

Reading Policy

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School



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Review Date

Vision and Aims

At St Matthew's, we believe that reading is a fundamental part of every child's education and is central to their success across the curriculum. Rooted in our Catholic mission, we want every child to become a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader who develops a lifelong love of books and reading. We maintain high expectations for all pupils, including those with SEND, pupils learning English and those facing disadvantage.

Our reading curriculum aims to develop secure word reading, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and a genuine enjoyment of literature. We want children to read widely, talk about what they read, make connections between texts and develop the confidence to respond to authors, characters, ideas and information.

Progression in Reading

By the end of Year 6, pupils should be able to read age-appropriate texts with increasing fluency, accuracy and expression, understand and discuss what they have read, and use evidence from texts to explain their ideas. Our curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the National Curriculum for England, with reading developed through systematic phonics, shared and guided reading, vocabulary development, comprehension and reading for pleasure.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, children develop the foundations of reading through Read Write Inc. phonics alongside high-quality stories, rhymes, poems and carefully selected texts. Children develop secure decoding, blending, word recognition and reading fluency. As children become secure readers, they are increasingly supported to read longer and more challenging texts independently and to develop their comprehension.

Across Key Stage 2, pupils build reading stamina, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. They encounter a broad range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and texts linked to the wider curriculum. Teachers explicitly teach vocabulary, model reading behaviours and develop children's ability to retrieve, infer, predict, summarise, compare and explain.

Curriculum Design and Planning

Reading is planned as a coherent whole-school curriculum. St Matthew's uses Literacy Counts to support the teaching of reading, with three dedicated 30-minute reading lessons each week. A consistent whole-school reading display supports a shared approach and makes key vocabulary, reading skills, discussion prompts and learning visible to pupils.

Teachers select and adapt texts and activities to meet the needs of their class. Planning takes account of prior knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and the reading needs of individual pupils. Reading is also developed through English lessons, the wider curriculum, story time and opportunities to read independently.

Teachers remain responsible for the reading taught and for ensuring appropriate progression and coverage. Class teachers communicate regularly with the reading subject leader about curriculum coverage, assessment, misconceptions and the adaptations pupils need.

EYFS and Key Stage 1

Early reading begins with the development of language, communication, listening and attention, alongside systematic phonics teaching. St Matthew's is a Read Write Inc. school. Phonics is taught systematically so that children develop the knowledge and skills needed to decode unfamiliar words accurately and confidently.

Children are immersed in high-quality language and literature through stories, rhymes, poems, songs and classroom talk. Adults model fluent reading and support children to talk about characters, events, vocabulary and ideas. Children are encouraged to reread familiar texts so that accuracy, fluency and confidence develop over time.

Strong Foundations in Reading

Strong foundations in reading are established through systematic phonics, rich oral language, regular reading and carefully chosen texts. Children need secure decoding alongside a growing vocabulary and understanding of language. Teachers revisit previously taught knowledge and provide additional practice where gaps are identified.

Adults model clear reading behaviours and language. Children have opportunities to hear texts read aloud, read together, read with an adult and read independently. Repetition, rereading and discussion help children develop fluency and deepen comprehension.

Where reading presents a barrier, teachers adapt the presentation of texts, pre-teach vocabulary, use visuals and provide additional guided practice while maintaining ambitious expectations.

Daily Reading and Reading Practice

Reading is an integral part of daily school life. In addition to the three weekly 30-minute Literacy Counts reading lessons, children read and hear books regularly through English, the wider curriculum, class reading opportunities and teacher-led reading.

Reading Plus is used once a week in school to provide personalised online reading practice and opportunities for children to develop fluency and comprehension. Children also have access to Reading Plus at home, allowing them to continue practising their reading beyond school.

Teachers use reading opportunities to identify pupils who need further practice or support. Reading practice is purposeful and linked to the skills, vocabulary and texts being taught.

Teaching and Learning the St Matthew's Way

Reading lessons follow the St Matthew's Way: teachers establish what pupils already know, introduce precise vocabulary and the learning goal, model reading and thinking, check understanding, provide guided and independent practice, and use feedback to decide the next step.

Teachers explicitly model fluent reading, including pace, phrasing, expression and attention to punctuation. Pupils are given regular opportunities to read aloud, read silently, rehearse responses with partners and discuss texts.

Questioning is used to deepen understanding. Teachers use retrieval, vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, comparison and summarising questions as appropriate to the text and year group. Children are encouraged to return to the text and use evidence to support their answers.

Teacher read-alouds are a valued part of reading provision. Adults read high-quality texts with expression and enthusiasm, exposing children to authors, genres, vocabulary and ideas that may be beyond their independent reading level.

Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure is central to our reading culture. We want children to see themselves as readers and to develop positive reading identities. Classrooms provide access to a range of high-quality books, authors, genres, poetry and non-fiction.

Teachers regularly share books with pupils and create opportunities for children to recommend, discuss and choose books. Children are encouraged to read widely and to discover texts that interest and challenge them.

Reading for pleasure is supported through teacher read-alouds, class libraries, book recommendations, independent reading, book talk and opportunities to celebrate reading across the school.

Reading from Teachers

Teachers are reading role models. Adults read aloud regularly and share their enjoyment of books with pupils. Teacher read-alouds expose children to rich vocabulary, varied sentence structures, different genres and a wide range of authors.

Teachers model what fluent, expressive reading sounds like and demonstrate how readers think, question, clarify and respond to a text. Discussion around shared texts helps children develop the language and confidence to express their own ideas.

Inclusion and Adaptation

The same ambitious reading curriculum is made accessible through responsive teaching. Teachers may pre-teach vocabulary, use visuals or symbols, provide sentence stems, chunk texts, reread sections, provide additional adult support or offer alternative ways for pupils to demonstrate understanding.

Pupils learning English benefit from explicit vocabulary teaching, oral rehearsal, visual support and opportunities to hear and practise language in context. Pupils with SEND may require carefully matched texts, additional repetition, structured questioning or targeted intervention.

Adaptations remove barriers without unnecessarily reducing the reading ambition. Teachers work with the SENDCO and families where appropriate to ensure support is well matched to individual needs.

Assessment and Responsive Teaching

Teachers assess reading through observation, questioning, discussion, reading aloud, comprehension activities and the work produced by pupils. Information from Literacy Counts lessons, Reading Plus and other reading activities is used to identify strengths, misconceptions and gaps.

Teachers use assessment to adapt teaching, revisit vocabulary and skills, provide further practice and identify pupils who may need additional support. Assessment is used to improve learning rather than to create unnecessary evidence.

Phonics assessment is used to identify pupils who require further teaching or practice. In Read Write Inc., assessment information supports appropriate grouping and responsive teaching so that pupils can make secure progress in decoding and fluency.

Personal Development and Building the Kingdom

Reading contributes to pupils' personal, social, cultural and spiritual development. Through stories, poetry, non-fiction and discussion, children encounter different experiences, perspectives, cultures and communities. Reading helps pupils develop empathy, curiosity, imagination and the ability to listen to and respect the ideas of others.

In keeping with our Catholic mission and the school's commitment to Building the Kingdom, carefully selected texts provide opportunities to explore themes such as kindness, courage, forgiveness, justice, service, friendship and caring for others.

Leadership Monitoring and Review

Class teachers plan, teach, adapt and assess reading, maintain a consistent reading environment and communicate concerns about progress. Class teachers have regular communication with the reading subject leader to gain advice and guidance.

We recognise the importance of strong subject leadership at St Matthew's. Allocated subject leadership time enables the reading leader to undertake learning walks, review planning, monitor books and standards, and provide team teaching and coaching where appropriate.

The reading leader regularly supports staff development and shares effective practice across school. Monitoring focuses on the consistency and quality of reading teaching, progression, pupil outcomes, the use of Literacy Counts, Reading Plus, phonics provision and the development of reading for pleasure.

The curriculum lead and senior leaders ensure the curriculum is implemented consistently and provide time and support for improvement. Governors hold leaders to account for the quality and accessibility of reading provision. Findings from monitoring and assessment inform action plans, staff development and curriculum planning.

Working with Families

We recognise that families play an important role in developing confident, enthusiastic readers. School shares information with parents and carers about reading provision and practical ways to support reading at home.

Children have access to Reading Plus at home and are encouraged to read regularly with an adult. Families can support children by listening to them read, reading aloud to them, discussing books and asking questions about what they have read.

Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate with the class teacher or Reading Lead if they have questions or concerns about their child's reading.

Homework

At St Matthew's, home reading is an important part of our reading culture. Home reading books are sent home on Monday and returned to school on Thursday. Children are encouraged to read regularly at home and to share their reading with an adult.

Children may also read books from home and other suitable texts, such as recipes, newspapers, magazines or information linked to their interests. The aim is to build regular reading habits and help children experience reading as an enjoyable part of everyday life.

Reading Plus is available for children to access at home in addition to their school session. Teachers use information from school and home reading opportunities to support children's ongoing reading development.

Related Guidance

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework; National Curriculum in England programmes of study for English; Read Write Inc. phonics guidance; Literacy Counts reading curriculum and resources; Reading Plus; school assessment and SEND policies; school home reading guidance.