

English Policy 2021

'With Jesus we can achieve what we dream and believe'

School Mission (Spring 2015)

Overview

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at St Michael's Catholic Primary School. It contributes to the school's philosophy of teaching and learning as expressed through the Mission Statement.

It has been revised in Summer 2021 in light of our school priority of improving the quality of teaching and learning in reading across the school.

Aims/Objectives

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.

Strategies

Implementation of National Curriculum 2014

In the National Curriculum for 5 - 11 year olds, English is developed through four key areas:

- ✓ Spoken Language
- ✓ Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- ✓ Writing – Transcription & Composition
- ✓ Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

It is important to note that each is closely interrelated with the next, so it becomes increasingly difficult to consider one without the other(s).

The Early Years Foundation Stage

English in Early Years is based upon the Foundation Stage Profile strand of Communication, Language & Literacy.

Communication, language and literacy depend on learning and being competent in a number of key skills, together with having the confidence, opportunity, encouragement, support and disposition to use them. This area of learning includes communication, speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes, being read a wide range of books and reading simple texts and writing for a variety of purposes.

To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in communication, language and literacy, practitioners should give particular attention to:

- ✓ Providing opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other
- ✓ Incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning;
- ✓ Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- ✓ Giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role play and practical experiences
- ✓ Planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books
- ✓ Providing opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script
- ✓ Providing time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups, with particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, using their home language when appropriate

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2):

Children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6):

Children should learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically.

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills.

Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.

They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances. Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the national curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

Reading

Reading is a skill essential for life and at St Michael's we want every child to leave school as a competent reader with a love of books. Reading is a habit and that habit needs to be grounded in what we do at school, therefore reading underpins our entire curriculum.

Children need to see adults loving books, so school staff are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children. This of course includes magazines, newspapers and online reading as well as traditional books.

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Whole-class guided reading:

Teachers read with pupils a range of texts focusing on comprehension and specific features in relation to objectives and content domains. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader. Teachers demonstrate to the class by 'thinking aloud' the skills required to be a reader. For guided reading, the text chosen should be at a level slightly higher than the majority of the class and the teacher should plan questions activities, differentiated as appropriate, around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment. For children working significantly below age-related expectations, guided reading is taught in a smaller group session using a suitable text.

Within whole class guided reading we use Reading Vipers (taken from the Literacy Shed) as a way of exploring the different content domains found in the National Curriculum, allowing children to break down questions into key skills and understand how they are required to approach a text. We also use the strategy APE to teach the structure of answering written comprehension questions, particularly those which involve using evidence from the text. Following the *Answer it, Prove it, Explain it* strategy provides the children with a systematic approach to their answers.

We aim to have regular reading sessions outside of English lessons – a minimum of four times weekly in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of medium to teach reading, including: newspaper articles, video clips, extracts from novels etc., covering a breadth of topics.

Reading for pleasure lead:

We have a dedicated Reading for pleasure lead, whose main focus is to promote reading for pleasure, however timetabled sessions throughout the week will also be used to address reading fluency and comprehension, dependent on the needs of the targeted children.

Class read:

Every class across the school is read to by an adult on a regular basis, fostering a love for reading through exposing the children to high quality literature. Teachers are encouraged to choose challenging texts that will uncover new vocabulary and themes, opening up discussions around the language of books.

Reading programmes:

Children in year 5 and 6 are enrolled in Reading Plus, an online programme designed to improve a child's reading efficiency. It allows the children to build their reading fluency whilst still ensuring full comprehension of the text. As the children work through a series of texts and progress through the levels, the data is collected for the teacher to view and

assess progress. Data from the programme is compiled into reports for teachers to analyse regularly.

Reading Eggs is an online programme targeted at SEN and lower key stage 2 pupils to improve their comprehension, fluency and vocabulary. We have allocated laptops to the relevant classes to ensure that they are able to access this on a regular basis to maximise progress.

Children are encouraged to use the above programmes regularly, both in school and at home.

Phonics:

As of Autumn 2014 we follow the 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics scheme. All children are assessed and then grouped according to phonic ability. Children who take part in RWI receive targeted sessions on a daily basis and are assessed regularly. 'Fresh Start Phonics' is used as an intervention programme in KS2. Please see our separate phonics policy for more information.

Independent Reading:

Children engage in independent, sustained reading. It provides an opportunity for pupils to read and enjoy a range of texts and to apply reading strategies. Each class has a dedicated, exciting reading area containing a range of books and text types for children to access independently.

Every class should have a range of books including:

- ✓ Poetry / plays
- ✓ Fiction – the choice of books reflects the spread of interest and reading abilities across the class, for example picture books, graphic novels, etc
- ✓ Non-fiction – as wide a range as possible, including plenty linked to the subject areas being studied
- ✓ Books from a range of cultures and covering a range of themes are interwoven through all collections

Books Going Home (Oxford Reading Tree, Bug Club and high quality texts):

EYFS, KS1 and KS2: Children are heard reading independently by an adult or their peers on a regular basis, changing their books when required. Children work their way through the stages according to their ability, progressing to reading literature of their choice (checked for suitability by an adult where necessary). Pupils accessing phonics will also have a decodable phonics book, in-line with their current phonics group.

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the

relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.

