

St Mary's English Policy

At St Mary's, we see English as a means of communication. It allows children and adults to communicate with each other and to understand others. We believe that fluent and accurate reading is one key to independent learning which directly affects confidence and self-esteem and contributes towards the school's mission to enable children to grow in confidence to reach their full potential. Oracy, Reading and Writing are essential skills for learning across all areas of the curriculum and beyond.

Oracy

Intent

At St Mary's, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. Through oracy, children learn how other people make sense of the world, how language is used to reason, how emotions and identities are expressed, and how to work together to solve problems. We aim to develop fluent speakers by providing a range of opportunities for meaningful conversation, discussion and talk through the curriculum, lunchtimes and extra-curricular activities.

Implementation

- Lessons across the curriculum are talk-rich to develop understanding and higher order thinking.
- Questioning is carefully planned to ensure all children can fully participate in lessons and have the opportunity to articulate and justify their own ideas.
- Kagan Structures are used within lessons to encourage communication and increase participation from all children.
- Children are encouraged to work collaboratively with a partner or in small groups to solve problems, take part in role play or drama activities and recite poems.
- Opportunities are provided for children to prepare and present their learning to the rest of the class individually or within small groups.
- An emphasis is placed on developing and building children's vocabulary both in the classroom and around the school.
- Children are encouraged to explore and use a wide range of vocabulary supported through the use of dictionaries and thesauruses.
- The subject specific vocabulary that children are exposed to is planned carefully and explicitly taught so the children become increasingly confident at using it within their own speech and written work.
- Classrooms are language rich environments and key vocabulary is displayed around the classroom on working walls and other displays.
- Fluent in Five is used to ensure children can recall and verbalise the key facts and information from a lesson.
- Children with additional needs are encouraged to take a full and active part in spoken language activities at a level appropriate for their needs. If necessary, they have

specific targets and are supported through speech and language interventions either individually or within a school group.

- Lots of opportunities for children to develop their oracy skills outside of the curriculum are also provided including a debate club, year group productions, class assemblies, participation in local events, school council, subject champions, the GIFT team and pupil voice activities.

Impact

The children at St Mary's are confident speakers who embrace opportunities to speak whether it be in the classroom, in assembly, in front of a panel of governors or in front of parents. As they move through the school, they build a rich and varied vocabulary and develop their ability to work collaboratively with other children.

Reading

Intent

At St Mary's, we value reading as a key life skill and are dedicated to enabling our children to become lifelong readers. We aim for every child to become a fluent reader by the end of Key Stage 1 so they can focus on developing their fluency, expression and comprehension as they move through Key Stage 2. As well as this, we want all children to leave St Mary's with a lifelong reading habit and a love of books because reading will improve their vocabulary, inspire them creatively and improve their ability to write well.

Implementation

Phonics

- At St Mary's, we follow the Letters and Sounds phonics programme from Reception into Key Stage 1.
- Phonics lessons happen for 25 minutes daily and children are grouped according to ability from Reception to Year 2.
- Staff systematically teach the relationships between phonemes and graphemes, ensuring that the children understand and use the correct vocabulary.
- During lessons, staff model and expect children to articulate phonemes correctly ensuring that mispronunciations are corrected.
- Each phonics session follows the Review/Revisit, Teach, Practise and Apply model for all lessons.
- The teaching of tricky words is also prioritised from the beginning of Reception.
- Staff regularly assess the pupils' phonic knowledge to inform planning and allow teachers to identify any gaps in learning. Children are
- Children who are falling behind are identified quickly and offered extra intervention to help them catch up.
- The children's home school reading books are closely matched to the sounds they are learning in class.
- Children in Year 2, who have passed the Phonics Screening Check, move on to looking at spelling rules and patterns.

- The lowest attaining children in Key Stage 2 have regular phonics interventions 1:1 or in small groups.

