



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Falmouth

Nurture, Prepare, Support, Enable

English Policy

Date of Policy	Autumn 2021
Policy Approved by	Governing Body
Review Date	Autumn 2023

Plymouth Cast Vision

“Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.”

Our School Vision

We **place our children at the heart of all we do**,
inspired by the love, life and teachings of Jesus.

“I am the way, the truth and the life.”

(John 14:6)

We aim to:

Nurture, Prepare, Support, Enable

In all our school we will develop a culture of high expectation and aspiration, based on our fundamental belief in the dignity of all human beings. We want all our pupils to flourish in safe, happy and enriching environments, taught and supported by adults who are skilled, motivated and committed to our shared vision and values.

English Policy

Rationale

At St Marys we aim to deliver a high-quality English curriculum that gives children the best opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of Literacy skills is central to improving a child's life chances. Teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills they have acquired in a range of contexts. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school. Teachers use cross curricular inspirational ideas to engage children in work providing memorable experiences, bringing topics to life through real life contexts.

Intent

At St Mary's, our aim is that all our children will become knowledgeable and confident readers and writers who have a life-long love of reading, an inspired imagination and a creative passion for writing.

We will achieve this ambitious goal through our daily English teaching, which:

- Promotes a positive and curious attitude towards all aspects of English.
- Fosters a love of language and an understanding of the power of story.
- Creates an exciting and enticing reading environment that inspires a life-long enjoyment of reading.
- Develops a deep understanding and ability to use the technical grammatical features of writing.
- Uses real-life, inspiring and exciting stimuli for writing.
- Utilises talk, discussion and the sharing of ideas as a platform to deepen understanding and stimulate creativity.
- Provides children with an ever-growing, wide and rich vocabulary, enabling them to bring greater meaning to their work and to use in their writing across the curriculum.
- Gives repeated opportunities to read, understand and write a range of texts, covering a wide variety of genres.
- Ensures children are given access to a wide variety of both classic and contemporary authors and poets.
- Provides all the literary skills and knowledge needed to access all aspects of the primary curriculum.

- Emphasises phonics as the basis of reading and develops a strong phonic awareness in our children.
- Seeks to enable each child to fulfil their full potential as readers and writers through access to the whole English Curriculum. *(Please also see Equal Opportunities and Inclusion policies.)*

School Policy in Relation to the National Curriculum 2014

Each child is entitled to a broad and balanced English curriculum that addresses the 2014 English Curriculum programme of study. However, pupils' experiences are not limited to the 2014 English Curriculum demands and should encompass English arising from cross-curricular topic work, events in school or community, or by meeting the needs or interests of individual children.

Continuity and progression is ensured by using the English Skills Progression to plan and assess, as well as by adhering to our Assessment and Planning policy. Teachers ensure that lessons are pitched accurately, resulting in children accessing learning for their ability. This includes children with individual needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers also ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging so that even their most competent readers and writers continue to develop and make progress.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are fundamental to good communication for us all and underpin the development of reading and writing. Teachers develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge. Teachers identify key vocabulary to be taught over a topic. Children are encouraged to be able to read, spell and define these words in context. To support the learning in this area teachers plan and develop a stimulating environment including the use of working walls where visuals and examples of key vocabulary are available for the children to access. Techniques such as story maps, story mountains, story bags, word banks and thought clouds are used to support children verbally planning and reviewing their work, up-levering vocabulary where required.

Children are encouraged to speak clearly and listen carefully, and both speaking and listening are stimulated in a range of ways, including;

- Listening to and responding to stories, rhymes, poems, songs and games from various cultures.
- Responding to visual and aural stimuli, such as pictures, paintings, film clips
- Exploring picture books, especially in, but not limited to, EYFS and KS1
- Discussing and expressing opinions
- Giving and receiving instructions or information
- Using talk partners in all curriculum areas
- Describing and recounting events
- Storytelling and reading aloud
- Reciting lines, songs and poems learned by heart in school plays, assemblies, masses, singing practices or presentations
- Imaginative play both structured and child initiated (in all Key Stages) for example role play, use of puppets or drama.
- Circle time and reflection
- Listening and responding to assemblies
- Debates
- Contributing to topic assemblies, reflecting on assemblies they have heard back in the classroom
- Taking part in class and whole school masses and liturgies

We also realise that a rich variety of speaking and listening opportunities arise from literature and so each teacher plans a class novel which is incorporated into their cross curricular planning and has a reading area in their classroom with a variety of fiction and non-fiction books.

