groups for English. Year groups 1-6 will teach an additional English lesson each week to close the gaps further. There will be a focus on revisiting and consolidating basic skills including SPaG skills during this lesson. Children will also be given some writing tasks to help them to practise and apply these SPaG skills in a variety of creative writing genres that they have previously covered.

In line with DFE guidance there will be an emphasis on reading in English lessons and other curriculum areas. The focus will be on key comprehension skills relevant for each year group and continuing to develop fluency, stamina, intonation and reading with expression. Class teachers will continue with whole class reciprocal reading sessions and read to children every day from the class novel. Children will be supported with their phonics and continue with their daily phonic lessons. Children will start to take reading books home again but will be able to use Oxford Owls if any children need to isolate. Children will continue with their reading in school.

Speaking and listening activities have been planned across the curriculum due to children having less social interactions during lockdowns. This will enable the children to instil their confidence and engage with their peers, as well as enabling them to communicate their emotions and anxieties about returning to school.