They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. References to developing pupils' vocabulary are also included within the appendices.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed in the curriculum. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

Spelling at St Michael's is developed through:

- The systematic teaching of phonics in KS1 using the RWI scheme and the recurrent teaching of spelling strategies and conventions at KS2 using the 'Assertive Mentoring' spelling materials.
- Developing an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar which are taught implicitly and explicitly from Year 1 through to Year 6 using the appendices in the new National Curriculum and the Assertive Mentoring spelling resources.
- Regular dictionary and thesaurus work.
- Use of word banks and spell checks.
- Regular opportunities to identify and use spellings within a context.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

As a school, we follow the Talk for Writing approach to teaching writing, which breaks down the writing process into 3 sections: Imitation, Innovation and Invention (see St Michael's Talk for Writing overview and Whole-school long term writing plan for a breakdown of our writing approach in different key stages).

Writing at St Michael's is developed through:

Shared Writing

This provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate writing, including the thought processes that are required. Teachers should make explicit references to genre features, as well as word and sentence level work within the context of writing. Pupils contribute to the

class composition by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups or using individual white boards or their strategy page. This is also the time when children are given the opportunity to discuss, verbalise and refine ideas before committing to print. With knowledge of text type from shared reading sessions, children should be able to generate a list of features that they would expect to use in any writing genre about which they have learned. This can be used by teachers and children alike as one way of assessing children's writing and their understanding of the purpose and organisation.

Guided Writing

Children are given the opportunity to work as part of a small group to complete a piece of writing with the support and guidance of their teacher and peers. The group work together to begin a piece of writing and then continue independently whilst the teacher moves around the group and supports with individual needs as they arise. It is important that guided writing sessions are used with the range of abilities represented across the classroom and are planned carefully according to children's targets to promote progression in writing skills for all children.

Independent Writing

Children should be given the opportunity for a range of independent writing activities which clearly link to whole class writing objectives. These tasks will need an identified audience, clear purpose and should cover all aspects of the writing process. Children should be given the opportunity to self-assess and peer-assess writing, based on a rubric linked to the learning objective/year group objectives and developed by the class as a whole as part of the teaching sequence leading up to creating an extended piece of writing. Ideally, time to mark pupil's writing should be built into the lesson, as 'live marking' allows children to go through their work with an adult, learning from their misconceptions and understanding their targets for future pieces of writing. As a school, we build in regular cross-curricular writing opportunities, using our rich and varied curriculum as an engaging stimulus for the children.

Handwriting and Presentation

At St Michael's, children are taught to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. In line with the National Curriculum guidance, we teach cursive writing from year 2 upwards.

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Inclusion

In planning work the teachers will aim:

- to provide breadth and balance of language activities for all children

- to provide a differentiated English curriculum to meet the needs of all the children through the continuity of experiences
- to set suitable learning challenges for individuals or small groups of children
- to respond to pupils diverse learning needs
- to liaise with the SENCO to ensure that provision is made for all children with SEN.
- to relate activities for SEN children to their individual targets and personal plans.
- to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.
- to identify vulnerable groups who are not making expected progress, and provide appropriate support.

SEN Provision

Pupils identified as needing extra support in English will be given the appropriate help in the classroom. Providing for pupils with special educational needs should take account of each pupil's particular learning and assessment requirements and incorporate specific approaches which will allow individuals to succeed, such as using texts at an appropriate level of difficulty and planning for additional support.

EAL Provision

At St. Michael's we are a very diverse community and have a high intake of pupils who do not hold English as a first language. Providing for pupils with English as an Additional Language should take account of each pupil's ability and grasp of the English language. Teachers should both differentiate planning for these children but also allow them the time to be immersed in the language, modelling high quality talk at every opportunity.

Roles (Governing Body, Head teacher, Teachers, Staff, Parents, Pupils)

Head Teacher and Governing Body

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively.
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning.
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations.
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil Attainment.
- Ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching.

Subject Leader

- To have an impact on raising standards of attainment for English across the whole school.
- Adapt and use the Programme of Study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children.

- To monitor the whole school and individual needs to be able to assess individual professional development opportunities and needs.
- To maintain the availability of high-quality resources.
- To maintain an overview of current trends and developments within the subject.
- To ensure, together with the Head Teacher and Assessment Lead, a rigorous and effective programme of moderation of assessments.
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of children's work sample monitoring is in place.
- To ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of short-term planning is in place.
- To effectively manage any funding designated to English.

Class Teachers

- Ensure the effective implementation of the New National Curriculum for English.
- Adapt and use the Programme of study for English across the whole school that meets the needs of our children.
- Make effective use of Assessment for learning within English.
- To ensure work is planned to enable all children to reach their full potential.

Teaching Assistants

- To support the class teacher in the effective implementation of English.

Parents/Carers

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings to discuss children's progress
- sending an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can develop their learning
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework and English learning.

Outcomes

We strive to produce children who are fully literate and articulate, and are prepared for their secondary education and later life. Through engaging lessons, we aim to foster a love of English and language and an enjoyment of learning. We challenge children of all abilities and in order to make good progress in all areas of the English National Curriculum. They are encouraged to have a growth mind-set and to develop the skills of perseverance and resilience. Through reading in particular, pupils are given a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English coordinator, in consultation with the staff, and as and when elements of English are identified or prioritised within the School Development Plan.

Jade Gordon
English Coordinator, May 2021