

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Introduction

Here at St Thomas More, we believe that literacy and communication are an example of the key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we promote that children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language.

We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety, encouraging an enthusiastic approach towards reading. We recognise that children will have encountered varying literary experiences before they begin school, which we will build upon.

We acknowledge that children must be helped to acquire competence in the use of English as soon as possible. Where necessary, we will ensure the children for whom English is a second language, have appropriate provisions in place.

Literacy is at the heart of all children's learning, to promote a holistic approach to all learning. Literacy enables children both to communicate with the people around them effectively, as well as examining their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, in order to give a true meaning to their experience.

Learning Goals and Intentions

Our aim at St. Thomas More is to enable all pupils to develop to their full ability, their use, understanding and enjoyment of both spoken and written English: to develop each individual's abilities in speaking, reading, and writing.

We aim to provide opportunities to extend the knowledge of language which children bring from home by providing experience in a range of varieties to enable them to accomplish more with their language : to develop children's understanding of and knowledge about the different ways in which meanings are conveyed through the written and spoken word.

Purpose

To promote a shared love and understanding of literacy;

To establish an entitlement for all pupils;

To establish high expectations for teachers and pupils

To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

Aims of Policy

To encourage children to:

- be effective, competent communicators and good listeners;
- express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary;
- foster an interest in words and their meanings, and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;
- enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres;
- be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;
- develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy;
- use grammar and punctuation accurately;
- understand spelling conventions;
- Produce effective, well-presented written work, within context.

Context

The children are taught in groups of mixed ability throughout the school and the English Curriculum is delivered in this context giving due consideration to differentiation. As a school we do not adhere to one particular scheme, however as a staff we use the Power of Reading scheme for their book selection.

The time allocated for English is in line with recommendations for key stages one and two.

In addition, it is expected that cross-curricular links will contribute to pupils' effective learning in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is reinforced through our delivery of the curriculum.

Content

The new National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. All children receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily English lesson.

Teachers use the National Curriculum 2014 via each year groups curriculum map.

This is used as a basis for short term planning and adapted according to the needs of the children, as well as linking coherently with the Power of Reading scheme. The length of a unit may vary.

Teachers plan closely with year group colleagues to ensure consistency of opportunity for all children.

Clear objectives are set for each session and are shared with pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support. Children are encouraged to reach their fullest potential through Greater depth challenges.

ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.

Additional adults are used to support the teaching of Literacy. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

Inclusion

All children receive quality first literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly, where planned by class teachers.

In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age appropriate objectives, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and monitor progress of these pupils, with support from the senior management team. These are shown within each classes provision maps.

There will be a third wave of support for pupils who are placed on S.E.I. for specialist external intervention (formerly SA+) or N.S.E.I. - no specialist external intervention (formerly SA) or that will be additional and different.

Children with special educational needs are involved in all work planned from the Programme for English at an appropriate level which will help each child reach their full potential. Teachers' weekly plans show how the activities have been adapted or extended for children of differing abilities.

Every child will be given equal opportunity and encouragement in English, irrespective of gender, race and disability. For further clarification refer to our Inclusion Policy.

Every effort is made to ensure that English activities are equally interesting for both boys and girls, from all ethnic groups within the school, and that similar opportunities are offered to all.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy.

Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Group or individual targets are set accordingly. Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy.

Analysis of assessment data is used to set targets and to track the progress of individuals or groups of children.

Children are informed of their own targets for learning and supported to make progress towards them. Children are also involved in setting their own steps to success and encouraged to review their progress towards these through self, peer and teacher assessment. Staff and pupils may use Marking Ladders to assess work and set future targets.

The teacher keeps records that enable them to deliver an effective, creative and relevant curriculum that builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of pupils.

Assessment of writing practice should be done whenever possible at the time of writing. Feedback may be verbal or written. When marking other pieces of work comments about handwriting and presentation should only be made after a response has been made to the content and/or style. Care should also be exercised when making an initial verbal response to avoid unintentionally transmitting messages about the significance of presentation and the insignificance of content.

