ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Approved by Governors: September 2026
Review Date: September 2029
Subject Leader: English Lead
Headteacher: Mrs Laura Concannon

---

1. Mission Statement

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe that literacy is at the heart of learning and essential for enabling children to participate fully in society. Rooted in our Catholic faith and values, we are committed to developing confident readers, effective communicators and skilled writers who are equipped to flourish academically, socially and spiritually.

Through high-quality teaching, engaging texts and a language-rich environment, we foster a love of reading and writing that inspires children to become lifelong learners.

---

2. Aims

The aims of English at St Mary's Catholic Primary School are to:

- Develop enthusiastic, fluent and confident readers.
- Foster a lifelong love of reading.
- Ensure all pupils can communicate effectively through speaking and listening.
- Develop ambitious vocabulary and strong language comprehension.
- Enable pupils to write accurately, effectively and creatively for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Promote high standards of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting.
- Provide effective support and intervention for pupils who require additional assistance.
- Ensure all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Equip pupils with the literacy skills necessary for future learning and life beyond primary school.
- Develop resilient, reflective and independent learners.

---

3. Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on the requirements of:

- The National Curriculum for England (2014)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- The DfE Reading Framework
- The Teachers' Standards
- SEND Code of Practice

The English curriculum is delivered in accordance with statutory guidance whilst reflecting the mission and values of our Catholic school. Our approach reflects the principles of the DfE Reading Framework by ensuring that systematic phonics teaching is complemented by a rich English curriculum. Children are taught to decode through structured phonics lessons and to develop language comprehension, vocabulary, reading fluency and writing through high-quality English teaching and wider curriculum experiences.

---

4. Curriculum Intent

At St Mary's, we intend that every child will leave primary school as a fluent reader, confident writer and articulate speaker.

We provide a progressive curriculum that develops:

Reading

- Word reading
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Reading stamina
- Reading for pleasure

Writing

- Composition
- Vocabulary choices
- Grammar and punctuation
- Spelling
- Editing and proofreading
- Writing for purpose and audience

Spoken Language

- Listening skills
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Discussion and debate

- Presentation skills
- Drama and performance
- Oracy across the curriculum

Children are provided with regular opportunities to apply their literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

---

5. Curriculum Implementation

Early Reading and Phonics

Early reading is prioritised throughout the school and forms the foundation of our English curriculum.

St Mary's uses the phonics approach and progression from **Read Write Inc. (RWInc)** to deliver systematic synthetic phonics teaching. Daily phonics lessons focus on the explicit teaching of sounds, blending, segmenting and decoding skills through a clearly sequenced progression.

Children:

- Participate in daily phonics sessions.
- Learn sounds in a systematic and progressive order.
- Practise blending and segmenting for reading and spelling.
- Read decodable texts matched to their phonics knowledge.
- Apply their phonics learning in both reading and writing activities.
- Are regularly assessed to identify next steps and any additional support required.

Children requiring further support receive targeted intervention to secure phonics knowledge and reading fluency. Pupils in Key Stage Two who have not yet mastered essential phonics skills access additional phonics intervention as appropriate.

Our phonics provision is closely linked to the wider English curriculum, ensuring that children move beyond decoding to become fluent readers who understand, discuss and respond to texts with increasing confidence.

Read Write Inc.

Phonics and Application

Daily phonics sessions provide children with the knowledge and skills required to decode and encode effectively. These skills are reinforced throughout the school day and applied within English lessons and across the wider curriculum.

Children are provided with opportunities to:

- Apply phonics knowledge within shared, guided and independent reading.
- Use phonically plausible spelling strategies when writing.
- Develop fluency and accuracy in reading.
- Build vocabulary and language comprehension.
- Transfer reading skills into purposeful writing tasks.

This integrated approach ensures progression from learning sounds to becoming fluent readers and successful writers.

Reading

Reading is central to the curriculum and forms the foundation for future learning.

Children are taught reading through:

- Read Write Inc.
- Shared reading
- Guided reading
- Whole-class reading
- Independent reading
- Reading across the curriculum
- Teacher modelling
- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Secure decoding through systematic phonics instruction.
- Development of language comprehension alongside word reading.
- Application of reading skills to support effective writing.

Teachers carefully select high-quality texts that:

- Promote enjoyment
- Expand vocabulary
- Reflect diverse experiences
- Develop cultural capital
- Support curriculum learning

Reading for Pleasure

We believe that children become successful readers when they enjoy reading.