Teachers model an appropriate use of language when speaking with children and with each other. Opportunities such as welcoming children in the morning or talking with them about subjects of interest to them, enable teachers to model and encourage appropriate spoken language.

Approaches to reading

Phonics

Phonics

We teach children from Reception to the end of KS1 to decode using a single synthetic phonics programme called Read Write Inc. Keeping to one scheme ensures that the teaching of reading in our school is consistent, effective and that irregular words are fully learnt.

In Early Years, there is a focus on supporting children to acquire a wide vocabulary, secure knowledge of phonics and communicate effectively. Children in nursery follow phase one of Letters and Sounds to develop their speaking and listening skills and lay the foundation for their phonological awareness. During the summer term in readiness for Reception, the children participate in more focused aspects of the Read Write Inc. phonic programme.

Children are taught phonics daily for 30 minutes in differentiated groups so that the content of phonics lessons closely matches the ability of children in the group. Groups are led by teachers or Teaching Assistants.

In Year 2, children who passed their phonic screening test have formal SPAG sessions instead.

RWI assessments are carried out half termly to diagnose anything that may be hindering progress in phonics and reading. Children move between groups flexibly according to ability. Where children fall behind targeted support is put in place to help them keep up or catch up quickly.

Comprehension

Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. Teachers model reading strategies and discuss texts in detail during shared and guided reading time. In KS1 and KS2, agreed guided reading record sheets are used during and after guided reading sessions to aid AFL and teacher assessment. Teachers will also use VIPERS to support guided reading sessions.

In EYFS and KS1 children have the opportunity to read 1:1 with an adult at least once a week. This is more frequent for children who read less often at home, or who may need additional support to reach national expectations for their age. 1:1 reading is recorded in Reading Record books. Children in EYFS and KS1 have weekly access to books directly related to RWI sounds being taught, in addition to weekly access to a book for enjoyment to share with family member. In UKS2, we expect children in UKS2 to record their own reflections in their reading record daily.

As children move through school opportunities for sustained independent reading are provided. In KS1 and KS2 daily independent sessions of 20 to 30 minutes are planned into the timetable.

A range of reading schemes are used across the Key Stages. In Reception and KS1 children take home a RWI book bag book and a book to promote reading for pleasure which is appropriate to their level of ability to share with parents. Each child keeps a 'Reading Record' in which parents and teachers share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with children as often as possible, preferably daily, and information is provided by teachers at the start of the school year to ensure parents know how best to support their child in reading. Alongside this, children also take 'keywords' home to learn. These are taken from the high frequency word list.

In KS2 once children can read longer texts independently and with fluency they move to Accelerated Reader. The Accelerated Reader programme involves children selecting a reading book and completing an online quiz linked to their book. The primary purpose of this programme is to assess comprehension skills.

At St Marys. We recognise the value of reading aloud to children to model appropriate use of story language and reading with expression. We want to enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers. They also take time to discuss their own reading with the children to show that reading is for life, not just as a part of learning. Every classroom also has a visible reading area that promotes a love of reading and curiosity about books

Approaches to writing

Our aim at St Marys is to develop children's ability to produce well-structured writing with appropriate detail, in which the meaning is clear and the interest of the reader is engaged. Our approach to writing aims to instil the importance of transcription and composition, as required in the National Curriculum.

Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

Teachers use a range of stimuli, including first hand experiences, to develop children's ideas and encourage them to articulate them and subsequently contribute to their writing. To support our teaching of writing, staff draw on a range of strategies including Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' and Alan Peat. These strategies allow children to develop their fiction and non-fiction language and learn how to structure their writing so that meaning is clear.

