



## **English Policy**

# **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

Policy approved by the Governing Body

Date:

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Next Review:

## **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

### **English Policy**

At St Mary's we believe that one of the most important skills any child can leave primary school with is the ability to read and write independently and effectively. We believe Literacy and communication are key life skills and that through the English curriculum our children will develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language. We also intend to teach children the importance of enjoying and appreciating literature and its rich variety.

At St Mary's we provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated.

#### **Aims**

We strive for the children to become a Primary Literate Pupil who can communicate through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding and in a range of situations. By the end of year 6 we aim for every child to be able to:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Peer and self-assess their work enabling independence and understanding
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use it to read and spell correctly
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Present written work using fluent and legible handwriting
- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment, and be able to talk about their preferences and opinions
- Have an interest in words, their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary
- Write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose
- Understand, use and be able to write a range of non-fiction texts
- Have an enthusiasm for, and love of, reading for life
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing

#### **At St Mary's we:**

- Provide daily reading sessions in all classes which enable the children to listen, explore and discuss a variety of rich texts and language
- Provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT
- Provide opportunities for cross curricular writing
- Provide opportunities for role-play and drama
- Daily phonic sessions for all Early Years, KS1 children and KS2 children at that level
- Provide opportunities to enter writing competitions which promote writing for real purposes

## **Learning and Teaching**

The National Curriculum Programmes of Study (2014) form the basis of teaching and learning at St. Mary's school. Clear objectives are set for each Literacy session and success criteria are shared with the children. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the children and intervention programmes are used to target and support identified children. Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working group's e.g. whole class/small group/ paired/individual. Teachers use a range of methods to teach literacy which include:

- Instruction/direction
- Modelling/demonstrating/scribing
- Explaining
- Questioning
- Discussing
- Consolidating
- Evaluating
- Summarising

Additional adults are used to support the teaching of Literacy. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

## **Speaking and Listening**

Throughout the school (including EYFS) children are taught to listen to and learn texts off by heart as an initial oral experience of the text type, appropriate key vocabulary and writing style. Children have the opportunity to respond to stories, poems and rhymes through daily English sessions. Children participate in discussions (e.g. talking partners, group and class discussions/debates), they are encouraged to respond orally to different stimuli (e.g. radio, television, visiting speakers, music). Children also learn to discuss and evaluate their own work with peers and adults.

Through speaking and listening opportunities at St. Mary's school children will be able to:

- Listen, evaluate and respect the opinion of others
- Speak expressively and confidently about a range of topics through class discussions and debates
- Experience a range of opportunities to talk and listen in formal and informal settings
- Use drama and role play to develop confidence when addressing an audience
- Use discussion during shared and guided reading and writing sessions

Teachers at St. Mary's create an environment in which children feel safe when speaking about their ideas thoughts and feelings.

## **Reading**

At St. Mary's Reading is at the heart of high quality literacy teaching. Teachers at St. Mary's use a range of strategies for the teaching of reading such as Shared, Guided and Independent reading as well as systematic phonics teaching.

From Reception to Year 6 there is a planned and consistent approach to delivering reading sessions and children are taught across the school to ensure they can access learning at their own level. At St.

At St. Mary's we use the **Oxford Owl Read Write Inc (RWI)** phonics and Fresh Start programmes for children in KS1 and where necessary in KS2, the children have direct and systematic phonics teaching where they are taught letter sounds, segmenting and blending skills and reading with fluency and expression.

Once children are taught reading skills in RWI and Fresh Start lessons they take home reading books or anthologies to practise their reading skills. Children in RWI sessions take home one book which they have been taught to read in school and another book which is matched to the same level for further practise. All books that are sent home contain sounds and words that have been previously taught in lessons. Each Read Write Inc. programme meets the higher expectations of the National Curriculum and uses effective assessment to accelerate every child's progress. Children are read to daily to promote reading for pleasure, use of expression, sustained listening and discussion. Children also have opportunities to enjoy books for pleasure independently in class and at home. Each child has their school planner stamped once they have completed a reading lesson in school.

In KS2 guided reading sessions, children are grouped according to their reading ability. No one reading book scheme is used, but books are organised within colour book bands which clearly allow teachers to monitor progress within reading. Read and respond resources are used to allow children to practise skills taught.

