

English Policy

St. Thomas More's Catholic Primary School



Approved by the Governing Body:

Spring 2026

Next Review:

Spring 2028

Our Mission Statement

As we walk together with Jesus we love, live and learn

Introduction

At St. Thomas More's we believe that English contributes to the development of the individual child, therefore it is our responsibility to prepare each child for the adult world.

We believe that language develops through speaking and listening, reading and writing. Our aim is to provide all children with range of diverse opportunities for these areas.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the delivery of English for the teaching and learning and management purpose for the next two years. This policy was reviewed in the spring term by staff and formally approved by the Governors at the spring meeting on Tuesday 6th February.

What do we understand by the term English?

English encompasses a wide variety of skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening and spelling. We understand that English is not a discrete subject and encourage cross-curricular development of these skills.

The School's aims

Our aim is to develop pupils who are confident literate individuals. We strive to achieve this aim by helping them:

- To see the purpose in English in the 'real world'
- To develop the necessary skills to access English across the curriculum
- To meet the requirements of the National Curriculum
- To enjoy different genres when speaking, listening, reading and writing
- To celebrate success in English
- To develop pupils computing skills as appropriate

The School's Curriculum Organisation

English skills are primarily delivered through a specific English lesson; however cross-curricular links are made where ever appropriate to encourage the children to see how English is important in all areas of the curriculum. Therefore an emphasis is placed on cross curricular writing in all year groups. The skills taught in English lessons are embedded and applied by the pupils in all other lessons that involve writing. Through effective planning we ensure that the children have an opportunity to experience a wide range of genres and styles of writing.

When planning English, teachers endeavour to identify activities that involve the children in developing their transcription and composition skills, alongside vocabulary development, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Lessons are planned in genres/topics. The children are taught narrative, non-fiction and poetry. As a starting point, the pupils' always activate their prior knowledge of a text in order to help develop reading comprehension. Teachers spend time discussing the text and analysing the language structures to ensure that the children are fully immersed and develop a good understanding of the genre being taught. We make clear links with Speaking and Listening at this stage of the teaching process. This is done through the planning of activities that include storytelling, role play and drama. The children then write and redraft or edit their work. This process allows children to improve their own writing. We also encourage peer editing and the children are given both verbal and written feedback and next steps. This allows the children to have a deeper understanding of the key features and language structures of different genres. There is also an emphasis on the children producing a computing outcome as well as a written outcome. All staff are kept up to date with continuous professional development as this allows staff to support children to develop and embed their skills into all forms of English.

Grammar lessons will be taught discretely at least twice a week in Key Stage 2 with explicit links made in all areas of the curriculum. Links to grammar will be made within English lessons in Key Stage 1, Year 2 will teach some elements discretely.

This allows formative assessments of the children to be made and the curriculum can be very flexible.

Foundation stage

We teach English in the Reception class as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the EYFS, English objectives the EYFS Curriculum. The children have the opportunity to experience a variety of genres enabling them to acquire the basic skills of English.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities with regard to English are as follows:

The Head Teacher carries out the following responsibilities;

- Meeting the statutory requirements
- To overview planning of English
- Identify requirements for the School Development Plan (SDP) in conjunction with the Subject Leader.
- Implementation of Data analysis to identify areas of development in English
- Monitoring English lessons across the school

The following responsibilities are carried out by the English Subject Leader;

- Purchasing and organisation of English resources
- Organisation of Continual Professional Development
- Active responsibility for English Initiatives
- Reviewing Policy
- Insuring the consistent implementation of English
- Development of effective use of computing in English
- Curriculum Development
- Monitoring English lessons across the school
- Developing the effective use of Cross-curricular English
- Maintenance of the Library

Class teachers carry out the following responsibilities;

- Planning for units of work
- Differentiating planning to enable all children to access the English Curriculum
- Ensure embedding of the English targets

- Assessment of pupils
- Continuity between year groups
- Ensure English progression

Elements of English

Reading

- Reading is not simply decoding of black marks on a page but involves the ability to read, with understanding, a wide range of fictional and non-fictional texts.
- In Key Stage 1, the books are linked to the phonics scheme we use (Little Wandle) and those books that are sent home to parents to support reading practise are only the sounds that the pupils have learnt as this enables them to practice their skills and develop fluent reading. We also encourage parents to use reading web based games to support reading development at home. At Key Stage 2 most children have developed the skills to be independent readers, choosing their own books from a variety of both popular and classical authors within school. They are also encouraged to make use of the local library and other texts that they enjoy. There is a reading scheme in place for those children in Key Stage 2 who still need support.
- In Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (reluctant readers) the children are heard reading by an adult on a regular basis.
- Children who have difficulty in reading are given support by Class teachers, teaching assistants and SENCo - This is detailed on their One Plan. There are specific reading intervention programs available to those children who require these, for example, Burt Reading Scheme, Dancing Bears.

