

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ENGLISH POLICY

Rooted in Faith ~ Growing in Love ~ Learning for Life

Compassion – We love and care

Humility – We put others first

Responsibility – We do what is right

Inspiration – We love to learn and achieve

Solidarity – We stand together

Truth – We live by God's Word

Whole School Curriculum Intent

At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, we are deeply committed to developing the gifts and talents each pupil has been given by God. The school's direction stems from its Mission Statement, 'Learning for Life'.

We deliver an engaging and challenging curriculum for every child that attends our school. The National Curriculum forms the foundation for all learning, which has been carefully sequenced to ensure that all children, in particular the disadvantaged and those with Special Educational Needs, are exposed to the richest and most varied opportunities that we can provide.

We have ambitious expectations and will support the spiritual wellbeing of each child by instilling the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to be aspirational, successful young people, who are confident and well-rounded in an ever-changing world.

English Intent Statement

At St. Francis of Assisi, we believe that literacy and communication are essential life skills that are embedded within everything we do and are developed consistently over time. Through our engaging English curriculum, we teach our children to develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively as they progress through life. We believe that a quality curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion throughout their primary schooling.

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in children's development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. At St. Francis of Assisi, we recognise that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing, and that 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. We therefore aim to ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. We recognise that our children should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. Teachers at St. Francis assist in making pupils' thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers aim to ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions.

At St. Francis of Assisi, we know that reading and writing are intrinsically linked and strongly believe that exposure to high quality and challenging texts support learners in both of these vital life skills, as well as developing a child's understanding of vocabulary, style and formality in a wider context. We understand that reading is the foundation for all learning and, therefore, our vision at St. Francis is that all children become lifelong readers with an instilled love and enjoyment of reading.

We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children are ambitious in their creativity and take pride in their writing. We aim for our pupils to be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing by adapting their language and style for a range of contexts and, most importantly, we aspire for children to see themselves as writers.

We follow the National Curriculum for English, aiming to ensure that writing skills are embedded in all forms of writing across all subjects and, from the very earliest stages of writing development, we promote talk to aid writing. We want all pupils to:

- Use discussion to learn: they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, alongside 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.
- Be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Subject Curriculum Design – Implementation

Our literacy provision follows the 2014 National Curriculum and is taught through regular English lessons to ensure continuity and rigour in teaching and learning of knowledge and skills. Four or five English lessons are delivered from Year 1 to Year 6 each week. Additionally, children in Early Years and Year 1 receive focused phonics lessons daily, and Year 2 continue to receive focused yet sometimes more discrete phonic lessons wherever suitable. Foundation Stage plans are based on the Early Learning Goals as set out in the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. All overviews, short-term lesson plans and outcomes are available for examining by relevant stakeholders through our school's 'All Staff' account. Medium and short-term plans endeavour to facilitate the development of English skills through cross curricular links in the foundation subjects. Wherever appropriate, a cross-curricular piece of writing is planned for each topic, allowing children the chance to transfer and apply their writing skills. The teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation is embedded into all English lesson sequences.

Each year group has a yearly overview of engaging key texts and writing genres that includes a focus for fiction, non-fiction or poetry that they will teach. These have been planned to ensure correct coverage of the key genres as well as to build on skills from year to year. From Year 2 upwards, writing units will take between two and four weeks to complete, and the outcome of each unit will be an extended writing piece which will be used to assess pupils' skills against the agreed success criteria. In all year groups, narrative units are linked to a carefully chosen text that acts as a stimulus for teaching the identified text, word and sentence level features that children will be expected to include in their extended writing outcome for that unit. In addition to the agreed genres, teachers may plan shorter units based on a cohort's needs, interests or linked to other curriculum areas.

Within each term the inclusion of a high-quality text is used to challenge, enthuse and engage children. Our priority is to expose children to a range of quality texts and authors including classics and new releases. Where possible, these texts link to current topics, to enhance learning across the curriculum. There is a clear progression in the teaching of writing which includes the familiarisation of the text type through reading, the identification of structure and language features, modelled writing, shared writing, supported composition, guided writing and independent writing. Progression of teaching writing includes exploring features, planning, drafting, assessing and editing. Throughout a writing unit, a success criterion of skills is often created in collaboration with the teacher and pupils. The success criteria may be displayed on the board for children to refer to or attached in books to allow children and teachers to assess against upon completion. This assessment is then used by teachers and pupils to set short term targets.

