



St Ambrose Catholic Primary School

'Follow the example of Jesus'

English Policy

Approved by the Governing body in November 2018

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Signed _____ Headteacher

To be reviewed and revised in October 2020

MISSION STATEMENT

Follow the example of Jesus

To do this we will:

- Show respect by being friendly to everyone, looking after everything that God has created and treating everyone as we would like to be treated ourselves. (Christ centred)
- Provide a high quality education which enables everyone to reach their full potential within a caring and supportive environment. (Education)
- Celebrate the school's place in the community and the wider world. (Community)

Objectives:

(Christ Centred)

- Provide quality collective worship and enriching liturgical celebrations.
- Enable our children to acquire an excellent religious education, through a well taught and resourced Come and See programme.
- Encourage all to develop their understanding of and relationship with God, while at the same time respecting that others choose to express their faith in different ways.
- Be positive role models, who treat each other with respect and are willing to forgive and be forgiven.

(Education)

- As teachers, to be both inspirational and creative so that every child's achievements are recognised and celebrated and that they are encouraged to become independent learners.
- To provide a safe and happy learning environment so that every child feels valued and secure within our school family.
- To encourage regular communication with parents by creating a positive and caring support network for the extended school family.

(Community)

- To join with the parish and local community to celebrate special occasions throughout the year.
- To enhance the curriculum by uniting as one all of the generations in the community and fostering mutual respect.
- To provide opportunities for the children to visit places of interest and experience a range of different cultural events in order for them to gain a better appreciation of the world around them and to 'fire' their own aspirations.
- To participate in charitable activities and be able to empathise with the needs of others.

Our School Vision for English

We aim to deliver a high quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of Literacy skills is central to improving a child's life chances. Teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills they have acquired in a range of contexts. As we use a Quality Text-based approach, rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout the school. This is because we believe that reading is the inhale and writing is the exhale. Carefully planned creative writing weeks provide memorable experiences for all children, bringing topics to life through real life contexts.

National Curriculum 2014

The National Curriculum clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential role of a Primary School. The new English programme of study is based on four areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

The National Curriculum gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key stage under the following headings:

- Spoken language
- Reading - Word reading
 - Comprehension
- Writing - Transcription,
 - Spelling,
 - Handwriting and presentation,
 - Composition,
 - Grammar and punctuation

Spoken language

Developing strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English at St Ambrose Catholic Primary School. Teachers place a high emphasis on spoken language and plan for the discreet teaching of skills as well as incidental learning opportunities. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to enable them to internalise language patterns and understand how language changes in different situations. This enables our children to understand and manipulate language for different purposes and audiences. To do this, teachers provide authentic contexts, giving children opportunities to use a range of spoken language. Teachers provide a range of purposeful opportunities through role play, drama, discussions and debates. Teachers model the use of Standard English masterfully, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken English.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10)

They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

The focus on the spoken word gives children the ability to cope with written language by discovering:

- How it works;
- That meanings are shaped by lexical and syntactical choices;
- That language changes in different contexts;
- That there are differences between written and spoken English and standard and non-standard;
- Rules of spoken language;
- Creative thinking and self-expression

Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should;

- develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- use accurate spelling and punctuation
- be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions regularly for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group. We use the Letter-Join Handwriting Scheme in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing.

Spelling

We want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers and we believe accurate spelling is essential to achieving this. Competent spellers spend less time and energy in thinking about spelling words correctly which enables them to channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

A balanced spelling programme includes five main components:

- understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological);
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words;
- practising and assessing spelling;
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading;
- building pupils' self-images as spellers

A good spelling programme gradually builds pupils' spelling vocabulary by introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced.

Spelling strategies need to be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross-curricular words and individual pupils' words. Proofreading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting.

At St Ambrose, we use the Purple Mash spelling scheme that fits with the National Curriculum.

Reading

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme. Children work on the programme until they have a secure understanding of phonics, which they are able to apply to their reading and writing.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

The programme is for:

- Pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write.
- Any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly

In Read Write Inc. Phonics pupils:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire good handwriting.

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on

difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing seldom matches their progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well-developed.

In Reception we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day.