The Literacy co-ordinator monitors the implementation of this policy to ensure consistency and continuity in the teaching of handwriting. This is carried out with the agreement of the staff involved. The co-ordinator will review plans, examine children's work, and / or visit classrooms with the prior agreement of all teachers concerned and in line with an agreed code of practice being developed. Verbal and written feedback is given to the staff concerned and may be discussed with the Head teacher.

Staff Development

Teachers are expected to keep up to date with subject knowledge and use current materials that are available in school or online.

Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, performance management and through induction programmes. These will be reflected in the School Development Plan. The English co-ordinator will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses or newsletters, to be disseminated.

Additional adults who are involved with intervention programmes will receive appropriate training that may be school based or part of central training.

Reading

The children are encouraged to use a variety of means for communicating and writing. The development of study skills and personal working styles is encouraged and respected.

Oxford Reading Tree is used as our core reading scheme and the children are given access to a wide variety of reading material and helped to acquire the necessary skills and habits in a structured way. Progress is recorded by the class teacher, classroom assistant, or adult reading partner. Phonics teaching is carried out progressively. In Foundation and Key Stage One, phonics work follows the stages of progression given in Letters and Sounds (2006). Spelling will progress from KS1 phonics teaching, throughout KS2.

Children are encouraged to read for pleasure, developing skills of using inference, deduction, and prediction to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of a wide selection of literature, to highlight the importance of reading for pleasure. Listening to poems and stories read by the teacher and sharing books together plays an important part in their reading development. Time is also set aside for children to read with an adult (parent or teacher) on a one to one basis as often as possible.

We see reading as a shared activity between home and school; therefore children are encouraged to take books home. At first, they will be helped to choose books that can be read in partnership with an adult but as they become more proficient a greater choice and variety of books are available. By Year 2 children choose their own books. From the outset, children are encouraged to see themselves as readers and helped through discussion to form opinions and comment about the books that they read. A reading diary is kept as a record of the child's development. This lists the books they have read and any comments the reading partners wish to make. At Key Stage 2, children are still encouraged to read widely, both at home and at school.

Each child has a reading diary in which they record the books they have read and their comments about them. Home readers and dairies should be brought to school daily, to be checked regularly by class teachers or teaching assistants.

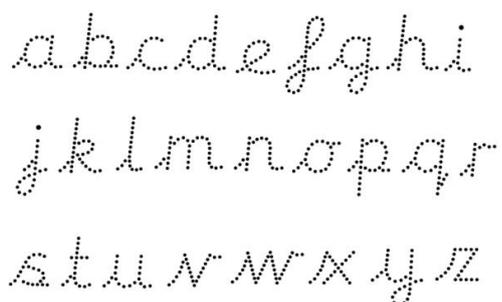
Handwriting

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. As soon as the children are ready, they should be taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct tripod grip and develop a legible and joined handwriting style.

The school follows a stance of cursive writing to be used and displayed by all staff. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned for and delivered.

It is expected that all members of staff, class teachers and teaching assistants, model the school handwriting style at all times i.e. when writing on the board or in children's books. By the end of key stage 2, all children should be displaying an efficient, quick, neat and legible handwriting style that is effective in recording their ideas.

Handwriting rules are taught to guide the children so that they will be aware that:
Each letter should begin and finish in the correct place, as demonstrated below:



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Handwriting practice will arise from what each child writes in the course of the school day. Teachers may wish to focus on particular aspects of writing such as letter strokes, letter families or letter joins to meet an individual, group or class need

Stroke-related families are as follows:

- 1. Line and arch letters:** i l t u y
- 2. Down, up and over letters:** h n m r b p k
- 3. Round letters:** c a d g q o e
- 4. Diagonal and counterchange:** v w x z f s

The 26 letters of the alphabet can be grouped by their entry and exit strokes to show those with similar joining patterns.

These letters join at the baseline: i l t u h n m a c d e k

These can join from the crossbar: f t

These join from the top: o r v w

These can be left unjoined: g j y

This has a unique join: q

Handwriting patterns and pattern making also help children to internalise the movements to make correct letter shapes.

