

## **ENGLISH POLICY**

### **ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL JUNE 2022**

#### **ST. HELEN'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**RESPECT YOURSELF,  
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY,  
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY,  
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY  
BUT MOST OF ALL, RESPECT GOD OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.**

At St. Helen's we recognise the central importance of English, as a subject in its own right, and as the most cohesive area of learning. Gaining and using skills in language not only affects the child's progress in school, but also has a profound influence upon the course of his or her whole life. We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English, within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught English skills.

#### **Aims**

By the time a child leaves St. Helen's Catholic Primary School, we aim for them to be able to:

- Take pleasure in all aspects of English;
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, developing a range of Independent strategies to self-monitor and correct;
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment;
- Have an interest in words and their meanings allowing them to develop a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- Understand a range of text types and genres allowing them to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation;
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

#### **Statutory requirements**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

#### **Subject organisation**

The English curriculum at St. Helen's Catholic Primary School is delivered using the National Curriculum English Document (2014). The EYFS Statutory Framework is followed and assessments are made against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage to ensure continuity and progression from the Early Years Foundation stage through to the National Curriculum. Birth to 5 Matters is also used as additional guidance.

### **Approaches to Oracy:**

The School aims to help children:

- Understand and produce a simple and an elaborate language;
- Use oracy for a variety of purposes e.g. describing events, expressing opinions, articulating feelings and investigation;
- To use language to aid social and emotional development;
- Use standard English, vocabulary and grammar;
- Use language for enjoyment;
- Listen carefully and respond to what is said.

### **Oracy:**

The *Speak for Change* reports defines oracy as '*our ability to communicate effectively using spoken language. It is the ability to speak eloquently, articulate ideas and thoughts, influence through talking, listen to others and have the confidence to express your views.*' In other words, it is an essential life skill which we need to support all pupils to develop.

Oracy is particularly important for pupils from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds. Many of these pupils enter school with much lower language levels than pupils from middle-class backgrounds.

Listening skills are developed through reading aloud to pupils. This also introduces children to literary language, explains how stories work, exposes them to a range of genres, and enables pupils to hear a rich and varied vocabulary. We ensure that we read to the children on a daily basis. Also, from Year Two upwards, children take part in Whole Class Reading, which helps to develop these skills further. We choose stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts carefully, to ensure that they help to develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading.

### **The Importance of Oracy for Writing:**

Oracy is also important for writing. The National Curriculum writing objectives specify that pupils should compose and rehearse sentences orally before committing them to paper. We use Talk for Writing, which is an approach based around this concept. Children are also given opportunities to explore a subject in depth through drama, the retelling of stories, vocabulary games and other speaking and listening activities often leads to writing with greater depth and focuses than would have been achieved without this preparatory work. A limited vocabulary has been shown to impact educational attainment. In contrast, a wide vocabulary impacts positively on reading comprehension and the ability to make inferences. It enables pupils to make sense of what they are reading. Vocabulary acquisition is at the heart of our teaching. In all subjects, vocabulary is carefully explained and focused upon.

## **Approaches to Reading**

The School aims to:

- Encourage a love of reading by making it a successful and enjoyable experience;
- Produce effective readers;
- Provide a wide, high quality and stimulating variety of texts;
- Build up a sound base of reading strategies, using phonic awareness;
- Develop initial and advanced reading skills;
- Provide children with a life skill proven to affect future outcomes

## **Reading Books**

Home reading books are organised into decodable, phonic phases and then on to a banding system. These books will be sent home for parents to read with their children. Children who move away from the banding system, will become 'Free Readers'. These texts are more challenging but are still age appropriate. At St. Helen's, we strive to provide our children with the best quality texts that we can. This means, keeping up-to-date with modern fiction, poetry and non-fiction. We also strive to provide books which represent the diversity within our society.

Our school library offers children the opportunity for wider reading. Children have regular access to library sessions. Within classrooms, pupils have access to books, which they can borrow. These books may be linked to: topics, books and authors that they are currently studying or have studied. Classroom libraries are rotated regularly, to ensure continued engagement.

Teachers read high- quality texts to pupils for at least fifteen minutes a day. These texts will be carefully chosen by the adults, to ensure that they are engaging.

## **Early Reading:**

Phonics is taught daily in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. This will involve a minimum of a 20 minute daily session of planned systematic phonics' delivery, with a wide opportunity for application of skills through the environment and other lessons. If children are struggling with their phonetic knowledge, intervention is put in place (this includes KS2).

## **Whole Class Reading:**

As part of the English Curriculum (from year two) each child across school, will take part in at least four Whole Class Reading sessions per week. These sessions will be adult led. They allow children to explore texts for comprehension, enjoyment and promote a huge amount of book talk. We are also try to link concepts taught elsewhere in the English Curriculum, into our reading. For example, if children have been learning about adjectives in an English lesson, this could be linked to their Whole Class Reading. For instance, they may be asked to find adjectives to describe... use adjectives to describe a character, linked to the text.

