

ENGLISH POLICY

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

RATIONALE

Mission statement

The Mission of St Thomas More's School is to educate and inspire every child to fulfil their unique giftedness within a loving Catholic community.

The study of English at St Thomas More's School supports this aim. Through studying English, pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It enables them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others effectively.

AIMS

- to enable pupils to communicate competently, confidently and appropriately in spoken and written English and to instil within each pupil a love of English language and literature
- to forge strong links between a pupil's speaking, reading and writing experience
- to plan and teach the English National Curriculum giving support to pupils with English as an additional language, to pupils with learning difficulties and extending more able pupils
- to give every pupil equal opportunities to take part in the activities, to learn and to be involved in new experiences, differentiated according to their ability
- to give pupils work that has relevance and purpose and which makes good cross curricular links
- to promote writing across the curriculum.

OBJECTIVES

- listen attentively with enjoyment and understanding in a variety of situations
- communicate clearly and confidently through speech and writing in ways appropriate for various occasions and purposes
- read with fluency, accuracy and understanding, for information, instruction and pleasure

- use and apply spelling, punctuation and grammatical conventions correctly
- to have handwriting that is fluent, joined and legible
- use higher - order thinking skills
- use skills in English to facilitate and communicate learning in other subjects

MONITORING

The Subject Manager monitors progress in English through work sampling, scrutiny of medium and short-term planning, analysis of teacher assessment data, Raiseonline data, Fischer Family Trust data, as well as pupil conferences or questionnaires. Progress is monitored by the leadership team as part of the Monitoring Programme through lesson observations. The subject Manager also ensures that pupils learning in English is applied in other subjects (through work scrutiny and monitoring planning).

Evidence – Teachers’ Planning and Tracking documents, pupils’ work, Lesson observation notes and notes from pupil conferences.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Senior leadership team also monitor progress in English.

Date approved:
Curriculum Committee February 2017

Review : Bi-annually
Next review: Spring 2019

GUIDELINES

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Pupils are given a variety of situations in which to be speakers and listeners. These include:

- collaborative discussion (paired or in groups)
- debate
- reporting
- questioning
- instructing
- story telling
- reciting
- poetry recital
- drama and role-play
- Masses, Assemblies, Liturgies

Pupils should be able to speak before a variety of audiences with clarity, expression and with appropriate volume.

Pupils are encouraged to speak well, i.e. pronounce words correctly and construct sentences grammatically (allowance should be made for regional accents and idioms).

As listeners they will have experience of being part of a variety of audiences, e.g. one-to-one, paired work, small/large group, whole school.

Listening experiences should include listening with interest and sustained concentration to their peers, live drama or musical performances, adults in school or from outside school, audio-visual.

Pupils should develop the skills of speaking and listening. They are given opportunities to:

- acquire the skills of good conversation, knowing when to talk and when to listen
- listen to instructions and carry out those instructions accurately
- develop the skills of listening in order to recall and recount what has been said
- acquire the skills of listening with sustained concentration in order to learn facts or develop opinions about what has been said
- listen to a variety of sounds to include noises, the spoken word, music and be able to adapt from one style to another with ease
- express themselves coherently and audibly
- acquire the ability to express an opinion clearly and succinctly
- acquire the ability to raise pertinent questions
- read aloud with confidence
- perform to an audience

Pupils should develop an awareness of when Standard English should be spoken and when more informal relaxed mode of speech is appropriate.

Speaking and Listening skills are monitored by the Class Teacher throughout the Foundation Stage and KS1 and 2.

GUIDELINES

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

READING

We seek to ensure that pupils make progress in reading and develop their understanding and response to text. Pupils are taught the key skills:

- phonic knowledge
- graphic knowledge
- word recognition
- grammatical knowledge
- contextual understanding

Reading is taught with the aid of sets of Guided Reading books and big books. Pupils are placed in guided reading groups according to ability. The appropriate books are selected for these differentiated groups. There is a combination of 'real books' and commercially available schemes. Reading levels are coded progressively. Guided readers enable pupils to develop the necessary reading skills and obtain a reasonable degree of fluency. Pupils show understanding in response to differentiated questioning or written response. Pupils are encouraged to read a variety of books in addition to Guided Readers, from the earliest possible age. There are also reading resources for more and less able pupils in KS2.

We help pupils to develop a love of and respect for books and to become enthusiastic readers. This includes opportunities for quiet reading. There is a choice of books available in the library and in the classrooms. Each phase in KS2 has a shared library collection.

Reading is taught from Foundation stage using the 'Letters and Sounds' phonics programme, as the first approach but also using the 'Look and Say' method, supported by reading games in order to build a sight vocabulary. Phonics, word building and decoding skills are also taught throughout Key Stage 1

Pupils are encouraged to take both reading and library books home. Pupils are provided with reading wallets and school reading book bags are available for purchase. Pupils have reading logs and reading records to complete. Each class has a reading display and pupils move their name or photo up the display as they complete reading activities. Children are rewarded termly for completing their personal reading target.

Children have access to an online reading resource called Bug Club. Here they can access books at their level and answer questions linked to all of the assessment strands. Teachers monitor children's activity on Bug Club and set books accordingly.

Reading is taught during shared and guided reading sessions. Pupils who need extra support with their reading are given further opportunities to practise and reinforce skills. Reading intervention programmes are in place for those pupils with specific needs. Parent helpers are given guidelines for hearing reading, from the class teacher. They are provided with a support document and prompts for effective questioning. They should always refer to the class teacher for advice before making any decisions regarding pupils' needs.

