



## St. Malachy's Catholic Primary School



### English Policy

#### Mission Statement

It is the mission of St. Malachy's School to provide a quality education based on Gospel values which promote the dignity and freedom of every person within our community, ensuring equal opportunities for all. The school is committed to achieving high standards so that pupils can attain their full potential. Attention will be paid to all aspects of a child's development.

This policy describes our aims and our practice in the teaching of English: reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and speaking and listening. It is defined by current national guidance on best practice, in-service training, staff discussion and professional judgement.

#### **Aims:**

##### English as a Whole

- ❖ To provide a language-rich environment for children that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- ❖ To give opportunities to consolidate and reinforce skills across the curriculum.

##### Reading

- ❖ To develop positive attitudes towards books so that reading is a pleasurable activity to extend beyond the classroom environment, enriching children's lives.
- ❖ To read expressively in a wide variety of texts, whilst gaining an increased level of fluency and understanding.
- ❖ To understand the phonics and spelling system and use these to read and spell accurately.
- ❖ To be able to use their reading skills to gather information (research) to support their learning throughout the entire curriculum.
- ❖ To teach reading skills explicitly throughout the school, to develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts.
- ❖ To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language, appreciating a range of literature from a variety of cultures.

##### Writing

- ❖ To write with an increasing awareness of the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling. All children to have the necessary tools.
- ❖ To be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- ❖ To form letters correctly, leading to a fluent and legible handwriting style.

##### Speaking and Listening

- ❖ To develop children's speaking and listening skills. This will enable them to express their opinions, articulate feelings and formulate appropriate responses to increasingly complex questions and instructions; to communicate and express themselves whilst also allowing opinions to be shared, maturing socially by working collaboratively.
- ❖ To develop confident, clear and fluent speakers able to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.

- ❖ To be open-minded and enquiring listeners.

## **Planning – Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National Curriculum, Ruth Miskin's Read Write Inc. Phonics, Pie Corbett (Talk for Writing) and Assertive Mentoring. Read Write Inc., is a fast-paced, rigorous and structured phonics programme used to work upon all aspects of the English curriculum.

In KS1/KS2, teachers plan in modules towards a text-type writing outcome that is also linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. As much as possible, writing is linked to the class topic and, therefore, the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and an emphasis on whole texts rather than extracts and worksheets.

Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set-learning objectives. Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting and, in the main, differentiation is by outcome and through setting different expectations. However, guided reading, writing and phonics groups are smaller groups working upon set skills. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on reading and writing issues that are particular to the needs of that specific group of children.

Teachers plan time within lessons for children to reflect upon their marked work, and to respond independently to teacher prompts to improve their English understanding. Intervention strategies are delivered as and when appropriate by all staff members. These interventions include paired work, guided reading and writing, phonics and SULP.

## **Reading**

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics using Read, Write, Inc.. Through this they work e.g. in whole word recognition, rhyme and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. High-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in them a love of literature. Children throughout the school are read to at the end of each and every day. Each Year group focuses upon whole texts linking their topic and the wider curriculum to their English lessons.

## **What does Reading look like at St Malachy's?**

- We have a structured early learning programme. The teaching of early reading skills begins from entry into school using Read, Write, Inc.. This teaching is systematic and children are placed into groups depending upon their assessments.
- RWI phonic sessions are taught in daily discrete sessions to ensure that all children are able to decode efficiently. This continues into KS2 where necessary. Each child takes a book home from their phonics group every 3 or 5 days, depending on their level.
- A further intervention reading scheme is now provided for older children (Dockside scheme).

- Teachers model reading strategies during lessons, guided reading and with a class text. Children have opportunities to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail in such sessions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give support by reading on an individual basis with children. How often this occurs is based upon assessment and need.
- Teachers and teaching assistants assess children's progression in reading using the Rising Stars progress tests, comprehensions and Pira/Puma.
- Independent reading sessions provide opportunities for assessment and 1-1 teaching.
- Texts are banded and children are able to choose their independent reading book from within a band. Such texts are purchased on a regular basis to ensure that they are books that the children enjoy. This motivates and re-ignites their enthusiasm for reading.
- Volunteers provide additional support for reading and regularly listen to readers during afternoon sessions.