During Whole Class Reading sessions, we link objectives to the reading domains and National Curriculum objectives. We use the acronym VIPERS to teach the main skills and principles of reading comprehension.

## KS1

- 1a draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
- 1b identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information
- 1c identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
- 1d make inferences from the text
- 1e predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

## KS2

- 2a give / explain the meaning of words in context
- 2b retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
- 2c summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
- 2d make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
- 2e predict what might happen from details stated and implied
- 2f identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
- 2g identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases
- 2h make comparisons within the text

## KS2 Reading Vipers

Vipers is a range of reading prompts based on the 2016 reading content domains found in the National Curriculum Test Framework documents which can be found online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-english-reading-test-framework>

Vipers heading	Content Domain reference	Content Domain Description
Vocabulary	2a	Give/explain the meaning of words in context
Infer	2d	Make inference from the text/ explain and justify using evidence from the text.
Predict	2e	Predict what might happen from the details stated and implied.
Explain	2f, 2g, 2h,	Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to the meaning as a whole. Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases. Make comparisons within the text
Retrieve	2b	Retrieve and record key information/key details from fiction and non-fiction
Summarise	2c	Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph



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## Approaches to Writing

The School aims to:

- Give Writing a purpose and make it an enjoyable experience by presenting a wide variety of writing opportunities;
- Develop the children's confidence as young writers;
- Help children see writing as an important means of communication;
- Develop Writing by positive teaching of skills and encouragement;
- Give each child the opportunity to write in a variety of genres and for a variety of audiences.

Classroom writing situations should emphasise to the children, the purpose of writing and give pupils the opportunity to write in a variety of genres and for different purposes, real life situations and for a range of audiences.

Shared and modelled writing (using the Talk for Writing principles) will take place within English lessons. This allows the teacher and support staff to demonstrate good writing practices, whilst utilising the children's ideas. Staff must ensure that the writing demonstrated, shows high expectations and covers the features and structures which they would expect to see in the children's writing.

## **Independent Writes:**

Every two weeks, each class (from year two upwards) holds an 'independent writing' session. These extended writing sessions (45 minutes by the end of year two) are often (where appropriate) linked to class topics or Whole Class Reading books. Importantly, each session the text type changes, to allow children to recycle and build upon their previous learning. They also enable children to express themselves in a more fluid way than Talk for Writing offers. Before children start writing, there will be a fun, interactive session, helping them gain the tools and devices that will help them in their writing.

After an independent writing session, the writing is marked by the teacher, or children are conferenced on their writing. Peer and self-marking plays a huge part of these sessions too. In order for children to take a greater ownership of their writing, they edit and up-level independently or with a partner in a feedback session.

## **SPAG:**

To support our children's grammar and spelling progression and attainment, teachers integrate time to practising these skills within their English lessons and apply them throughout the curriculum.

Spelling is taught discreetly using 'Spelling Shed'. Spelling Shed provides a fun interactive and progressive approach to spelling. Children also can play the spelling games at home, in order to reinforce their knowledge. Grammar is taught in context of children's writing. This may include some discrete sessions and then application in their writing and during reading sessions.

## **Presentation**

In our school, we have high expectations of presentation. To support this, from year two upwards cursive handwriting practice is undertaken regularly across school. Children write in pencil until they obtain a pen licence. Teachers and support staff are expected to demonstrate high quality presentation and the use of cursive handwriting, when marking and working with children, scribing or modelling during a lesson.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is a critical part of teachers' planning and work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy.

Teachers will carry out continuous assessment of progress, in each aspect of the English Curriculum (where appropriate, this will be noted down on daily plans). Such assessment will be formative. Progress with specific skills or objectives will be assessed with a view to informing the subsequent appropriate teaching and learning for children. Most feedback will be given to children 'in the moment'. This may happen in several different ways. It could be through conferencing, whole class feedback or when walking around the classroom.

Children will assess their own work against the 'Learning Objectives' and 'Remember Tos'. Peer marking will be used, when appropriate, to evaluate successes and provide a focus for improvement.

## **Writing:**

Each class (year 2 and above) will undertake three formal writing assessments at the end of each term. These assessments will involve all children writing a letter. A copy of these letters

will be kept in a class Independent Writing Folder. A copy of the results will be given to the subject leader, along with a copy of two: more able, able and less able letters.

To monitor the progress in spelling:

KS2 will take the Single Word Spelling test at the end of each term.

Reading:

Year one, will take a formal 'Phonics Screening Test' which will be repeated for those in year two who did not meet the expected national standard.

Children (year 2 and above) will complete a formal reading test, every term to ensure progress and gaps are picked up.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

This policy is in line with other School Policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following School Policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Feedback and Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Reviewed January 2022