

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

English Policy



We live, love and learn together in the light of God by...
praying together
learning together
playing together
and
respecting each other.

Approved by: J Kennett

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Next review due by: January 2028

This policy outlines Holy Family's approach to teaching English. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the 2014 National Curriculum for English. It sets out the rationale for teaching each area of the English Curriculum and specifies the skills that will be developed, for the majority of pupils in school.

This policy has been developed, using the DFE English Programme of Study, English Curriculum Review and Planning Tool (National Literacy Trust, 2014) and the Education Endowment Fund documents Improving Literacy in KS1 and KS2.

Vision

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (National Curriculum English, 2014, Pg. 10)

The National Curriculum (2014), clearly states that teaching English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a Primary School. At Holy Family we believe in a high quality, creative English curriculum, that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society; with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature.

Explicit vocabulary instruction is a golden thread running through reading, writing and spoken language across the curriculum, enabling all pupils to access learning and express their ideas with increasing confidence and precision.

Aims

- 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.

In Holy Family School we believe the development of English 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.
- The use of a systematic approach to teaching phonics has been developed and is embedded in school using Sound Start phonics, a systematic synthetic phonics programme validated by the DfE.
- We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form and become confident in language.
- Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school developing a knowledge of texts and greater understanding of vocabulary.
- Teachers use inspirational ideas to engage children in work; providing memorable experiences, bringing topics to life. A clear purpose and audience, either real or imagined, are used to launch a unit of work.
- We value and celebrate diversity in culture and language ensuring we use text from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Curriculum coverage is carefully monitored by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all staff are delivering the quality, creative English curriculum; in line with our vision statement.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023).

National Curriculum 2014

The new English programme of study is based on four areas;

- Spoken language
- Reading
 - Word reading/decoding

- Comprehension
- Writing
 - Transcription
 - Spelling,
 - Handwriting and presentation,
 - Composition,
 - Grammar and punctuation
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

In the Early Years Foundation stage (Reception) children are given opportunities to:

- speak, listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- listen to and read a range of texts;

become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication, where mark making opportunities are widely available and opportunities to gain and practise skills in reading and writing.

The National Curriculum is divided into 3 Key stages; **Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2** (Years 3 and 4) and **Upper Key Stage 2** (Years 5 and 6). By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. **This is the essence of the English mastery curriculum.**

At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2), children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds. Children are given opportunities to speak and listen throughout all subject areas.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6), children learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

Subject Organisation

The English curriculum at Holy Family Catholic Primary School is delivered using the National Curriculum English Document (2014). The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Early Years Foundation stage through to the National Curriculum.

Using the English Curriculum teachers throughout school will follow a Curriculum Map based on a rich literature spine influenced by fiction, non fiction and poetry, These text units are generally planned over a 2-3 week period using the 7 step approach to learning and metacognition using EEF (2018)

1. Activating prior knowledge;
2. Explicit strategy instruction;
3. Modelling of learned strategy;
4. Memorisation of strategy;
5. Guided practice;
6. Independent practice;
7. Structured reflection.

These steps allow the children to thoroughly explore the text type and its features, clear modelling, shared practice and independent writing.

Implementation of the Policy

At Holy Family School we recognise that literacy skills are a key component for all learning and therefore English is always a key priority in our school. We follow the Early Years Statutory Guidance and the National Curriculum 2014 when planning all our learning opportunities.

The English curriculum at Holy Family School is delivered within a stimulating, attractive environment, where a range of teaching styles are used to promote quality learning and children are motivated to achieve success. English is taught in a variety of ways including:

- Direction
- Demonstration
- Modelling
- Scaffolding
- Explanation
- Targeted questioning
- Initiating and guiding exploration
- Discussing and challenging ideas generated by the children
- Listening and responding to children in a sensitive and supporting manner, discussing and evaluating children's successes.

In addition, with specific reference to English, teachers will:

- plan for well-paced lessons which drive learning forward, using quality texts for teaching as their basis
- consider the opportunities for developing English skills across the curriculum
- be mindful of the literacy needs of the child in all subject areas, and differentiate questions and activities to allow all children access.

All children in our school will have full access to English on a daily basis.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

Holy Family School aims to help children:

- understand and produce a simple and an elaborate language;
- use speech for a variety of purposes e.g. describing events, expressing opinions, articulating feelings and investigation;
- use language to aid social and emotional development;
- use standard English, vocabulary and grammar;
- use language for enjoyment;
- listen carefully and respond to what is said.