When using a clear success criterion in English lessons, these help the children understand the expectations of a task and how they can achieve their best in the lesson. Success criteria are consistently referred to during teacher modelling and used effectively for self and peer assessment at the end of a task. Elements of success criteria are clearly referred to when feedback from the teacher is given, either verbally or in writing. Success criteria can be altered for different ability groups in the same lesson where appropriate. Often, they are spilt into three levels (must, should, could) to ensure there is an ambitious element to all lessons so that children can stretch themselves and extend their learning.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We teach English in the Foundation Stage as an integral part of the school's work. We relate the Literacy aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals and Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance, which underpin the curriculum 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,
- to try and extend their vocabulary and communication skills,
- to explore words and texts.

The Song of Sounds scheme is used to deliver phonics teaching through daily lessons. On Fridays, children participate in a range of activities to consolidate the week's learning. Writing opportunities are planned throughout the unit and within the continuous provision. Four English focused inputs are delivered each week, and children will complete follow up tasks in small groups with the class teacher. Children record in their writing in books weekly from the second half-term in Autumn. Children read fortnightly regularly to adults who track their progress through our banded book system.

Spelling

We use 'Spelling Shed' to support the explicit teaching of spelling across Key Stage 2 and to consolidate and complement our phonics program. Spelling is taught by focusing on specific rules and patterns each week. Children are given the opportunity to revise prior learning, whilst being introduced to new spellings. Rules and patterns are taught through multi-sensory activities which examine aspects such as the number of syllables, tricky sounds and the morphology of the word. There are also opportunities for both independent tasks and consolidation, within lessons and by using online games and activities that children can access at home.

In Key Stage 2, spelling lessons are incorporated into English lessons at the beginning of the week, where the new spelling pattern for the week is introduced. Children then have a further opportunity to encounter these words in one of the handwriting sessions during the week. Children are encouraged to also practise their spelling lists at home in preparation for a spelling test the following week.

Handwriting

We are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care with our handwriting style. In line with the Writing Framework 2025, handwriting is taught explicitly twice a week across the school beginning in Early Years, in addition to writing daily in phonics lessons. We use Letter-join's whole school handwriting scheme, which enables us to meet National Curriculum requirements through a structured teaching programme with the aim to develop neat, legible and speedy handwriting where letters and words are automatically produced in independent writing. Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the teaching and learning of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in their work. We want to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting, so they feel a sense of achievement and pride.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is continuous and ongoing. There should be assessment opportunities in every lesson. Assessment of the standard of children's work and rate of progress is measured through teachers' careful observation and marking of children's output in line with the school Response and Marking Policy. Summative data to measure progress is gathered through testing as directed by the school's Assessment Lead, and data is recorded on Juniper Sonar Tracker.

Home/School Link

The link between home and School is forged in a number of ways. In EYFS, this is through regular tapestry observations. In both EYFS and Key Stage 1, developing strong links between home and school reading is vital in ensuring children become lifelong readers. The school will support parental engagement with their child's reading by ensuring that appropriate texts are sent home regularly for both independent reading and books to be read aloud. Children are encouraged to read each evening as part of the school's Homework Policy and this work is supported through their Reading journals. In Key Stage 2, Spelling homework packs are sent home at the beginning of each half-term (5-8 lists at a time depending on the length of the half-term, so that families may get

ahead with practising the spelling patterns with their child should they wish to. Then, one list is set as a weekly assignment on Spelling Shed. This will support the teaching of Spellings in line with what is being taught in the classroom each week. To give more detailed outlines of the child's progress, annual reports and parent consultations are arranged but informal meetings are also encouraged when needed. English targets will be discussed in Pupil Learning Review meetings (PLRs). Additionally, the school encourages families to engage in online learning with resources such as Spelling Shed and Letter-join.

Inclusion and Special Needs

We aim to meet the needs of all children by an effectively adapted curriculum through quality first teaching. Where we identify that, due to one or more factors, a child is finding an area of learning challenging, measures are put in place to support the child in catching up. These measures are individual and personal to the needs of that child at that time and may be as small as altering an element of our classroom practice. When or if a desired impact has not been seen, then it may be appropriate for a SEN Support Plan in the form of a provision map to be put in place. Quality first teaching will still be taking place, but the child may receive additional support in or out of the classroom. On occasion, a child may have significant difficulty which requires support from specialist strategies or external agencies. Ultimately, we aim to ensure that every single child is fully catered for regardless of their age, gender, race, culture or ability. Where children do find difficulties, we are proactive in our actions.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In English, Subject Leaders and SLT know that children achieve their very best through regular monitoring which includes lesson visits, book and planning reviews, staff meetings and pupil voice. Pupil Learning Review meetings take place termly where each child's progress is discussed and actions taken to accelerate/support learning, as necessary.

Role of the Subject Leader

The Subject Leader will be responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning in English through:-

- Pupil progress,
- The quality of the learning environment,
- Ensuring quality texts are included and updating texts as necessary,
- Taking the lead in policy development,
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD,
- Purchasing and organising resources,
- Keeping up to date with latest theory and teaching strategies.

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