In EYFS and KS1 story maps (Talk for Writing) provide children with invaluable opportunities to express their own ideas and develop their own characters and plot. In KS2 story maps (Talk for Writing) and Sentence Structure (Alan Peat) provide children with the skills and knowledge on which to build to become proficient writers. They experience a broad variety of genres that enables them to develop rounded writing skills.

Children in all key stages are given daily opportunities to write in a range of contexts, for a variety of purposes, and have the opportunity to write at length in extended independent writing sessions where they apply their taught skills. In all key stages, children have clear and high-quality models and examples to follow, on which to base their writing. More able writers are encouraged to move further from these models, where younger children, less able writers and those with individual needs adapt these models to express their own ideas.

Teachers model writing skills and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. These shared and guided sessions often form part of the writing process giving children the experience of contributing to, improving, adapting and structuring writing as a group, before they apply these skills to their own writing. They also allow teachers to explore and improve vocabulary, which the children can also then carry forward to their pieces.

Writing is planned and built up orally before it is written down. It is also reviewed orally where children work independently or with a partner to check, edit and improve their work – including developing vocabulary. Peer marking therefore forms a central part of the composition process.

Teachers facilitate the drafting, checking and editing of writing and this is a taught skill which staff regularly model, including through 'live marking' sessions. Children have an individual focus for this time, based on their writing ability and curriculum objectives. Children edit and improve using a purple pen so that they and their teachers can see the changes they have made. Teachers use marking and feedback to direct children's attention to particular areas that need correcting, improving or developing. Children are given frequent opportunities to respond to this feedback and again, use a purple pen to show these responses.

Spelling

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's creativity.

We take a 'phonics first' approach to spelling from EYFS to year 6. Teachers use the year group spelling lists and spelling patterns as identified in the National Curriculum, with weekly spellings supported through the Babcock spelling scheme in KS2. In addition, RWInc is fundamental in developing children's spelling in EYFS and KS1.

From EYFS children are taught to segment words to spell and learn words which are not phonetically regular (common exception words). From year 1 there is more focus on choosing the 'right' sound for spelling and children learn alternative representations of graphemes and spelling rules.

In KS2 the experiences, skills and knowledge are built on from KS1 to enable pupils to apply spelling rules; use thesauruses to find new words; access dictionaries to spell words correctly.

When marking we do not correct all spelling errors, instead focusing on high frequency words, technical vocabulary and those studied in phonics.

Handwriting

The expectation for handwriting and general presentation of work is very high. Handwriting is taught daily in all year groups, to help children develop fluent, clear and legible handwriting. Pre-cursive handwriting is taught in reception when the children are ready, cursive script is used from year 1 and in year 2 children will begin to join their writing. Handwriting interventions are arranged when needed, especially in KS2. Where appropriate children use pencil grips and take part in motor skills interventions, such as fun fit or 'Speed Up' if needed. When children have developed a fluent, clear and legible handwriting style they are then given their 'pen license' and can use pen rather than pencil to write.

Grammar and punctuation

Children are taught to use standard English when speaking and writing. Grammar and punctuation are taught in context using the National Curriculum as guidance and age related expectations. Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation is taught in a systematic way from year 2 to year 6. This can be taught discretely as well as through text talk and writing. Teachers focus on a particular area/s of grammar and punctuation to focus on during a unit of work. This focus is often linked to the genre being taught.

Planning

English will be delivered daily and continually adapted to best suit individual learning needs and maximise learning. So, the structure of lessons will be flexible to suit the needs of the children, including pit stops as and when required. The duration of each lesson should be flexible and designed to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. Teachers should plan for opportunities to use and apply English throughout the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to write at length will take place throughout the week but may not always be confined to the English lesson and may be found in other subject books.