### **Developing a love of reading**

- ❖ Reading is used across the curriculum e.g. during topic research, looking at news articles etc..
- ❖ Each classroom has a section of books that pupils can access.
- ❖ Each class has a dedicated timetabled slot in which they can use the school library.
- ❖ Specific one-off events e.g. visits from authors and illustrators, author links using video conferencing. World Book Day events e.g. competitions, dressing up as their favourite book characters, book sharing.
- ❖ All class teachers are expected to read a class novel to the pupils and texts are carefully selected to fit with the class topic.
- ❖ There have been recent improvements to the appearance of the school library. The environment is bright and child friendly to encourage children to visit. The non-fiction sections have been updated and new titles added, including those that the children themselves requested.
- ❖ Reading areas are being developed around the school (wherever possible) to encourage reading and to display examples of books.

Children are expected to read every night at home, writing in their reading diaries to share ideas and to keep a record of what they are reading.

### **Writing**

At St Malachy's, we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. Teachers carefully plan writing to link text types and topic, ensuring that there is a purposeful outcome to each piece of writing. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers, we encourage children to write creatively, whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically. Writing takes place within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all times.

### **What does this look like at St Malachy's?**

- ❖ Text types are initially assessed with a cold piece of writing. Teaching then works to improve writing content, structure and accuracy for this specific text type. The text type is then re-assessed with a hot piece.
- ❖ A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset.
- ❖ Writing is displayed throughout school and entered into writing competitions wherever possible.

- ❖ We provide stimulating first-hand experiences e.g. trips to stimulate writing experiences.
- ❖ Writing is taught as a sequenced activity and follows Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing and or the IPEELL strategy for structure. This strategy involves looking at modelled examples, boxing up text types, using and speaking a Text talk map, paired writing, teacher modelling writing and independent writing. The writing process is to be modelled, with the teacher verbalising her thought processes throughout, to make explicit the writing and editing process.
- ❖ Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking. – see *Marking Policy*.
- ❖ Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to literacy marking and feedback.
- ❖ Writing is, in the main, linked to class topics to promote engagement.
- ❖ We ensure progression in a complexity of tasks and reading material year on year and use the National Curriculum standards to ensure that we are teaching material to achieve Year group expectations.
- ❖ We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write for extended periods.
- ❖ Some pieces will be 'published' i.e. re-drafted in neat and displayed, e.g. in the classroom, in a class writing book etc..
- ❖ Peer marking is encouraged and used as often as possible as a further learning experience.
- ❖ Paired writing is used to share skills and to provide opportunities to share understanding.
- ❖ Self-assessment and the use of editing are used at the end of all extended pieces of writing. This helps the children understand how they can improve their own writing.
- ❖ Two pieces of writing each year are collated into a child's Extended Writing book. This is used to see progress in writing over a longer period.

## **Spelling**

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children. Spellings play a significant part of standardised assessment tests (SATs) and are taught throughout the school. Assertive Mentoring provides spellings to ensure Year group expectations. However, children needing intervention may access different stages.

### **What does this look like at St Malachy's?**

- ❖ We use the 2014 National Curriculum as a guideline. This shows which spellings are to be learnt by each year group. In addition to this, Key Stage 1 focuses on high frequency 'tricky' words.
- ❖ From Year One, children are actively encouraged and taught to proof-read their writing for spelling errors and to sound out words phonetically with syllables.
- ❖ The 'Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check' approach to learning the spelling of words is taught and encouraged. Other strategies may be used to aid learning, e.g. Spelling games to encourage children to look closely at words.
- ❖ Where possible, children are encouraged to identify their own spelling errors and edit accordingly and to check spellings.
- ❖ Dictionary use is encouraged and skills are taught to help children to find words using letters beyond the initial letter.
- ❖ At Key Stage 2 there is an emphasis on developing a range of strategies to aid spelling.
- ❖ Children practise three spelling corrections in their literacy books - chosen by their teacher as part of their response to marked work across the curriculum.