The Four Strands of Speaking and Listening: Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction, and Drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

Approaches to Reading

Holy Family School aims to:

- encourage a love of reading by making it a successful and enjoyable experience;
- produce effective readers by teaching phonics through a systematic approach using Sound Start Phonics, so all children have the skills to decode effectively when reading and writing;
- develop reading fluency through repeated reading, modelled prosody and regular opportunities to read aloud;
- provide a wide and stimulating variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry;
- develop strategies for children to read for meaning;

Reading is an important part of the English curriculum in Holy Family and permeates throughout the curriculum, with targeted support and appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND and those learning English as an additional language.

Reading in EYFS and KS1 uses Sound Start Phonics and Collins Big Cat Letters and Sounds books with all children matched to a decodable book in class through guided reading, with this book taken home to read and share with parents and carers. Pupils also have the opportunity to choose a book from a book banded selection to share and read at home every week too.

Home reading books at KS2 is organised on a banding system ensuring that the children read books appropriate to their reading (the children's reading should be 99% accurate in these books). These books will be provided and sent home on a daily basis for parents to read with their children. Reading resources provide enriching vocabulary, correct grammatical structure and interesting content.

Each parent is given the opportunity to liaise with teachers through the reading record books which record children's reading at home and parents are expected to read for 20 minutes every night and record this in their child's reading record. Pupils have the opportunity to gain stars for consistently reading at home and these are awarded on a termly basis.

Children who have moved on from the book banded books have access to the class book selection and School Library or they can bring a book to read from home. This is monitored by class teachers.

Children in Holy Family are encouraged to read widely and our library offers the children the opportunity for wider reading by borrowing a variety of books. The children have access to the library, which offers a wide variety of texts to capture interest. They also have access to share in a range of texts through their class novel, which the teacher reads to them daily throughout the week. Holy Family School is a Reading for Pleasure School and has worked with Open University Reading for Pleasure to promote and embed reading at the heart of everything we do. Teachers develop reading for pleasure through book talk, recommendations, class novels and opportunities for children to see adults as readers. Ofsted March 2020 "The school's reading culture is inescapable. Pupils value reading and are eager to talk about their favourite stories." Ofsted February 2025 "The school successfully promotes a love of reading." In our English work we have developed links with a variety of authors and illustrators to ensure our pupils have first hand access to excellent English bespoke to our curriculum.

Phonics is taught daily in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One following Sound Start Phonics. This involves a 20 minute daily session of planned systematic phonics' delivery, covering tricky words, reading and writing. These skills are developed further through all curriculum areas as children apply their phonics skills in all their learning. Some children in KS2 receive further support to develop their phonics to support their reading and writing.

In Reception and KS1 all children have the opportunity to share a guided reading session each day. This will include reading using Big Cat Collins Letters and Sounds matched to phonics phases, reading with an adult, comprehension activities linked to the books or phonics.

At KS2 pupils work on a 2 week timetable with shared reading using high-quality texts such as Reading Detectives one week, and guided reading the following week.

Additional support is provided for pupils with English as an additional language to develop vocabulary, oral language and comprehension, ensuring full access to the English curriculum.

Approaches to Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should;

- develop the stamina and skills to write at length

- use accurate spelling and punctuation
- be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing; in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling.

Teachers model writing strategies 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.

The children have opportunities to write at length, in extended independent writing sessions, regularly for a range of purposes/audiences; across the curriculum.

In line with the DfE Writing Framework, writing at Holy Family is taught through a carefully sequenced approach which prioritises transcription (spelling and handwriting), sentence construction and purposeful composition. Teachers ensure that pupils are supported to plan, draft, revise and edit their work, with high-quality models and explicit instruction enabling pupils to write with increasing independence and accuracy. Adaptations are made to teaching, resources and scaffolding so that pupils with SEND can access, practise and apply key writing skills, including transcription, sentence construction and composition.

Holy Family School aims to:

- ensure all writing has a purpose and that children have the skills to be resilient and independent writers;
- develop the children's confidence as young writers by using a range of text to promote their understanding and enjoyment;
- help children see writing as an important means of communication;
- develop writing by developing writing toolboxes in each year group which build on spelling, grammar and handwriting skills;
- give each child the opportunity to write in a variety of genres and for a variety of audiences.

Children are expected to write daily across the curriculum. Clear modelling by teachers and opportunities to take part in shared writing will help to support independent writing and the high expectations at Holy Family School. As pupils move through the school, scaffolds are gradually removed so that pupils can write independently and fluently.

In our school we have high expectations of presentation. The children follow Nelson Handwriting and are expected to write in their VBH each day. To support this handwriting practice is undertaken regularly across school and children write in pencil until they obtain a

pen licence. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are expected to demonstrate high quality presentation and handwriting when marking, working with children or scribing in a lesson.