The school Reading Leader closely tracks the progress of children who attend RWI and Fresh Start lessons and groups the children accordingly, staff are then matched to groups to deliver lessons in small focused groups to maximise teaching and learning. Teachers monitor reading progress by listening to children read, using RWI assessment data and termly PIRA assessments to inform their teacher judgement. Evidence is collected through discussion, questioning and through written reading comprehension activities. SEN pupils are assessed by the school SENDCO each term using the 'Salford Reading Test' materials to gain a reading accuracy and reading comprehension score.

Outside of class reading sessions, children are actively encouraged to read a range of text types in school and at home. Pupils and parents use their home school planners to record independent reading, this includes Key word practise in Reception and Year One. Pupils continued reading at home is celebrated and encouraged and this partnership with parents to support pupils reading is actively encouraged.

## **Writing**

At St. Mary's Pupils experience a wide range of writing activities, which include both fiction and non-fiction writing.

Children are taught to:

- Be aware of the need to write legibly and use layout and space effectively to aid the reader
- Choose form and content to suit purpose and audience
- Compose both on paper and on computer screen, using different formats and layouts to present work.
- Read examples of writing in various forms and begin to recognise the criteria for such writing.

## **Big Writing Adventures**

Teachers plan and deliver writing sessions using the **Oxford Owl Big Writing Adventures** materials. The programme provides the children at St. Mary's with exciting video clips and missions which

motivate and give a real purpose to writing. Each unit allows the children from Reception to year 6 opportunities to apply their learning through an extended writing activity. Throughout the programme the children explore a range of vocabulary, punctuation and text types in preparation for the independent write where they can use their own ideas and demonstrate the skills they have learnt. Teachers create a calm, language rich environment which allows the children to write creatively and skilfully and most importantly with enjoyment.

Teachers at St. Mary's understand the skills and strategies involved in teaching writing; using methods and strategies such as Modelled, Shared, Guided and Independent writing. Children are given opportunities to write at length.

### **Writing in the EYFS**

In Reception children are taught reading and writing skills through the Read Write Inc phonics programme.

When using RWI to read the children will:

- Learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letter/letter groups using simple picture prompts
- Learn to pronounce 'pure' sounds correctly
- Learn to read words using Fred Talk
- Listen to stories being read with expression and intonation
- Read lively stories featuring words they have learned to sound out
- Show that they comprehend the stories by answering questions.

When using RWI to write the children will:

- Learn to write the letters/letter groups which represent 44 sounds.
- Learn to write words by saying the sounds in Fred Talk

Pupils in Reception have access to writing activities that are completed both independently and with the support of an adult. There is continuous provision for writing both inside the classroom and outside. (e.g. use of writing in role play areas, writing labels for information, free story writing and sand writing)

### **Grammar**

At St. Mary's children are taught to write fluently and accurately, understanding how to use the main rules and conventions of written English, as outlined in the Appendices in the National Curriculum.

Children are taught grammar rules through RWI and class sessions. Once taught the children apply their learning to structures activities which enable them to practise and demonstrate their learning. Teachers teach grammar using a range of resources including rules, pictures, rhymes and actions.

Teachers provide direct and accurate modelling when teaching both in the written and spoken forms whilst children are introduced to the grammatical functions of different types of words and punctuation and explore how sentences are constructed.

In their writing children will be encouraged to draw on their understanding of Grammar from discreet grammar sessions and discussions about carefully chosen text. They will be taught to show their understanding and develop a sense of style, experiment with the construction of complex sentences and restructure sentences for clarity and effect when writing.

## Spelling

At St. Mary's Spelling is an integral part of the writing process. Pupils are taught the knowledge and skills they need to become independent spellers through the RWI programme and discreet spelling lessons. Through RWI children are taught the 44 phonemes of spoken English as well as digraphs and trigraphs known as 'special friends', they are also taught to identify and use alternative pronunciations of the same sound.

As the children move out of the RWI and Fresh Start groups teachers plan discreet daily grammar sessions to support pupils phonic knowledge.

All children from Year 1-6 receive weekly spellings to learn. These spellings include a range of spelling patterns, common exception words and spelling lists as outlined in the National Curriculum 2014. Children have a weekly spelling test to ensure they have learnt the spellings, results are recorded by class teachers and progress shared with parents.