- ❖ Children learn to spell in weekly spelling lessons where common letter-strings, pattern in words and spelling rules are discussed. Known words, root words, derivations, word families and familiar spelling patterns are used to help the learning of spellings.
- ❖ Words which are challenging may need mnemonics or multi-sensory approaches
- ❖ It is recognised that some pupils will need to consolidate the phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.
- ❖ Building on the approaches introduced in Key Stage 1, there is an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. Pupils are expected to assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling corrections, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources (including spellcheckers and a variety of dictionaries and word banks) for making corrections.
- ❖ Use of Spellodrome (ICT resource).

In addition to work in class, focus spellings are given to children as part of their homework

- ❖ The learning of spellings is encouraged as part of the home-school partnership. Weekly spellings will be sent home to practise, in readiness for a test in school.
- ❖ Children are given words according to their developmental needs, so the amount and level of difficulty will vary.

## SPELLING/PHONICS

Some children, with specific literacy needs, will have additional spelling sessions e.g. in their RWI phonics groups. For these children, extra support is provided by the HLTA, TA or LSA support on an individual daily basis. When a child is given spellings to learn as part of additional support work, they will not be expected to learn the extra words set in class. Effective communication will ensure that each child has a reasonable amount and level of spellings to learn.

## Grammar

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and identifying word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work. Linked to the National Curriculum, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

## What does this look like at St Malachy's?

- The basics of sentence construction including full stops and capital letters are taught from the beginning and in RWI groups.
- Children begin to identify word classes early (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb).
- We follow the 2014 National Curriculum as guidance as to what is taught in each year group and, from this, have devised a specific structure for our school detailing expectations year by year.
- Assertive Mentoring, Grammar Hammer is used for teaching aspects of grammar formally. Other aspects of grammar are also taught through writing.
- An externally set and assessed Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test takes place in Year 2 and Year 6.
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## Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years, there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters. From Year 2, all children are expected to use

cursive script. Handwriting is taught through modelling, discussion and then the children independently use these skills.

### **What does this look like at St Malachy's?**

- ❖ We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly.
- ❖ We award, 'Pen licences' to children who regularly use legible, cursive, fluent handwriting meeting Year 6 handwriting expectations.
- ❖ Extra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school, where the class team feel that additional handwriting support is needed.

### **Speaking and Listening**

At St Malachy's, we believe that Speaking and Listening are fundamental means of communication and learning, form relationships, transfer information, develop understanding and to challenge their own thinking. Speech underpins the development of reading and writing and helps children to develop effective communication skills for their later life. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear is vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding of reading and writing. Listening is an active process in which they must assimilate new information and form links to previous learning.

In both formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently. We also recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is of prime importance.

### **Foundation Stage:**

Children will be taught to listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories daily, discuss key events and respond to what they hear. Children are taught to give their attention to others and to respond appropriately. Children use talk partners to develop good communication skills such as: taking turns, making eye contact and learning that other people have opinions and ideas that are different from their own. This is then developed throughout the school.

Children also learn how to follow instructions and to make independent choices. Children are encouraged to ask and answer questions and use their own experiences as well as new experiences in response to stories or new encounters. Children begin to develop their own stories and explanations by connecting ideas. Opportunities throughout school provide a rich environment for Foundation Stage children to develop their speaking and listening skills. These include: songs, games, assemblies, special occasions, performances, visits, visitors and frequent encounters with new vocabulary.

## Key Stage One:

Pupils in Key Stage One continue to practise and develop their communication skills through talking to partners and in groups across the curriculum. This helps them to learn to take turns, listen and clearly explain their own ideas.

Pupils are exposed to a rich oral language and are encouraged to answer questions in full sentences, using Standard English. They have frequent experiences to encounter new words through an environment that is rich in vocabulary. They also experience new vocabulary in different contexts across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to play with words and ask about new words that they encounter.

