

English Policy



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St. Matthew's Policy for English

The Aims of English as outlined in the National Curriculum English Programmes of Study

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 word, 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.

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.

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.



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- 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.

Reading

Word Reading

All staff at St Matthew's Primary School are committed equipping pupils with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding needed to be able to read well. We understand that early phonics and early reading is vital which is why we use the Read, Write Inc programme to teach our pupils how to read from the moment they start reception. The programme is in place for children in Reception to Year 2 and any older pupils who are still at the early stages of reading. After the children complete the programme, they will continue to practise their reading and develop their fluency and comprehension. The expectations for [word reading and comprehension](#) are outlined in the English National Curriculum Programmes of Study. For more information please read our 'How to teach reading-letter to parents' document.

Comprehension

All children from EYFS to Year 6 have access to high quality texts. At St Matthew's we use the 'Steps to Read' programme to teach reading comprehension. In EYFS, children are also exposed to RWI's 'Talk through Stories' and other carefully selected texts to enhance the provision.

Steps to Read is planning support for whole class shared reading through carefully crafted units of work. These units of work also help schools to provide essential background curriculum knowledge for foundation subjects. They empower teachers to teach all aspects of comprehension through high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts.

Steps to Read provides a clear teaching sequence to reading sessions that explicitly teach reading skills and strategies in a cumulative way through evidence-based approaches. These comprehensive



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units have been constructed so that the entire statutory curriculum for reading is covered from EYFS to Y6.

The primary aim of Steps to Read is to teach reading comprehensions skills and strategies explicitly.

Steps to Read:

- *Is sequenced, coherent and progressive.*
- *Uses language-rich texts for vocabulary teaching*
- *Includes all elements of comprehension, taught sequentially across an academic year*
- *Has a clear focus on the skills and strategies needed to be a proficient and confident reader*
- *Uses engaging texts to promote a life-long love of reading.*
- *Includes poetry, non-fiction and fiction that enhances knowledge learning across the curriculum.*

For more information, please review our 'Steps to Read Long Term Plan'.

Home Reading

We use 'Read, Write, Inc.' for our home reading scheme for children in reception to year 2 and for any children in KS2 who need to continue to access the programme. Children will take home a decodable reading book matched to the sounds they know. Pupils are regularly assessed to ensure that they only read books containing the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have been previously taught. Once children have finished the RWI programme they will move on to Oxford Reading Tree for our Home Reading Scheme. This is to ensure that children are accessing reading books that reflect their growing stamina, maturity and background knowledge. All children will also have access an additional reading for pleasure book to share with adults at home. The aim of this second book is not for word reading, but to give children the opportunity to develop their vocabulary and language comprehension by listening to adults read at home. We host 'Storytime' and 'Listening to your child' parent workshops regularly. See 'Read, Write, Inc Parents FAQs' for more information.

Further opportunities to develop reading at St Matthews

Alongside the RWI and Steps to Read programme, St. Matthew's teach daily English lessons following the Read to Write programme from Reception to Year 6 providing consistency across the school. Through the programme the children are taught units of work based around a key text. At the start of every unit the children will immerse themselves in the text and analyse the text as a reader. This allows the children to focus on comprehension, vocabulary and language as well as stylistic features which are all combined to help children to build up to their writing piece. Pupils are also given the opportunity to use and apply their decoding (word reading) skills when writing. At St Matthews we are aware that encoding and decoding (spelling and word reading) are reverse processes. This means that children segment to spell words, allowing them to apply their knowledge from word reading lessons into writing lessons (e.g. Fred fingers).

Ongoing assessment of word reading and fluency

Children will be regularly assessed by adults both formally and informally. This will be carried out by adults listening to a child reading their decodable reading text and ensuring that they are reading at



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an [independent level](#) (95% accuracy). The school also carries out regular summative assessments such as NFER assessments to assess children's word reading and comprehension.

Where needed, older children will also be given access to RWI tutoring with teaching assistants on a 1:1 basis or in small groups to further develop their word reading ability and address any gaps in their learning.

Independent reading and Reading for Pleasure

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.
- pursue favourite authors or types of books.
- learn to select texts that match their interests and expand their horizons
- look, think and predict before reading
- read on and back, predict, clarify, decode unknown words, make mental pictures and use all cueing systems during reading

We encourage children to select books that:

- elicit a strong response – e.g., curiosity, anger, excitement, laughter, empathy.
- have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings.
- extend their vocabulary.
- have content that is engaging and reflects children from all backgrounds and cultures.
- help children connect with who they are.
- help children to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own.

