

St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

English Curriculum Policy



Policy written and agreed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Smith', is written over a solid black horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ratified by full governing body:

September 2026

To be reviewed:

September 2027



St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

English Curriculum Policy

Introduction

At St Nicholas, we believe that a high-quality education will teach pupils to speak, write, listen, and read fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, both orally and through the written word. We recognise that English is integral to accessing all aspects of school life, achieving excellence across the curriculum and participating fully as a member of society. The acquisition of English skills, through well-planned and resourced teaching, will empower our pupils and provide the foundation for all future learning. We strive to educate children who are fully literate, articulate and prepared for their secondary education and later life. Through engaging lessons and equal opportunities, we aim to foster a love of language and an enjoyment of learning.

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England. For Key Stages 1 and 2, these are found in the English Programmes of Study. For the Early Years Foundation Stage, these are found in the Communication and Language and Literacy areas of learning.

Overall Aims and Objectives

- To ensure coverage of the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum for English in the teaching of reading, writing, spoken language and listening, within English sessions and across the curriculum making obvious links and promoting enjoyment for our children.
- To implement effective differentiation in order to enable each child to develop individual language skills to the highest possible standard.
- To ensure that English skills are not taught discretely and are instead embedded within all aspects of the school curriculum.
- To equip pupils with sufficient literary skills for future learning and progression in later life and to help them realise the importance of this.
- To celebrate, as a whole school community, achievement in English through awards and displays.
- To model Standard English, demonstrate correct linguistic conventions and the use of specific terminology.
- To use the working wall flexibly to reflect current learning and allow children to become more independent.

Writing

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
To know and be familiar with the general writing process: stimulate and generate; capture, sift and sort; create, refine and evaluate.	To follow this process explicitly in teaching a variety of fiction and non-fiction genres. Make children aware of the writing process.
Develop composition skills, promote independence and allow assessment for learning.	Encourage pupils to orally rehearse a sentence before writing it. Draw on a range of strategies for teaching writing (shared, independent, guided, modelled). Peer and self-assessment.
Recognise that an effective piece of writing encompasses the use of a variety of skills such as adventurous vocabulary, genre specific features, neat handwriting, accurate spelling and embedded grammatical skills.	Effective and accurate teacher modelling. Regular opportunities to access WAGOLL texts (what a good one looks like). Immerse children in the genre of writing at the beginning of a unit of work.

	Effective use of the working wall to display key vocabulary, specific genre features and teacher writing. Explicit teaching of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting skills where necessary.
To recognise that each genre of text has a specific audience and purpose and therefore uses a particular set of writing features that are selected for that audience and purpose.	Provide adequate opportunity for children to deconstruct, analyse and write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Discussion at the start of a unit and reminders throughout.
Compose informed, creative and imaginative pieces of writing.	Implementation of a book-based curriculum. Provide adequate opportunities to collect, collate and plan ideas before beginning a piece of writing. Explore writing tasks through drama and role play. Ensure that writing tasks are meaningful for the children including cross curricular opportunities.
Recognise that drafting and editing is an essential part of the writing process.	Edit modelled writing as a class. Provide regular opportunities for children to edit and improve their writing. Provide opportunities for children to respond to teacher, peer and self-assessment.
Promote independence within writing tasks.	Ensure children have access to resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dictionaries ● Thesaurus' ● Relevant and up-to-date working wall ● Writing mats ● Key spellings ● 'Have a go' spellings book.
Develop writing stamina.	Gradually build up the expectation that children will write for extended periods of time whilst maintaining consistent quality starting from Year One. Provide regular opportunities for extended writing, giving adequate time for this.

Planning of writing

Teachers will follow the long term writing curriculum map and use this to generate a unit plan. This will be a flexible working document, subject to change and monitored by SLT.

Assessment of writing

Assessment for learning will take place during each English lesson. Teachers will follow the school's live marking policy to upscale children's writing within the lesson. Children will use their 'purple pens of progress' to show where editing has occurred.