Children have the opportunity to listen to a variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry and they are encouraged to link what they hear to their own experiences.

Pupils also experience re-telling stories orally and adapting well-known stories in their own words.

They continue to have many opportunities across the curriculum to use their communication skills, these include topic projects, assemblies, visits and visitors to school.

## Key Stage Two (Years 3 -6)

As pupils progress through the school, they are encouraged to ask more questions to deepen their learning.

Talking to partners and in small groups develops skills and the children begin to learn how to debate and form their own opinions about what they have learnt.

Children are encouraged to relate learning experiences to their own home experiences.

Pupils increase their bank of stories and poetry that they use to re-tell stories orally and recite poems.

Scripts and events e.g. the Easter play in Year 3/4, help pupils to develop their intonation, volume, pitch and oral presentation of vocabulary.

Reading and text discussions allow pupils to discuss books they have read, clarify new and unfamiliar vocabulary within a small group, taking turns, listening to others and building upon their own ideas as well as challenging the views held by others.

Other curriculum subjects continue to support pupils' oral presentation and listening skills.

Pupils in Key Stage Two continue to have many opportunities across school to develop their communication skills, these include assemblies, productions, special occasions, visits and visitors.

### **What this talk looks like?**

- ❖ Questioning and taking risks with language;
- ❖ Presenting in front of different audiences, e.g. friends, class, teachers and other adults;
- ❖ Reciting and reading aloud. Explaining their understanding of books and other reading material;
- ❖ Re-telling, role-play and drama e.g. improvisation, role play, hot seating, freeze-frame as well as writing and performing script drama;
- ❖ Listening to and participating in stories, poems (Poetry by Heart), rhymes and songs;
- ❖ Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character;
- ❖ Talk for Writing - talking the text type. Opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing;
- ❖ Debate - know the conventions and be able to use conventions for discussions and debates;
- ❖ Collaborative work and reporting back following group work;
- ❖ Speaking and Listening is to be developed throughout all curriculum areas.

### **Inclusion and Equality**

We actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching of all children, providing opportunity for all. Themes on equality will be discussed to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions.

#### Inclusion

Our school is inclusive and we aim to make all children feel included in our activities. St Malachy's staff recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We identify barriers so that all children can engage in school activities. We aim

for all children to participate in mainstream lessons, however to secure basic reading skills some children may have extra lessons in phonics. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place. Children's work is monitored by the class teacher and, when necessary, by the SEN Co-ordinator. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

### Children Achieving Above Year Group Expectations

Children achieving above their year group expectations will be challenged to extend their writing ideas, use and apply their skills to similar situations. Probing questions are used to challenge their understanding to develop higher-level comprehension skills. Texts are provided to suit their understanding to provide stretch and challenge. Independent reading and writing promotes creative thinking and enables children to apply their skills to different situations.

### Access for Pupils with English as an Additional Language

Pupils who are learning English as an additional language have skills and knowledge similar to monolingual English-speaking pupils. To help these students progress with all their English skills we aim to:

- Ensure that vocabulary work addresses the technical and everyday meanings of key words, metaphoric expressions and idioms.
- Provide clear models of the way texts in English are structured to achieve different purposes in a range of subjects. (Talk for Writing provides explicit text structure.)
- Set high expectations in line with all pupils.
- Provide a variety of reading material e.g. pupils, media, literature, reference books to highlight the social and cultural aspects of English in use.
- Encourage pupils, where appropriate, to transfer their skills, knowledge and understanding of one language to another, drawing pupil's attention to the similarities and differences between English and other languages.
- Build on the language experiences of the home and wider community so that the development of English and other languages is seen as mutually supportive.

### Assessment

Children's English work is marked according to the marking policy, and provides next steps in learning to ensure progress. All children are encouraged to self-assess and edit/evaluate their own work. Assessments are made daily by the teachers and this is used to inform planning.