Writing

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'. Teachers establish the purpose and audience for writing and make teaching objectives explicit to pupils so they know why they are studying a particular text type, the kind of writing activities they need to undertake and what the expected outcome will be. This approach will be encouraged within the Power of Reading scheme, with a high quality books to encourage enjoyment of reading and writing.

The writing process breaks down into a number of steps that will need to be taught and practised regularly:

1. Planning
2. Drafting and Writing
3. Evaluating, editing and re-drafting
4. Proof-Reading
5. Reading Aloud and Sharing

Subject-specific texts that link to work being undertaken in other areas should also be used in literacy lessons to support the wider curriculum.

Teachers use shared writing and modelled writing to show the writing process. Shared reading and writing provide a context for discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word level, sentence level and text level.

Activities are differentiated through the use of writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support.

Children's work

All written work is contained in either loose leaf folders, exercise books or saved electronically, at the discretion of the teacher. When work is typed, the spelling and grammar checking tool is disabled to allow children to write independently if necessary.

Samples of the children's work will often be used for display purposes. Children are encouraged to take a pride in their work and to produce their best efforts. They are taught to respect and value the work of others too.

Children are taught how to plan, draft and edit (if required) and present a final copy of their written work in their books or on paper as necessary. Children are able to use whiteboards to attempt more challenging spellings and grammatical forms and use dictionaries/thesauruses when writing independently. They are also encouraged to evaluate their own work and to make constructive comments about the work of others. Year 5 and Year 6 children may choose to use erasable pens in addition to purple polishing pens to edit their work.

Resources

A comprehensive range of resources is available in school. Every class has a selection of reference books e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus etc. and a class library.

The library can also be used for a story or study session, and informal access is encouraged within school hours. The library uses a computerised system for cataloguing the book stock. This system entitled 'Junior Librarian' (Micro Librarian Systems) allows books to be loaned or returned using either a scanned bar code system or by use of individual thumbprint recognition.

Each classroom has many fiction books, displayed as attractively as possible. Most children have formal access to the library, at least once a week, to choose a book with assistance from a member of staff. I pads, kindles, camera, and other computing equipment can be used to facilitate a more cross curricular approach to learning within the classroom setting. Classes are equipped with computers, interactive whiteboards, screens and overhead projectors as these become available.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, Middle Management Team and the Literacy Coordinators will be responsible for monitoring English.

Having identified priorities, the Senior Management Team and English Co-ordinator construct an action plan that may form part of the School Development Plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling etc.

Assessment and Record Keeping

All written work is contained in either loose leaf folders or exercise books at the discretion of the teacher, where it is marked in accordance with the school's marking policy. Assessment in English must be seen in the context of the whole school policy on assessment. Reading assessments are made as teachers listen to the children read, and note their progress. A detailed reading record form is used for all children in Foundation and Key Stage 1. This record is continued at Key stage 2 until teachers decide that a child is sufficiently fluent for it to be no longer needed.

At all stages records are kept of books read. At Key Stage SALFORD reading tests are used to assess the reading age of children. Progress is recorded electronic data base. Results are passed on to the child's next teacher, the assessment co-ordinator, Head, and Literacy co-ordinator, and form the basis of yearly target setting.

Termly all children across the school are assessed using Rising Stars assessments, to track for progress.

At the end of each Key Stage children undergo statutory Standardised Assessment in reading and writing as directed by the Secretary of State for Education.

Monitoring

The Literacy co-ordinator monitors the implementation of this policy to ensure consistency and continuity in the teaching of English. This is carried out with the agreement of the staff involved. The co-ordinator will review plans, examine children's work, and / or visit classrooms with the prior agreement of all teachers concerned and in line with an agreed code of practice. Verbal and written feedback is given to the staff concerned and may be discussed with the Head teacher.

Review Date: November 2017

Next Review Dated: November 2018

Signed: _____ Position: _____