Reading

- Children work through the school reading scheme reading levelled books which match the child's current reading age. Children are encouraged to read at home with a family member daily and for this be recorded in their Home School Reading Record.
- The teaching of reading is focused on the key reading skills - decode, explain, retrieve, interpret and choice. There is a simple logo for each skill and these are embedded within each lesson to ensure children become aware of which skills they are using.
- All children from Reception to Year 4 take part in Guided Reading sessions on a rota basis.
- Reading Explorers is used to support Guided Reading sessions. Each text focuses on teaching a specific reading skill as well as allowing children to practise other skills as appropriate within a session.
- In Years 5 and 6, a whole class reading approach is taken to ensure that each session focuses on deepening children's understanding of one specific reading skill as well as providing children with the opportunity to answer higher order analytical questions through both discussion and written outcomes.
- Reading skills are also developed in English lessons through the picture books used each term as a stimulus for writing.
- Children who need additional support read individually with adults in school including teachers, teaching assistants and other volunteers such as parents or governors.

Assessment

- Assessments are carried out regularly to ensure that children are accessing books of the right level and being challenged in their reading.
- Book Band Trackers are completed termly to monitor children's progress through the book bands and identify children who are reading at a level below their year group expectations.
- Summative assessments are carried out termly to track children's progress and identify children who need additional intervention.

Reading For Pleasure

- Each classroom has a reading area which is filled with reading books suitable for their reading age. Children are also able to spend time in and borrow a range of books from our school library.
- St Mary's has close links with the Education Library Service which enables classes to borrow a selection of books linked to their class topic. This offers opportunities for the children to apply their language skills across the curriculum.
- Children are read to regularly by their class teacher. These class texts are chosen carefully to ensure children are exposed to a range of authors and genres throughout the year.

- A range of other activities take place throughout the year to encourage children's enjoyment of reading including celebrating World Book Day, library visits, book fairs, clubs and mystery readers.

Impact

By the time children leave St Mary's, they are competent readers who have a thirst for reading a range of genres including poetry. They can recommend books to their peers and can participate in discussions about books. They also have a sound understanding of the skills and strategies required to be a well rounded reader.

Writing

Intent

At St Mary's, writing is a crucial part of our curriculum and we strive to ensure that all of our children develop a genuine love of language and the written word. We want children to be able to plan, draft, edit and improve their writing whilst developing an awareness of the genre, audience and purpose as well as an increasingly wide knowledge of spelling, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. We aim to provide children with frequent opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum so they can develop an appreciation of how widely writing is used in everyday life and are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Implementation

Teaching and Learning

- Writing is planned and taught through the Teachers PAL Toolkit.
- Each term, children are exposed to a high quality picture book which is their core text for the term. This core text is used as a stimulus to produce one narrative and one non-fiction piece of writing.
- Each unit last approximately 3 weeks and follows the same structure - Creating Interest, Reading, Gathering Content, Writing, Presentation.
- For each unit, the children are encouraged to think about the text type, purpose (to entertain, to inform, to persuade, to discuss) and audience for their piece of writing.
- A unit starts with a Creating Interest Phase where children are hooked into their upcoming piece of writing.
- The Reading Phase allows children to read and respond to the text as well as developing their reading and comprehension skills.
- The Gathering Content Phase provides children with the opportunity to look at the specific text type, gather ideas and vocabulary for their own piece of writing and develop their understanding of specific writing objectives linked to the text type they are focusing on.
- High quality WAGOLLS are used to support children's understanding of the key structural and language features of a specific text type as well as providing them with a model on which they can base their own writing.

- The Writing Phase allows children to plan and write their own piece of writing in sections over a number of days focusing on a different Learning Objective each day.
- Throughout the Writing Phase, there is focus on shared writing in order to remind children of the key features they need to include and explicitly model the writing process to them.
- During the Writing Phase, there is also a focus on editing and redrafting. This is modelled during teaching and consolidated through guidance on a 1:1 basis or in groups.
- Each day, the children are encouraged to proof-read their writing for spelling and punctuation errors and correct any mistakes in purple pen.
- When redrafting their work, they are encouraged to add, replace, move or substitute words linked to the specific Learning Objective they were focusing on.
- Washing lines are used throughout a unit of work to show the build-up to a piece of writing and support the children when they are writing.
- Children are encouraged to use dictionaries and thesauruses throughout the writing process.
- Children are provided with opportunities to use the skills they are taught when writing across the curriculum.