Children from Year 1 to 6 are assessed against writing criteria adapted for the new National Curriculum. See Appendix 1. Teachers will use a wide range of evidence to make these assessments and will use the information gathered to inform future planning. This will include writing in their English books and writing from across other curriculum subjects.

Children complete an independent piece of writing at the end of a unit of work to showcase the skills that they have learnt and assess children's ability to use these independently. Children will be given the opportunity to plan, write and then edit and improve their work. All planning and editing will be child initiated. At teacher's discretion, children can choose the topic for their writing within that genre. Children will be assessed at working below, towards, at or above age related expectations.

Results of these assessments will inform future teaching and support.

Additional support for writing

We expect children to primarily have their needs met through quality teaching and support from their class teacher. Additional support may be given to children through effective deployment of teaching assistants and a wide range of resources such as:

- Word mats
- Visual cues
- Sentence openers
- Differentiated tasks
- Peer composition

Where children require more targeted support, the class teacher will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) to implement further intervention that may take place outside of lessons.

Reading

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Appreciate the beauty and impact of different forms of literature. Acknowledge cultural diversity within literature.	Expose children to a wide variety of texts, including stories from other cultures, within other areas of learning and in the school environment. Provide opportunities for children to learn about different authors.
Develop a love and passion for reading.	Ensure pupils have the opportunity to see adults enjoying reading. Select texts which are age-appropriate and foster children's interests. Provide intentional time for children to read for pleasure. Show an interest in the texts children are reading and allow time for them to share their opinion. Provide a rich reading environment including access to a well-resourced classroom library whilst encouraging children to read for meaning. Actively encourage children to read at home. Support parents in reading effectively with their child. Celebration of reading through 'extra-curricular' days and events. Reading Ambassadors. Develop links with Boldmere and Birmingham libraries.
Read fluently with expression and good comprehension.	'Teacher modelling of reading - children can listen to the teacher reading and modelling expression, intonation and volume. Model 'thinking aloud' when reading to pupils. 1:1 reading pledge.
Acquire knowledge across the curriculum, develop a rich bank of vocabulary and inspire children's imagination.	Choose class reads and guided reading books which provide an adequate challenge. Provide appropriate and relevant opportunities to read fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts to support all areas of the curriculum. Use of First News and The Week magazine. Whole school vocabulary initiatives.

Develop comprehension skills.	<p>Initiate and direct high-quality discussion during whole class reading and daily guided reading sessions which covers areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vocabulary ● Inference ● Prediction ● Explanation ● Retrieval ● Summarising <p>Ask questions which require children to answer questions and then find evidence within the text to support their answer. Discuss techniques, used by the author, to allow pupils to visualise the text.</p>
Develop a range of reading strategies for specific tasks e.g. skimming, scanning and deep reading.	Demonstrate effective text technique when reviewing assessments and past papers.
Develop strategies to decipher unfamiliar vocabulary.	<p>Adults to model deconstructing the word into phonic sounds. Encourage pupils to look for familiar sounds, phrases and words in the unknown word.</p> <p>Encourage children to expose the context of the unfamiliar word.</p>

Planning of reading

Teachers will plan for weekly guided reading sessions, ensuring that children read with an adult at least once per week. They will also plan a range of engaging, appropriate and relevant independent activities. The planning for guided reading will be a flexible working document, subject to change and monitored by SLT.

Assessment of reading

Children are assessed summatively at the beginning of the year and grouped accordingly. Assessment for learning takes part in all guided reading sessions. Teachers will make written notes assessing children's fluency, recognition of punctuation, expression and comprehension.

Formal assessment will take place each term using the Progress in Reading Assessment Test (PIRA). These provide children with the opportunity to read and answer questions on fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Teachers will calculate age-standardised scores and look for trends, as a result of the assessment, to inform future teaching. Children will be assessed at working below, towards, at or above age related expectations.

Results of these assessments will inform future teaching and support.

Additional support for reading

We expect children to primarily have their needs met through quality teaching and support from their class teacher. Additional support may be given through the use of booster groups, delivered by trained teaching assistants or additional guided reading sessions.