For more information please refer to the [Reading Framework: teaching the foundations for literacy](#).

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.

Spelling



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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 [National Curriculum Programmes of Study: Appendix 1 Spelling](#), by the end of year 1, pupils should be able to read a large number of different words containing the GPCs that they have learnt, whether or not they have seen these words before. Spelling, however, is a very different matter. Once pupils have learnt more than one way of spelling particular sounds, choosing the right letter or letters depends on their either having made a conscious effort to learn the words or having absorbed them less consciously through their reading.

Phonic knowledge continues to underpin spelling after key stage 1; teachers still draw pupils' attention to GPCs that do and do not fit in with what has been taught so far. Increasingly, however, pupils also need to understand the role of morphology and etymology. Although particular GPCs in root words simply have to be learnt, teachers can help pupils to understand relationships between meaning and spelling where these are relevant.

Teaching and learning of spelling.

Children will begin learning to segment for spelling (Fred fingers) in Reception following the school's chosen systematic synthetic phonics programme: 'Read, Write, Inc.' using Fred Fingers. Alongside this, children will learn an increasing amount of common exception words throughout the year. Children are given the common exception words or 'red words' to learn at home over the course of the year. Years 1 and 2 continue to follow 'Read, Write, Inc.' using 'Fred fingers' 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 and are tailored to the children's needs and abilities (see phonics policy).

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

Read Write Inc. Spelling is a teacher-directed programme for children in Year 2 and above who have completed Read Write Inc. Pre-programme activities assess children's knowledge of phonics and Year 1 spelling knowledge (listed in the National Curriculum in England), to ensure that they are ready to start the programme. Assessment is built into the activities for every unit: Speed spell tests children's knowledge of words from previous units; Team teach and Four-in-a-row help children assess their own progress; Jumping red/orange words tests children's knowledge of red and orange words (words from the word lists in the National Curriculum in England). The tests are presented as fun games and activities so children are motivated rather than intimidated. National Curriculum requirements for Year 2 are tightly packed so we the programme is divided into Year 2A and Year 2B. The total estimated teaching time for Year 2 is 34 weeks. Five weeks of further core consolidation and practice material is also available. The National Curriculum for spelling in Years 3–6 has less content requirement: Read Write Inc. Spelling takes 16 weeks per year, with around two to six weeks of extra core consolidation and practice. This includes practising extra-challenging words in the National Curriculum word lists and an optional week-long team Spelling Challenge at the end of every half term to consolidate spellings and celebrate progress



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Spellings may also be taken from the key vocabulary identified across the wider curriculum. Learning these key words (and their meaning) supports application of spelling. 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, particularly when pupils are using and applying their phonics knowledge. 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, green words, red words and word games to practise and play games with at home. In Key Stage 1 pupils are given spellings based on the GPCs they have been taught. In the rest of the school children are also given spellings to take home and practise following their RWI Spelling sessions.

Assessment

Assessment of pupil progress is on-going and forms part of the class teacher's formative assessment. Children are assessed every half term and grouped according to their phonics knowledge. In addition to this, pupils are tracked on our phonics tracking sheets. At the end of Year 1 all children take the Phonics Screening Check as part of the government statutory requirements to track accuracy. 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 following the Read to Write programme and application is seen through a range of other subjects. The school is aware of the two main elements of the writing national curriculum: transcription and composition. Transcription (handwriting and spelling) is primarily taught through the school's phonics and spelling programmes (Read, Write, Inc. Phonics and Read, write, Inc Spelling) and through the handwriting resource: Letter Join (see the school's phonics and handwriting policies for more information). The compositional element of the English National Curriculum (including punctuation and grammar) and the application of transcriptional skills and knowledge is taught using the Read-to-Write Programme.

Read to Write empowers teachers to provide high-quality teaching of writing through children's high-quality literature (Vehicle Texts). The units of work centre on engaging, vocabulary-rich texts, with a wealth of writing opportunities. Several of these carefully selected Vehicle Texts have strong thematic links to the Science, History and Geography curriculum. They are being implemented with great success because they include (with some additional resources for 2021):



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- Clear Sequential Episodes of Learning
- Example Texts (greater depth WAGOLL)
- Learning Objectives that link to the teaching sequence (Immerse, Analyse, Plan Write)
- Vocabulary Learning
- Contextualised Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation
- Writer's Knowledge Linked to National Standards
- Sentence Accuracy Work Linked to National Standards
- Progressions Documents with Year Group Expectations
- Reflecting on Unit Outcomes: Planning for Next Steps
- Example Planning Format
- Wider Reading for the Wider Curriculum
- A Wealth of Resources Linked to the National Standards
- Explicit Links to the National Curriculum

Read to Write is evidence-based teaching of writing. These units have been carefully mapped out so the entire statutory curriculum for writing is covered for each year group. They also enable schools to draw upon the wider curriculum, which supports schools to build rich curriculums.