Approaches to Spelling

At Holy Family School, we want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers; and we believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers need to spend less time and energy in thinking about spelling to enable them to channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

A balanced spelling programme includes five main components:

- understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological);
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words;
- practising and assessing spelling;
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading;
- building pupils' self-images as spellers

A good spelling programme gradually builds pupils' spelling vocabulary by introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced. Short, lively, focused sessions are more enjoyable and effective than an occasional skills session.

Spelling strategies need to be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross-curricular words and individual pupils' words.

Children learn their spellings using LCWC (Look, Cover, Write, Check), HAG (Have a Go). Teachers check children progress, using dictation and evidence in writing. Proofreading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting.

Spelling at Holy Family School:

- YR/Y1 - Sound Start Phonics. Any child that has not passed the Phonics Screening Check in Y2 will continue to receive daily phonics sessions.
- Year 2/Key Stage Two follow the Babcock No Nonsense Spelling Programme. Children are taught spelling discreetly each week.

Children have given spellings each week linked to Phonics phases and the No Nonsense Spelling Programme to learn and are assessed using dictation. They also have the opportunity to practise every day to embed spelling skills.

Approaches to Grammar

Grammar is most effective when taught in the context of reading and writing; either in the context of the linguistic demands of a particular genre or the writing needs of a child. So, alongside discrete grammar sessions from Y1 to Y6, we take a pragmatic approach to the teaching of grammar and believe effective grammar teaching takes place in meaningful contexts.

Playing with words, investigations, puns, jokes, and rhymes can all enrich and inform grammatical knowledge and understanding and develop a genuine interest in how language works.

Cross-curricular English Opportunities

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired to other areas of the curriculum to maximise English learning every week.

The Use of ICT

Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in English will be planned for and used as appropriate ensuring the activity has a strong English base.

Assessment and Target Setting

Teachers will be set annual targets for their children's progression and attainment as part of their performance management. Pupil progress meetings will be termly and assessments against the national criteria will be made at the end of each term (December, March and July).

Statutory assessments are undertaken at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teacher assessment is used to inform judgements in line with national guidance. In EYFS, the new Baseline assessment will be carried out each Autumn term. All staff are responsible for the progress of all groups of learners in their class.

At the end of Year 1 the children sit the Phonics Screening Test and those who do not pass re-sit it at the end of Year 2.

Learning Environment

Our classrooms and displays are used as learning tools. Using the learning environment, all skills are transferrable and learning is applied across a range of contexts, ensuring intrinsic links between reading, writing, phonics, grammar, spelling and punctuation are made. Children

are regularly given time to consolidate learning. Through the learning environment children are empowered and supported to build independence when working.

We have English rich classrooms, which have evidence of;

- Differentiation offering all children the opportunity to make progress in English learning
- Modelled expectations available for reference
- Current phonic and spelling and grammar objectives are visible
- Easily accessible reference material such as spelling dictionaries and thesauruses.

Intervention Programmes

Intervention programmes are implemented to support children where appropriate and for children identified by the class teacher and the SLT during Pupil Progress Meetings. These may include, Phonics Booster Groups and additional 1:1 reading.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Conclusion

This policy also needs to be in line with other School Policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following School Policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Feedback and Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This details the specific learning objectives for that week in the form of LO and (Steps to Success), and gives details of lesson content and structure and differentiated learning activities for each ability group. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and general observations in line with AfL procedures.

Teachers plan the activities in English so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan progression into the scheme of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

The Early Years Foundation Key Stage

The teaching of English in the Early Years Foundation Key Stage is through the Area of Learning for Communication Language and Literacy and we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. We follow the Sound Start Phonics Programme for the teaching of phonics through a systematic, clear approach building on each phase.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that cognitive and academic language proficiency in all subjects is given a high focus for all pupils.

Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Individual classrooms have their own resources including teacher books, books of specific genres, guided reading books.

Reading Area

Every class has a reading area that is inviting and may be themed according to the learning journey, author reviews, book reviews and reading prompts are on display.

Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the English curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping them informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- purchases and organises resources;
- uses specially allocated regular subject leader time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe English lessons across the school to monitor pupil progress;
- conducts moderation staff meetings regularly using samples of extended writing from literacy and other curricular areas. This ensures consistency of judgement

across the school and increases all staff's knowledge and awareness of levels and standards;

A report is made to the *Governors* on the progress of English provision. This report identifies strengths and areas for development. The English governor (Jo Kennett) meets regularly with the subject leader to review progress.

The quality of teaching and learning in English is monitored and evaluated by the subject leader and head teacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil interviews.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Approved by the *Governors* of the Curriculum and Standards Committee