Where children require more targeted support, the class teacher will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to implement further intervention that may take place outside of lessons.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Know the key grammatical concepts for each year group and use the correct terminology.	Use the National Curriculum, for each year group, to ensure coverage of teaching. Revisit these concepts regularly and with purpose. Draw children's attention to these concepts within reading. Display key grammatical terms within the classroom.
Know the key spelling rules for each year group.	Follow Read, Write Inc (RWI) spelling programme. Use the National Curriculum, for each year group, to ensure coverage of teaching. Display these within the classroom or on word mats for the children to use in their writing. Share these with parents. Praise children for using these correctly within their writing. Provide activities within class to allow children to practice these spellings. Use these words in modelling writing activities.
Embed grammatical concepts within all writing.	Effective teacher modelling. Teach grammar skills meaningfully as part of a unit of work. Encourage children to apply their grammatical knowledge to writing tasks in other curriculum areas.

Assessment of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Assessment for learning will take place during each English lesson. Teachers will follow the school's live marking policy to highlight any grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors for the children to correct within the lesson.

Teachers will administer termly SPaG tests where data will be analysed to inform future teaching. Children will be assessed at working below, towards, at or above age related expectations.

Additional support for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

We expect children to primarily have their needs met through quality teaching and support from their class teacher. Additional support may be given through booster groups, delivered by trained teaching assistants, or additional SPaG sessions.

Where children require more targeted support, the class teacher will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) to implement further intervention that may take place outside of lessons.

Speaking and Listening

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Listen, evaluate and respect the opinions of others.	Use of talk partners. Class discussion and debate activities. Model effective listening children when children are talking and when also listening to other adults in the classroom. Provide opportunities for children to comment constructively on the word of others. Use of classroom memory and speaking games.
To speak expressively and confidently in front of others.	Provide regular opportunities for children to share their work. In KS1, provide time for children to take part in 'show and tell'. Re-telling stories. Performance poetry. Class assemblies and performances.

Use speaking and listening skills to develop a deeper understanding of the text.	<p>Drama and role play activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conscience alley ● Hot seating ● Mantle of the expert <p>Orally rehearse sentences before writing them down.</p>
Use speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.	<p>Opportunities for children to listen and respond during assemblies and Liturgies.</p> <p>Opportunities for children to share their work in all curriculum subjects.</p> <p>Use of drama and role play activities across a range of subjects.</p>

Assessment of speaking and listening

Children will be assessed on the effectiveness of their speaking and listening skills through continual teacher observations across all areas of the curriculum.

Additional support for speaking and listening

Where children are identified as needing additional support for speaking and listening, teachers will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) to provide booster groups and/or specific interventions suitable for that child.

Handwriting and presentation

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Develop the physical skill behind handwriting.	<p>Fine motor activities in EYFS and KS1.</p> <p>Teaching and modelling a secure pencil grip – ensuring that this forms the basis of any handwriting sessions.</p> <p>Model and teach a seating position conducive for writing.</p>
Develop a fluent, legible and cursive handwriting style	<p>Follow Read, Write Inc (RWI) handwriting guidance.</p> <p>Provide a structured teaching programme which is suitable for children's stage of development.</p> <p>Use tracing lines and patterns in EYFS.</p> <p>Introduce discrete printed letter forms in EYFS and Y1. These include lower and upper case, numbers and punctuation.</p> <p>Introduce cursive letter joins in Year 2.</p> <p>Ensure regular opportunities to practice handwriting both discretely and embedded within lessons.</p> <p>Model correct handwriting appropriate to the children's age. This includes the marking within children's books.</p> <p>Celebrate neat and consistent handwriting.</p>
Write with automaticity, neatness and speed.	<p>Opportunities to write in all areas of the curriculum.</p> <p>Challenging dictation passages.</p> <p>Discuss with children and model the type of handwriting that will allow efficiency in different tasks e.g. final piece vs note taking.</p>

Assessment of handwriting and presentation

Assessment for handwriting and presentation is informal and assessed in all lessons. As a result of this, close the gap activities may focus on letter formation and children may receive additional support from a booster group.