Children are expected to check their own writing as their confidence and spelling ability progresses, they are also taught to use dictionaries and 'Purple Pens' for editing to show that they have checked their written work for spelling errors (as outlined in the schools marking policy).

## Handwriting

Handwriting is taught with reference to the National Curriculum objectives. All staff model the 'joined cursive' script on handwritten labels, displays, working walls, marking in children's books and writing on the board, the only exception for this is when teachers are modelling writing in in other lessons and in the Early Years.

Handwriting in Reception is taught daily as part of the daily phonics sessions in a variety of ways including pictures, rhymes, modelling and opportunities to practise and apply learning. Teachers in Reception model the correct pre cursive letter formation initially. RWI resources are used to support visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning.

Handwriting in KS1 is taught daily using the **Oxford Owl Nelson Handwriting** programme. Nelson Handwriting is a whole-school programme designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet higher curriculum expectations.

The programme includes resources for pattern practice and motor skills, fun activities to bring handwriting to life and an online subscription to help implement the programme in class. Teachers begin lessons by using warm up videos where the children the opportunity to move about and develop co-ordination skills. Teachers then model letter formation using the online resources. For the purposes of practising their letter formation, children have handwriting books and extension sheets.

Children in all year groups are encouraged to implement their handwriting practice into their everyday writing across all subjects.

## Assessment

At St. Mary's assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and is clearly linked to learning objectives.

We ensure that:

- Learners are actively involved, through an explicit understanding of learning objectives, self-evaluation and target setting for personal improvement (Assessment for Learning)
- Termly trackers are used to track progression, analyse what has been achieved in relation to learning objectives and to set future targets
- Regular marking in line with the schools marking policy is carried out by all teachers which offers pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning and make improvements
- PIRA assessments are used to inform teacher assessments and level children's work against year group expectations

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

A prime area of learning and development is communication and language (CL). Children are assessed against the three early learning goals at the end of EYFS. (Revised 2014) These are

- Listening and attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

Literacy is a specific area of learning which is made up of two early learning goals:-

- Reading
- Writing

These skills are taught and developed within Reception and continues into Year One where necessary.

Handwriting is taught in the EYFS and assessed against the ELG (Early learning goal) 'moving and handling' which is part of 'Physical Development' (PD). The children handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. Handwriting is taught through daily phonic sessions where resources from Jolly phonics are used to support the children learning.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The full and effective participation and progression of all pupils is achieved by:

- Acknowledging and valuing the variety of different experiences, interests, social and cultural backgrounds of pupils; using such differences constructively to raise confidence and self-esteem
- Ensuring access to learning at an individual level, through differentiated teaching and learning strategies; planning sets high expectations and provides appropriate learning opportunities for pupils from all social backgrounds, ethnic groups and for those who are disabled
- Providing texts from a range of cultures and which are free from discrimination and stereo typing.
- Providing resources to support specific learning difficulties e.g. lap tops, large print texts, Braille, taped materials
- Appropriate 'Pupil Profiles' and intervention programmes
- Recognise that the role of the family is central in supporting the child's language development as a speaker, reader and writer
- Families, pupils and teachers are regularly informed of progress
- Teachers provide guidance on what families can do to extend their child's competence in using spoken and written language. This many include parent workshops, shared lessons, information sent home and on the school website
- The needs of children in receipt of pupil premium are specifically identified and planned for

### **Parent involvement**

At St. Mary's we aim to involve parents directly in the life of the school, and thus in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English.

Parents are involved in hearing children read, and are encouraged to discuss books with them.

In Reception parents are invited in to take part in 'Phonic' information sessions which informs parents of the strategies and resources used in school to teach reading and writing.

There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. Termly curriculum letters provide information about the English curriculum and how parents can support their children. They also emphasise the importance of reading.

Parents are encouraged to read both with and to their children at home in order to promote reading. Parents are welcomed into school to support reading in the classroom.

The English Policy is intended as a framework of principles underlying effective teaching and learning. The English National Curriculum and St. Mary's Long Term Plan is used to plan Schemes of Work in relation to these principles. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's homework policy and assessment, recording and reporting policy.

**Written by Denise Morgan (English Leader) January 2021**