Children take part in 'cold' and 'hot' writes and the beginning and end of units. Teachers use the 'cold' writes to assess current understanding and identify areas for improvement and skills to be taught over the unit. 'Hot' writes are used to check progress and to support assessment. They also give children the opportunity to express their learning.

Children will have access to a wide range of resources such as word cards, dictionaries, sound mats, thesauruses, spell checker, iPads, computers, working walls and a rich learning environment. Wherever possible, children and teachers will use ICT in English lessons to enhance and support learning. Where appropriate additional learning opportunities will be provided by the class teacher, for individual pupils, to be undertaken outside of the normal lesson.

Assessment is used as a foundation for planning.

The National Curriculum forms the basis of the long-term plan. Medium Term planning for English is structured around the objectives for each stage on our English Skills Progression. We spend more time teaching the strand objectives that the children find most challenging to learn. Therefore, end of term Teacher assessment informs the medium plan for the next term.

Short term planning will be on a weekly basis, using the relevant school's weekly planning sheet. Teachers are expected to plan using a range of approaches including, but not limited to, direct teaching, extended writing, drama, poetry, information writing, drafting, editing, Higher Order Thinking. These approaches should be selected according to the needs of the individual class and to maximise learning.

Teachers make use of teaching strategies based on meta-cognition and Rosenshine Principles.

Finally, weekly plans are shared and discussed with TAs at the beginning of each day so they know exactly what is expected of them within the lesson, enabling them to feel confident in their role. TAs receive weekly planning so that they can see the structure for the week's lessons.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Through differentiation we provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of all children. Work in English considers the targets set for individual children.

(Please refer to our Inclusion Policy and More and Most Able Policy.)

It will be ensured that all pupils will have equal access to the full English curriculum. *(For further details please refer to the Equal Opportunities policy.)*

Assessment – measuring impact

Assessment is on-going, using Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques (observing, peer assessment, self-assessment discussing with the children, self-assessment and looking at outcomes of work, or tests). Wherever possible, children are involved in self or peer assessing their own learning, encouraging them to set next step targets. This might take place informally during the plenary with thumbs up or down in the Foundation Stage and KS1, but more often than not, formally in KS2 with the child highlighting the most suitable differentiated Challenge statement, correcting mistakes and recording written comments. It is recommended that teachers also highlight the differentiated Challenge statement that best reflects each child's understanding and records a written comment so that the children receive relevant assessment feedback. Teachers' written comments might set Next Step targets or additional work to support the child to close the gap. (For further details please refer to our schools Marking Policy.)

National curriculum writing objectives for each year group are stuck in the books and teachers assess against these objectives when the children have demonstrated sufficient understanding. Reading and Writing levels are recorded on Insight, and progress monitored, in line with the assessment policy. From Yr 2/3 – 6 children take Accelerated Reader 'Star tests' every half term to

monitor their progress on this scheme. Teachers are provided with key reading data from Accelerated Reader to help them monitor their children's progress and attainment. Intervention is quickly put in place for those children who fall behind.

Reading records are used in all classes to monitor frequency of reading, make observations and communicate issues around reading between home and school. Teachers identify children who are not reading as frequently at home and extra support is provided. Teachers record reading progress as required during guided and individual reading sessions. In Reception and KS1, teachers record the progress that children make through their RWI book bag books.

Staff also engage in collaborative moderation through staff meetings -once a term and use of No More Marking. Teachers use CAST's writing KPIs as basis for assessing children at EXP in Year 1, 3-5. KS1/KS2 assessment frameworks used for assessing writing in Year 2/6.

Resources

There is a comprehensive range of resources in school, including but not limited to, Guided Reading books, dictionaries, thesauruses, spell checkers, a range of genres within each class, library, teacher guides (e.g. storytelling resources), online resources (e.g. Literacy Shed, Pobble 365)

Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of English teaching is the responsibility of the English Coordinators, Headteacher and Deputy Head. The work of the English Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, working with colleagues from other schools, being informed about current developments in the subject, purchasing and organising resources, reporting to governors and SLT, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

Review

The English policy will be reviewed in Autumn 2023