At St. Matthew's we use the Read to Write 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. Read to Write follows the teaching sequence – Immerse, Analyse, plan and Write- which equips the pupils with all the relevant skills that they need to become confident and independent writers.

Immerse

During this first stage of the sequence the children are immersed into the key vehicle text that has been chosen carefully for each year group. The children enjoy, explore and respond to the text through a variety of activities that allow the children to develop their reading and comprehension skills whilst also exploring new vocabulary and word choices. The children will also determine the purpose, audience and form of the text to develop their knowledge and understanding. After exploring and responding to the text the children will look at an example text to provide them with a clear understanding of expectations. Throughout the immerse stage the children are given lots of opportunities to collaborate and discuss their ideas, thoughts and opinions about the vehicle text. This allows the children to gain a deeper understanding and truly immerse themselves in the text.

Analyse

In the analyse stage of the unit the children will be taught and familiarise with text structures. This allows the children to develop their knowledge of structures and features of the genres they are studying using the example texts to support them. In this stage the children will also familiarise themselves with language features, exploring why words and phrases have been used and where. This supports the children when they come to writing their own text. Finally in this part of the analyse stage the children will focus and develop their writers knowledge. This allows the teacher and children to discuss and explore what the writer has done and what effect this has on the reader. Through doing this we are providing our children with the tools that they need to become writers themselves.

Plan



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During the planning stage of the sequence the children will gather ideas and plan their own writing. Again, there will be opportunities to collaborate and discuss as this is vital before children compose their own work. The class teacher will model how to plan at this stage pulling together all the elements of the teaching sequence. The children will then complete their own individual plans ready for the writing stage.

Write

At the start of the writing stage the teacher will explicitly share the writing purpose with the children this will provide children with a clear understanding of expectations and the intended audience. The teacher will then use the completed class plan to model and guide writing. Throughout the teacher will use a think aloud 'writerly voice' to model composition, editing and evaluating of the writing on each of the shared writes throughout the week. Teachers will also refer to the information on the working walls/washing lines to ensure all elements taught over the sequence are included in the writing. After shared and guided writing the children will carry out independent writing following each of the modelled stages. During their independent writing the children will draft, revise and edit their work whilst applying their writers' skills and knowledge.

Explicit teaching of writing takes various forms at St Matthews, appropriate to children's background knowledge and prior learning.

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.

Dictation activities

Similar to Shared and Guided Writing approaches, pupils are given the opportunity to develop their compositional knowledge without demands on their working memory. Pupils' ideas are recorded by an adult or their peers and then dictated back to pupils, giving them an opportunity to focus solely on transcription. This means they are not thinking about spelling, handwriting and their ideas all at once.



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The Teaching and Learning of Early 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 green and red 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. 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. Each lesson will start with a sentence accuracy activity which focuses on year group expectations. The objectives are carefully matched to the unit of work to enable them to be taught and learnt within a meaningful context. .

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 when children can form letter correctly (usually at the end of Year 1 or the beginning of Year 2). This is then practised and developed through every year group. At St. Matthew's we use the letter-join programme to develop a consistent approach to explicitly teaching handwriting across the school.

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. Spelling is taught explicitly. Punctuation and Grammar is taught throughout the Read to Write sequence of lessons and then embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to revisit their punctuation and grammar knowledge daily through 'Sentence Accuracy' activities at the start of each writing lesson. At the end of Key stage Two, national assessments take place which will include a Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar test. There is an optional assessment for children at the end of Key Stage One. Children in Years 3-5 will take optional NFER 'SPaG' tests.

English across the wider curriculum

Teachers are encouraged to draw meaningful links across subject disciplines. Where there are opportunities to use and apply skills and knowledge from the English curriculum, teachers take these opportunities.

Teaching pupils with SEND

English is planned to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities adapted to meet the needs of all children. Work in English takes into account



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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 EAL lead
- Develop opportunities for the children to hear stories in their own language.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the coordinators to ensure policies are up dated 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.