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils following Read Write Inc. Phonics using the Sound and Word Entry Assessment. We use this data to assign them to a Read Write Inc. Phonics or Read Write Inc. group. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

In Read Write Inc. Phonics, because the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day. The homogeneous groups in the Phonic lessons help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils learn to read quickly. The Reading Leader records the results from the Sound and Word Assessments, which take place every six to eight weeks, on the Assessment Tracker. This data allows us to intervene in different ways. For instance, we quickly move pupils to another group if they are progressing faster than their peers. Those who continue to struggle have one-to-one tutoring so that they keep up. All the pupils are engaged, with a positive impact on their behaviour. They learn to participate fully: we agree with them the rules for working in a group or discussing with a partner. We discourage 'hands up' for answering questions because we believe that all pupils should answer every question. The teacher selects pupils to answer.

The Read Write Inc. programmes have detailed lesson plans. These give the teachers practical day-to-day guidance, but we work hard to build on these plans so that the lessons are matched carefully to the needs of each particular group. Every activity is prepared thoroughly and has a clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

Additional support for lower-attaining pupils learning to read

Pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group have the widest variety of needs. This is therefore the least homogeneous group. In order to give these pupils the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of these pupils have daily one-to-one tutoring for 10 to 15 minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. This targeted intervention helps us to meet their individual needs.

When choosing texts, we look for a balance of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. While components such as grammar and vocabulary are important parts of the curriculum, they will be taught in context, through the enjoyment of shared reading.

Units of work (writing) will include rich texts which will be evidenced on planning. Shared reading will take place daily using a class text and a guided reading takes place each morning. Every classroom has a reading area that is inviting.

To promote a love of reading, we:

- Read aloud to children up to and including Year 6, to introduce them to new authors and styles of writing.
- Encourage and model reading for pleasure and establish an appreciation and love of reading.
- Establish and develop a varied range of texts in the classroom.
- Focus on book corners, displays and the library.
- Stop, drop and read - this is where the whole school stop and read at the same time.

Guided Reading

Guided reading is focused on covering the Assessment Foci that stem from the National Curriculum, ensuring word decoding and word comprehension are both covered appropriately.

Grammar

Grammar is most effective when taught in the context of reading and writing; either in the context of the linguistic demands of a particular genre or the writing needs of a child. We take a pragmatic approach to the teaching of grammar and believe effective grammar teaching takes place in meaningful contexts.

Learning Environment

Our classrooms and displays are used as learning tools. Using the learning environment, all skills are transferrable and learning is applied across a range of contexts, ensuring intrinsic links between reading, writing, phonics, grammar, spelling and punctuation are made and children are regularly given time to consolidate learning. Through the learning environment children are empowered and supported to build independence when working.

Time allocations for English

- Each class teacher organises a daily English lesson of an age appropriate length
- Whole class shared reading five times per week for 30 minutes.
- Guided reading five times per week for 30 minutes.
- Writing is taught and applied across the curriculum.
- Punctuation and grammar should be embedded in all English teaching.
- Phonics interventions or whole class focus where needed.

Rules for presentation in English KS1

- Write the date in words.
- Write the WALT.
- Leave a line and begin work.
- Children in KS1 to complete work in pencil.
- If a mistake is made, an eraser should be used.
- All diagrams and pictures are to be drawn in pencil.
- All lines to be drawn with a pencil and ruler.
- Felt tip pens are not to be used in any book. Coloured pencils are to be used for pictures.
- Doodling is not allowed on the front or inside of any book.
- Teachers to mark in green pen.
- LSAs to mark in black pen.

Rules for presentation in English KS2

- Write the date in words.
- Underline in pencil using a ruler.
- Leave a line.
- Write the WALT.
- Underline in pencil using a ruler.
- Leave a line and begin work.
- Children in lower KS2 to complete work in pencil.
- Children in Year 3 and 4 can obtain a pen licence when their handwriting shows a neat, fluent, legible style.
- Children in Year 5 and 6 will use a blue pen, when handwriting is of a neat, fluent, legible style.
- Numbers to be placed in the margin.
- If a mistake is made, children are to draw a line through the error if writing in pen but can be rubbed out if writing in pencil.
- All diagrams and pictures are to be drawn in pencil.
- All lines to be drawn with a pencil and ruler.
- Felt tip pens are not to be used in any book. Coloured pencils are to be used for pictures.
- Doodling is not allowed on the front or inside of any book.
- Teachers to mark in green pen.
- LSAs to mark in black pen.