Reading for pleasure is promoted through:

- Daily class stories
- Reading Buddies
- DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)
- Reading challenges
- World Book Day celebrations
- Book fairs
- Library visits
- Author events
- Attractive book corners
- Recommended reading lists

The school actively encourages reading at home through strong partnerships with parents and carers.

Writing

Writing is taught through engaging and purposeful contexts using high-quality texts and the **Hamilton English** framework. The writing curriculum builds on children's phonics knowledge and reading experiences, enabling them to apply spelling, vocabulary, grammar and composition skills in meaningful contexts. Links between reading, phonics and writing are carefully planned so that children develop as confident communicators and authors.

Children are taught to:

- Plan their writing effectively
- Develop ideas and vocabulary
- Write for a range of purposes
- Write for different audiences
- Use grammar accurately
- Apply punctuation correctly
- Edit and improve their work
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their writing

Writing opportunities are planned across the curriculum to ensure meaningful application of skills.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught both discretely and within the writing process.

Teaching includes:

- Explicit grammar instruction
- Vocabulary development
- Spelling pattern investigation
- Application of spelling rules
- Proofreading and editing skills

Children are expected to apply these skills independently within their writing.

Spoken Language and Oracy

Spoken language underpins all aspects of the curriculum.

Children are encouraged to:

- Express ideas clearly
- Listen attentively
- Participate in discussion
- Justify opinions
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Present information confidently

Opportunities include:

- Debate
- Drama
- Presentations
- Group discussion
- Storytelling
- Role play
- Collaborative learning

In the Early Years, communication and language development is supported through a progressive Communication and Language curriculum and NELI interventions where appropriate.

Handwriting

The school uses **Nelson Handwriting** to teach handwriting progressively from Reception to Year 6.

Children are taught to:

- Form letters correctly

- Develop consistent joins
- Increase speed and fluency
- Present work neatly and consistently

High standards of presentation are expected across all curriculum areas.

---

6. Inclusion

All pupils are entitled to access a broad, balanced and ambitious English curriculum.

Support may include:

- Read Write Inc. interventions
- Fresh Start
- Precision teaching
- Small-group intervention
- SNIP literacy programmes
- Vocabulary support
- Additional adult assistance
- Adapted resources
- Multi-sensory approaches

Provision is carefully tailored to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those requiring additional support.

---

7. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Teachers use:

Formative Assessment

- Daily assessment within lessons
- Questioning
- Observation
- Marking and feedback
- Pupil conferencing

Summative Assessment

- Read Write Inc. assessments
- Termly assessments
- Pupil progress meetings
- Standardised assessments
- Writing moderation activities

Statutory Assessment

- Reception Baseline Assessment
- Phonics Screening Check
- Key Stage One and Key Stage Two assessments as applicable

Assessment information informs future planning, intervention and curriculum development.

---

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of English provision is monitored throughout the year by the English Subject Leader and Senior Leadership Team.

Monitoring activities include:

- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Book looks
- Planning scrutiny
- Pupil voice activities
- Assessment analysis
- Intervention reviews
- Staff discussions
- Phonics observations

Findings are used to inform school improvement priorities and future professional development.

A subject report is presented annually to governors.

---

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Approve and review this policy.
- Monitor standards and outcomes.
- Provide challenge and support.
- Ensure statutory requirements are met.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead and monitor curriculum implementation.
- Ensure appropriate staffing and resources.
- Support professional development.
- Monitor pupil achievement.

English Subject Leader

The English Subject Leader will:

- Lead the development of English across the school.
- Monitor standards and progress.
- Analyse assessment information.
- Organise training and support staff.
- Develop curriculum provision.
- Report to governors.
- Maintain high expectations for teaching and learning.

Class Teachers

Class teachers will:

- Deliver high-quality English teaching.
- Assess pupil progress accurately.
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all learners.
- Promote reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Communicate effectively with parents and carers.

---

10. Equal Opportunities

All children, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability, background or ability, will have equal access to the English curriculum.

Teaching will be appropriately adapted to ensure all pupils can participate fully and achieve success.

---

11. Safeguarding

All staff recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Through carefully selected texts, discussions and writing opportunities, English contributes to pupils' understanding of:

- Personal safety
- Healthy relationships
- Diversity and inclusion
- Online safety
- Mental wellbeing

Any safeguarding concerns arising through English lessons will be reported in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

---

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English Subject Leader, Headteacher and Governing Body.

Approved by: Governing Body
Date Approved: September 2026
Review Date: September 2029

"Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible."
Barack Obama