All pupils are given ample opportunities to extend their reading aloud skills in a variety of situations.

Reading is formally assessed at the end of each Key Stage and termly using PIRA Reading Tests. The results are passed on to the next teacher and used to identify those who need reading intervention. Year 1 children carry out the phonics screening check in the summer term.

Teachers track progress (English Benchmarks) throughout both Key Stages. A record is kept of both guided and home readers while pupils are still using them. Those pupils who achieve below age expectation in Reading use Home/School Readers or for older pupils, a guided selection of library books. Those working at age expectation choose Library books or a book from the shared reading collection and keep a record in a Reading Log. During guided reading sessions, teachers and teaching assistants assess pupils against the different assessment foci. Achievements are highlighted to indicate progress. To ensure that assessments are secure, an individual target will be highlighted one third at a time i.e. usually not fully achieved until demonstrated on three occasions. These sheets are passed from class to class to ensure continuity.

All pupils are given opportunities to learn and practise library and research skills, through English work and other areas of the curriculum, in accordance with the Library Policy.

The essential involvement of parents in helping pupils to read is recognised and encouraged. Teachers are readily available throughout the year to discuss progress and give advice at weekly surgeries. Parents are informed about expectations in reading during pre-school 'home visits' and parents meetings in the autumn and spring term.

Pupils are rewarded for reading regularly by being entered into a termly raffle in which a range of prizes have been won. Children are entered into a weekly raffle if they have achieved their weekly reading target. Children also receive a reading certificate at the end of the term.

KS1

At St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, we follow the Letters and Sounds approach to teaching phonics in Years 1 and 2. We have a broad range of levelled reading books that include phonetically decodable texts, as well as texts that encourage children to read for meaning.

WRITING

Pupils should learn to communicate ideas and feelings clearly and confidently, through their writing. They should be taught knowledge, skills and understanding which include:

- composition
- planning and drafting
- punctuation
- spelling
- handwriting and presentation
- standard English
- language structure
- grammar

Pupils are taught to consider the range and purpose of their writing and to use writing to help their thinking, investigating, organising and learning. The audience for pupils' writing should include teachers, other pupils, adults, the wider community and fictitious characters e.g. Father Christmas. The range and forms of writing should include narratives, poems, play scripts, reports, explanations, opinions, persuasive, instructions, reviews and commentaries.

Pupils are encouraged to see writing as an essential, exciting and enjoyable means of communication and learning. Writing is taught across the curriculum using the National Curriculum.

A variety of strategies and methods are used to help pupils to learn to spell. They learn to spell phonetically where appropriate and use the look, say, cover, write and check approach as well as segmenting to spell. Pupils also use spelling investigations, word games, mnemonics, dictionaries and word banks. They learn to spell the high and medium frequency words from Letters and Sounds. In KS1 the 'Letters and Sounds' programme is used to help teach spelling objectives. In Key Stage 2, spelling is taught in accordance with the National Curriculum and using 'no nonsense spelling' to support.

Spelling homework is given weekly in KS1 and bi-weekly in KS2 to consolidate what has been learnt in school. Pupils are tested on the words they have learnt as well as 2-3 other words following the same rule of spelling pattern. Pupils are expected to use the spellings they have learnt in context across the curriculum, and to proof read and check their work.

Regular spelling assessments take place to assess pupil's knowledge of both previous and current spellings. A Single Word Spelling Test is taken by all pupils termly. The results are passed on to the next teacher and used to identify children who need spelling intervention.

At St Thomas More's we use a cursive style of handwriting, adapted from the 'Kingston' script. St Thomas More's Kingston is introduced from Foundation stage onwards. As soon as pupils can form all lower case letters correctly, they start to join their handwriting.

Handwriting practice takes place on a regular basis, up to and including Year 4. Older

juniors, who are having difficulties with handwriting, will receive extra support in school and be given practice for homework.

The school provides handwriting pens to KS2 pupils. All children in KS2 write in pens once they have received their pen license. In order to improve presentation, biros and gel pens are strongly discouraged for formal writing. Older juniors may bring their own fountain pen if they can use it correctly.

Pupils normally use lined paper or guidelines. Handwriting books are often used for handwriting practice.

In their writing, pupils are expected to demonstrate what they have learnt. Teachers will only mark work where basic expectations have been met (see marking section in Assessment Policy).

Ongoing teacher assessment of writing is tracked using National Curriculum expectations, St Thomas More's assessment document A range of writing evidence is used to make a judgment as to whether a child has achieved expectation including independent work in the English books, writing from other areas of the curriculum and a regular cold writing tasks. Children will take a formal test at the end of KS1 and KS2 to assess their spelling, punctuation and grammar

Teachers track progress throughout the Foundation stage and both Key Stages.. Parents are kept informed about expectations in writing, at parents meetings during the autumn and spring term. Parents also receive a written report during the year informing them about their child's progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening and are informed of pupils' attainment in comparison to national expectations. Pupils are also involved in tracking their own progress. In KS1, teachers set targets using EYFS Early goals where children still need these, and then from the National Curriculum programme of study These are presented to the pupils on success mats, with each group having different targets and typically three per group. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are set targets using the stepping stones to writing and criteria from the St Thomas More's curriculum document.