Phonics & Early Reading

Systematic synthetic phonic teaching follows the Read, Write, Inc. scheme of work. Children are assessed and grouped according to phonic ability. Children receive 45 minute daily sessions and are assessed regularly. Children are grouped according to their phonic ability and specific phonic interventions are used to support children with the lowest 20% attainment.

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Recognise that the written word carries meaning.	Modelled reading. Regular opportunities to share books. Well-resourced classroom library. Rich print environment.
Segment and blend to spell.	Discrete, daily lessons which follow a structured approach – children learn to recognise and use sounds in a specific order. Sessions include recognising and saying the sound, writing the sound and reading the sound.
Read and understand simple sentences.	Phonic specific books that focus on the sounds that children are learning/have already learnt. Book bag books to support phonic ability.
Apply phonic knowledge in the wider curriculum.	Teacher modelling of the 'segment to spell' method to spell unfamiliar words when writing in other subjects. Opportunities during child-initiated learning and in writing tasks to apply the sounds from phonics sessions. Rich print environment. Culturally diverse range of texts.
Learn letter sounds and names.	Taught within discrete, daily phonics sessions. Displays to incorporate alphabet names and sounds.
Learn words that do not follow a specific phonetic structure.	Introduced and modelled regularly by teachers. Phonic red words. Opportunities to read/write these words within continuous provision. Displays to include these words.
Demonstrate understanding, when talking with others, about what they have read.	Phonics sessions include reading comprehension. Targeted questioning from teachers. Children are regularly encouraged to read for pleasure including environmental print. Modelling of key comprehension skills.

Writing in the EYFS

Intent and aims for children's learning	Teacher implementation
Develop basic writing comprehension skills.	Oral rehearsal of sentences before writing them down. Regular teacher modelling of sentence composition. Opportunities to edit and improve written work. Ordering sentence activities as part of continuous provision. Grammar skills including capital letters, full stops and exclamation marks taught.
Hold a pencil effectively to form recognisable letters.	Initial mark-marking given a high prominence in the curriculum. A range of gross and fine motor skills available during continuous provision. Consistent and regular opportunities for writing across the EYFS curriculum. Handwriting activities.

Write in meaningful contexts.	Book based curriculum. Expose children to a wide variety of texts and genres to use as a stimulus for writing. Provide a wide range of writing implements and materials. Include opportunities for writing within role play activities. Writing opportunities which reflect children's interests and key celebrations and events.
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Cross-curricular Links

Children have the opportunity to read, write, speak and listen within all areas of the curriculum. The skills taught in English are developed and used purposefully in all wider curriculum lessons.

Reporting to Parents/Guardians.

Children's attainment and progress in English is discussed during Parents' Evenings and written feedback is given within End of Year Reports. Open lines of communication between the child's parent and their class teacher will remain throughout the year to discuss any aspect of their progress.

Examples of communication with parents and guardians:

- Weekly homework
- Weekly spellings
- Phonics/reading record
- Phonics activities set via the online portal
- Additional home learning activities such as flashcards, handwriting or spellings
- Curriculum newsletter

Staff Development

Continual Professional Development will be given to staff as a result of any of the following:

- Learning walks
- Book trawls
- Informal discussions/observations
- Lesson observations
- External moderation/collaboration
- Advice/training from external professionals

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Initially, children identified as having a Special Educational Need (SEN) will be supported by high quality, universal provision 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.

A range of targeted and specialist support will be implemented as and when necessary.

See SEND policy for further guidance.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Our provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language takes 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.

A range of targeted and specialist support will be implemented as and when necessary.

Pupil Premium

Children who are eligible to receive Pupil Premium are closely monitored to evaluate their attainment and progress. Where necessary, children who receive Pupil Premium will be offered additional support and resources to support their learning.

Governor Link

The English Leader will communicate with the Link Governor for English annually. Communication will include major changes to the subject, priorities reflected in the School Development Plan and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy has been reviewed and ratified by the governing body.

It will be reviewed biennially 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.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor and evaluate adherence to the policy.