### Formative assessment in Reading

- ❖ In Nursery and Reception, children are assessed in their early literacy development against the 'Development Matters' goals.
- ❖ From Year One onwards, teachers regularly set guided group reading targets and related objectives that are shared with children in this context.
- ❖ Starting in the Reception year, teachers and support staff carry out '**Running Records**' to assess children's reading levels. This is completed by half-termly RWI assessments. The school uses the Pira/Puma books to carry out assessments. Progress is tracked and children at risk of not making expected year group expectations are closely monitored and placed into intervention groups if necessary.
- ❖ The support teacher at Key Stage 2 continues to carry out running records using the Pira/Puma system on children if their progress as a reader gives cause for concern. Banded books are provided from which the children can choose.

### **Summative Assessment in Reading**

- ❖ Year 1 take the end of year **Phonics Screening test** in June.
- ❖ Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take end of Key Stage national tests that examine a range of reading comprehension skills.

### **Formative Assessment - Writing**

- ❖ **Teacher Assessments:** For every extended piece of written work, children are given differentiated next steps and a specific SMART target, e.g. 'To use a range of sentence openers' or 'To use clauses to develop my sentences'. Year 6 and Year 2 are using the guidelines produced by the Standards and Testing Agency. All other year groups are using assessments from Read, Write, Inc. or Target Tracker.
- ❖ **Moderation-** Written work is moderated internally by all staff, the Literacy co-ordinator and the Head teacher. External moderating meetings are attended to ensure consistent standards are applied across all year groups.
- ❖ **Self and Peer Marking/Assessments** - used to enable children to learn from each other.
- ❖ **Writing Targets**  
Writing targets are formed through teacher assessment of extended pieces of (mainly independent) writing. These are then used to form individual targets: the detailed assessment of the termly writing sample may provide an overarching writing target in addition to this throughout the term. Children are then grouped in writing sessions linked to their writing targets and ability. These groups are fluid and assessment is regular.

### **Summative Assessment in Writing**

- ❖ Writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is teacher assessed. There is no external assessment of writing; however we routinely moderate internally and externally with other local schools. The local authority also carries out writing moderations. Regular writing assessment in the children's literacy and cross-curricular writing examples are used to form a profile for final teacher assessments at the end of Year 6.

*See Assessment Policy for more information on whole school monitoring and evaluation, tracking and work sampling.*

### **Parental Involvement:**

We aim to involve parents directly in the life of the school, and thus in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English. Parents are involved in hearing children read and are encouraged to discuss books with them. Parent volunteers visit school to listen to readers. In addition, the PTA help to raise money to support English across the curriculum. Recently they have helped with funding for the library e.g. in the purchase of chairs and books.

There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. Termly class newsletters provide information about the English curriculum and how parents can support their children's English development at home. Parents are encouraged to read both with and to their children at home in order to promote enjoyment of reading. Parents are welcomed into school to support reading in the classroom.

### **The English Subject Leader**

The English subject leader should:

- Ensure the development of the teaching of the English curriculum at St Malachy's. This will follow the New Primary Framework guidelines and will be built around the school's curriculum topics and cover aspects of the English National Curriculum statements.
- Ensure all staff are aware of statutory requirements for English and its developments.
- Model good practice.
- Promote the integration of English learning across the curriculum.
- Liaise with RWI co-ordinator in all aspects of English progression and achievement.
- Manage the provision and deployment of English resources and provide guidance in their use.
- Use the budget efficiently for this curriculum area to ensure that adequate resources are available for staff to teach the subject to their full potential.
- Work to lead and inspire colleagues to deliver high quality English teaching and learning opportunities.
- Monitor and evaluate pupil progress, English provision, the Learning Environment and the deployment and provision of support staff.
- Analyse results to set targets to raise standards in English.
- Monitor use of library and strategies to improve English across the school.
- Monitor and review English provision within the school.
- Monitor and evaluate an action plan for English for the School Improvement Plan.
- Lead INSET within the school, and investigate suitable training externally.
- Lead the evaluation and review of the school's English policy.
- Keep up to date with subject developments.