

How is English a Sacred Subject?

Through the study of English, we enable our pupils to discover the multi-faceted beauty of communication, understanding, and exploration of relationships with themselves, each other, and the mysterious nature of God's world; to recognise that language plays a fundamental role in the growth of our identity and self-image, leading to human flourishing which transcends limitations and barriers. Exposure to a rich variety of literature and the development of high-level literacy skills gives them the tools to participate as a global citizen.

Intent

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we are dedicated to fostering a love of reading in our pupils. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils become confident, fluent readers who have a good knowledge of a range of authors and who use what they read to make sense of the world around them. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a passion for discovery and confidence to explore their imagination. At St. Mary's we strongly promote the development of vocabulary, which is central to our broader curriculum. We understand the importance of parents and carers in supporting their child to develop their reading fluency and comprehension, so a home-school partnership is paramount. Reading workshops are adopted to enable parents and carers to support their children effectively at home.

During their time at St. Mary's, all children will be exposed to a high quality education in English. We are committed to ensuring that all of our pupils become highly competent writers. The development of key writing skills is central to our English curriculum and these are taught through high quality texts and visual stimulus, which are carefully selected in line with our pupils' interests. Our pupils are given endless opportunities throughout their school journey to write for different audiences and purposes, therefore independently applying and securing the key writing skills, which are progressively built upon.

As a Voice 21 school, we strive to create an oracy-rich community, where we ensure that all children feel that their voices are valued and listened to. Quality first teaching aims to support children in using their voice confidently to reason, negotiate, present and explore ideas, which in turn will support their learning across the curriculum and prepare them for later life.

Implementation

At St. Mary's, the English Curriculum consists of:

Writing

- A sentence stacking approach to writing, which promotes teacher modelling and a shared writing process. This promotes meta-cognition as teachers talk through the writing process aloud with the children.
- Application writes are planned to give pupils the opportunity to independently apply taught skills.
- Hook lessons to engage the pupils and give them a strong purpose for writing.
- Regular opportunities to draft, edit and publish written work.
- The writing for a particular audience is split over several lessons to promote concision and quality. Learning to live out our calling with compassion and love
- Use of high quality, language-rich texts and visual stimuli, which enthuse and challenge pupils.
- Opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences, which inspire pupils to write.
- Opportunities to apply taught skills in other areas of the curriculum.

- Modelling of a high standard of talk and writing to secure high expectations.
- Each lesson is designed so that learning is chunked to sustain engagement and pupils are given ample opportunities to talk through their ideas with their learning partner.
- Use of Alan Peat sentence types to develop sentence structure and text composition.
- Challenges are provided for all children - at their level – in all writing lessons to ensure accelerated progress.
- Writing is assessed daily during English lessons. This formative assessment then informs future teaching and planning.
- Teachers regularly moderate writing as a year group and with other colleagues from different schools.
- Pre-teach sessions take place four times a week before school across the school for children working towards the expected standard, who would benefit from a writing intervention.

Reading

- Daily phonics takes place in EYFS/KS1. We currently use Little Wandle, which teaches phonics through a systematic approach.
 - Identified groups of children are given further support in additional phonic sessions, as necessary, to close gaps in learning and to ensure accelerated progress.
 - Whole class reading taught in Y1 three times a week and follows the Little Wandle scheme.
 - Whole class reading taught from Y2-Y6. This a structured approach which takes place three times a week. A chosen text is studied over a fortnight and the sequence of lessons include: text immersion, vocabulary focus, activities to support VIPERS skills in areas which are in need of development, planned questions to develop and assess the children's understanding of the text, big questions which require a more in-depth response and modelled answers which give pupils the opportunity to edit and improve their initial responses. Extension activities are provided as necessary to provoke higher level thinking skills.
 - Celebration of whole school events to promote reading and encourage reading for pleasure.
 - Home reading books in EYFS and KS1 are fully decodable and closely matched to each child's phonetic knowledge and ability.
 - Accelerated Reader used in KS2 (and where applicable in Year 2) to develop reading fluency, comprehension and enjoyment of reading. Books are determined following regular assessments which provide children with a ZPD score.
 - Regular story time in each classroom. These texts are carefully selected by teachers and encompass a range of authors, genres (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) and carry cultural capital.
 - The expectation is that all children read at home every night with someone at home. This is communicated and tracked via the children's reading diaries.
 - Reading buddies takes place so that competent Year 5 readers (who receive training) read with targeted pupils in Year 3/4 on a daily basis to support their reading development.
 - Ready, steady, readers takes place so that competent Year 4 readers (who receive training) support the phonetic development of targeted children in Year 1.
- ☑ Reading is assessed primarily during reading lessons, where both fluency and comprehension can be evaluated by the class teacher. In addition to this, termly summative reading tests are completed from Y1-6, which are used to support teacher judgements of reading.