Writing

- Writing is an important part of communication. Children will be given the opportunities to communicate, through writing, to a wide range of audiences.
- Through modelling and shared writing children will experience and develop the necessary skills to write in a range of styles.
- Children will be given the opportunities to experience the process of writing from the initial planning stage through to the final draft.
- Through word and sentence work the children will be taught the conventions of correct punctuation and grammar. Computer programs provide support for this area of the curriculum.
- Oral language is an integral part of the writing process. The children are provided with opportunities to develop their ideas through discussions with both peers and adults.
- Children are provided with opportunities to develop extended writing. Allowing them to draw upon their skills active taught during the English Lesson.
- Teachers will provide, wherever possible, an opportunity for the children produce writing for a real audience and purpose.
- There are support materials available for supporting the individual needs for example, Booster Classes, 1:1 tuition
- Through our school we encourage children to develop an independent, fluent style of handwriting. The children are taught the fundamental skills of handwriting from pencil control to a fully joined script. Joined handwriting is developed from Year 2 upwards.

Spelling

- The children are taught the key aspects of spelling (spelling rules) on a daily basis in Years 2-6 with a weekly spelling test to allow teachers to assess progress and support those children who need it.

- In Year 1 and foundation stage the foundations of spelling are taught through phonics on a daily basis in Years 1 and 2 and twice daily in Foundation Stage. See Phonics Policy.
- The children are encouraged to become independent spellers through the use of the "have a go" method. This encourages the children to use their knowledge of phonics and spelling rules to attempt an unfamiliar word.
- The children have a wide range of resources at their disposal e.g. word banks, dictionaries and thesaurus.

Speaking & Listening

- Speaking and listening skills play a fundamental role in the children's progression across the whole curriculum. Therefore speaking and listening is taught throughout the whole of the curriculum.
- Children are provided with many opportunities to use talk partners during the English Lesson. This allows the children to verbalise their ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- The children are provided with many opportunities to develop their speaking skill through talking to a wide range of audiences.
- Listening skills are also actively taught through the English lesson, PSHE and Circle Time.

Assessment

At St. Thomas More's we use a wide range of assessment strategies:

- Reading is assessed formally through the New Salford Sentence Reading Test once a year and termly for those children who are being monitored, SATs results from Years 2 - 6.

- Phonics is assessed on both a formative and summative basis in Foundation Stage and KS1, with Year 1 completing the Phonics Screening Test. Those children who do not pass the screening test will be rescreened in Year 2 and have a bespoke phonics intervention to support their development.
- Reading is assessed formatively on a regular basis by the class teacher.
- Writing is formally assessed each half term when the children complete an independent piece of extended writing and through SATs results from Years 2 - 6.
- Writing is also assessed through the use of target specific for each class, focusing on the needs of the pupils and the areas in need of development.
- The children in Key stage 1 and 2 will complete the Nelson one word spelling test to determine their spelling age once a year.
- Speaking & Listening is assessed informally on a day-to-day basis by the class teacher.
- All aspects of English are formally assessed half termly, using the Sonar statements for Reading, Writing and speaking and Listening. The information is put on to the Sonar Assessment Tool which the SENCo, Assessment Subject Leader and Head Teacher monitor. The assessments are also used to support the development of future planning and target setting.
- Any children who are having difficulty with any element of English the Class Teacher, SENCO and LSA work together to design and carry out an intervention that best supports any gaps and misconceptions that need to be addressed.

Equal Opportunities

All children should have equal access to the English Curriculum to develop their English skills.

- To ensure all genders, races, and disabilities are included books are carefully chosen.
- All literature endeavours to represent a wide range of cultures.
- Where appropriate an external specialist is used to assess a pupil's specific need.

Monitoring and Reviewing

There is an annual review of this policy by the head teacher and the senior management team, which takes place in the summer term. A review involving the whole staff and the Governing Body takes place every two years.