Spelling

- In Years 1 to 6, spelling is taught discretely outside of English units and focuses on the outcomes indicated in the National Curriculum.
- A whole school spelling plan is followed which provides opportunities to revisit material from previous year groups as well as introducing new age-appropriate material.
- Children are expected to learn and apply spelling rules rather than learning lists of words.
- Children are taught a variety of strategies for learning and practising spellings, including visual and kinaesthetic methods.
- Children have weekly spelling tests focusing on common exception words in Key Stage 1 and the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 statutory word lists in Key Stage 2.
- Children are expected to spell these words correctly in their writing and, in Years 5 and 6, they are encouraged to identify where these words have been used.
- Some pupils who have been identified as struggling have additional support in school through interventions or differentiated spelling lists.
- When writing, children are encouraged to have a go at unfamiliar spelling and then use dictionaries to correct these during the editing process.

Grammar and Punctuation

- The teaching of grammar is embedded within the writing units, taking examples from the core texts and modelling appropriately.
- Pupils are given practise tasks to enable them to explore these grammatical elements in oral and written form before being expected to independently apply them in their own writing outcome at the end of a unit.
- Grammatical terms are used with pupils so they develop their understanding and application of these.

Handwriting

- Handwriting sessions are taught regularly across the school following a cursive programme.
- Handwriting begins in the EYFS with the development of gross and fine motor skills. Children are taught initial letter formation alongside their phonics learning.
- When practising letter formation, children are taught the correct size and orientation of letters as well as how to position them correctly on the line.
- Children are also taught about the different types of joins.
- Handwriting habits are explicitly taught including how to hold a pencil as well as correct posture and paper position.
- Pencil grips are provided to those who need them.
- Writing slopes are also provided when necessary to ease discomfort and improve presentation.
- From Year 3 onwards, children can earn pen licences if their handwriting is legible and consistently joined correctly. When writing in pen, children use black handwriting pens provided by school.
- Children are provided with opportunities for publishing their work either in their books or to be used for display.
- Presentation expectations are continuously reinforced to children by all members of staff, encouraging them to take pride in their work.

Assessment

- Assessment for learning strategies are used on a daily basis to build up a picture of strengths and weaknesses which can be used to inform planning within a unit of work or for the next unit.
- Through effective feedback and marking, children are aware of their next steps and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Writing assessments are carried out termly using ARE grids for each year in order to track children's progress and identify children who need additional support.
- In Years 2 and 6, the Teacher Assessment Framework is also used.

Impact

By the time they leave St Mary's, the children are enthusiastic and independent writers who can confidently transfer their writing skills across the curriculum. They are familiar with a range of genres, can write for a variety of different purposes and are able to adapt their writing depending on their audience. The children are able to effectively apply the spelling rules and patterns they have been taught as well as demonstrating a sound understanding of grammar and punctuation objectives.

Inclusion

At St Mary's, all children experience Quality First Teaching and we identify which pupils or pupil groups are under-achieving in order to take steps to improve their attainment. Children with identified SEND in English receive tailored support from SEND TAs. Other children,

who are in receipt of pupil premium funding or are identified as having additional needs, may have work additional to and different from their peers in order to help them access the curriculum as appropriate. More able children are identified and challenged appropriately within lessons and through a range of wider opportunities including extra guided reading sessions and writing workshops.

Parental Involvement

Parents can play a vital role in the development of English skills. We aim to foster a strong home-partnership regarding reading, using school reading records as a tool for communication between school and home. Parents also support the school by coming in to hear readers during the school day and volunteering to be Mystery Readers in Reception. Parents provide support for handwriting, spellings, grammar and other writing activities that may be set for homework.

Certain practices within this policy may be modified during the current Covid-19 pandemic in line with government guidance.

September 2020