Spelling and Grammar

- Daily phonics sessions in EYFS and Year 1, following Little Wandle.

- Spelling rules are taught progressively across the school, via Ed Shed, during discrete spelling lessons.
- Dictation sessions are timetabled weekly, which focus on the Statutory Spelling Lists for each year group.
- Discrete teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar three to four times per week from Y2-6.
- Spelling Hive Tests are completed weekly to assess gaps in knowledge.
- Weekly grammar scores are recorded by class teachers and analysed to identify gaps in learning and to inform interventions and future planning.

Handwriting

- Daily letter formation sessions in Y1.
- Cursive handwriting is to be introduced once the children are able to write fluently after mastering correct letter formation. The Magic Link Handwriting Scheme is used at this point to provide a consistent approach to the teaching of cursive handwriting.
- The Magic Link Handwriting Scheme is used three times a week from Y2-Y6. These whole class sessions focus on developing competency when joining letters.
- Handwriting baselines are completed in the autumn term and repeated in the spring and summer term. Monitoring of handwriting in this way ensures that key needs are identified and targeted in interventions/pre-teach sessions.

Oracy

As a Voice 21 school, oracy is integral to the St. Mary's Primary School curriculum. Our aim is to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, understanding and higher order thinking, which starts at Nursery all the way through to Year 6.

At St. Mary's, we aim to create an oracy-rich environment, where all children feel that their voices are valued and listened to. Staff at St. Mary's model use of high-level vocabulary and correct use of Standard English in speech. It is the expectation that children reflect on these models when structuring their spoken and written language.

Approaches to teaching and learning encourage pupils to:

- Have thinking time to formulate and structure their ideas before articulating them (nesting).
- Orally engage with different groups of people to present ideas with confidence, in a range of groupings and settings.
- Recognise the value of listening.
- Speak with confidence, clarity and fluency.
- Use their voice confidently to reason, negotiate, present and explore ideas to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Take turns and listen to the views of others.
- Take on a specific role when engaging in group talk.
- Sustain a logical argument and respond to others appropriately.
- Be open minded to value the contribution of others.
- Orally rehearse ideas for writing.

Through our English curriculum, pupils have opportunities to develop their oracy skills by:

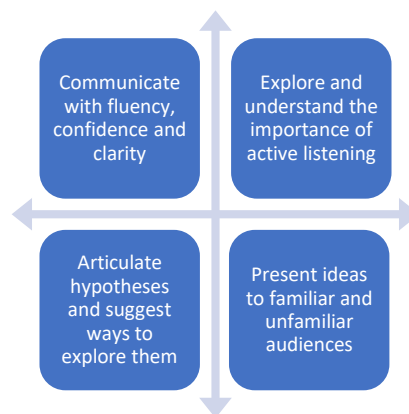
- Engaging in paired and group discussions.
- Engaging in role-play activities.
- Engaging in hot seating activities.
- Participating in structured debates.
- Generating vocabulary with peers.
- Critiquing own and others' written work and suggestions.
- Justifying reasons for authorial choices.
- Evaluate written work.

Impact

We strive to ensure that our children's attainment is in line with, or exceeds, their potential when we consider the varied starting points of all our children. The age related expectations are paramount when it comes to measuring attainment. We robustly and systematically track the progress and attainment of all children throughout the year, aiming for accelerated progress in all pupils. We aim for the percentage of pupils working at age related expectations and greater depth standard within each year group to be at least in line with national averages.

Children at St. Mary's enjoy reading and this has a positive impact on reading attainment. They can confidently talk about what they like to read and who their favourite authors are. Children have enhanced levels of text comprehension and have a good understanding of the key reading skills. Parents and carers have a good understanding of the importance of reading and know how to support their child at home.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum and cross curricular writing is of a high standard. Skills taught in English lessons are transferred into other subjects, showing mastery of the key skills.



During their time at St. Mary's, pupils' speaking and listening skills progress rapidly so that by the time they leave St. Mary's, they are able to communicate effectively for a wide range of purposes and to a wide range of audiences. We enable our pupils to achieve because they can do the following:

We hope that as children move on from us to further their education and learning that their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do. Our intentions are that our English curriculum will ensure all pupils are academically prepared for life beyond primary school and throughout their educational journey, into adulthood.