

English Policy:

As a school we aim:

- To provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are enjoyed and valued by all.
- To provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning, both in speech and writing, of factual, imaginary and personal experiences.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate its main features.
- To foster an enthusiasm for and love of reading for life.
- To encourage pupils to have fluent and legible handwriting.
- To provide writing opportunities in all areas of the curriculum.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT
- To provide opportunities for role play and drama.
- To provide additional support to pupils who require it in order to raise standards in English.

We hope that pupils will:

- Be able to participate in a conversation, listening to others, responding appropriately and taking turns to speak
- Develop the confidence and ability to speak and perform in front of an audience
- Be able to sustain concentration in a range of listening situations
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of non-fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Understand the phonic system and spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately
- Be able to use a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts
- Be interested in books, read for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences
- Be able to work confidently and increasingly independently in all areas.

All children at Sacred Heart follow the National Curriculum for English. This is split into a number of different areas; reading, writing or composition, spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting.

Literacy Development and Communication and Language in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

Sacred Heart's Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Nursery classes and two Reception classes.

Communication and Language development in the EYFS

The development of communication and language is vital in the EYFS and is inextricably linked to all other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We encourage and celebrate the multitude of home languages spoken at Sacred Heart, but also aim to develop children's understanding of, and ability to communicate effectively in English. Listening and attention plays an important role and children are supported to listen to others, with increasing attention and recall. Practitioners in the EYFS ensure children are exposed to a high standard of spoken English and are introduced to new and exciting vocabulary. Children are supported to speak in full, grammatically correct sentences as this is a pre-requisite of both reading and writing. Practitioners model effective language communication and will support all children to develop reciprocal and effective communication with adults and peers' language through play and exploration.

Reading in the EYFS:

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, reading is at the heart of children's learning. The children take home a variety of different books, both fiction and non-fiction, to read themselves or to share with an adult at home. Through the stories they read at home and those that are read to them in class, children are encouraged to develop a love of and for reading.

The EYFS curriculum and learning environment is planned around a wide variety of high quality fiction and non-fiction texts. Cross-curricular links are made to foster children's language development, curiosity, interest and understanding of a variety of genres. Through a combination of independent and structured activities, children become active learners and are encouraged to think critically.

Nursery

When in Nursery, children are given a book once a week, which they take home and read with their family. Parental feedback is important in the Early Years Foundation Stage and we ask parents and carers to support children to draw, mark make and record their child's comments about the book. This helps us to know how the child has enjoyed, interpreted and understood the text. Children in the Nursery are read to, several times a day.

Reception

We ask that children read their books with their family for at least 10 minutes each day. When the children are in school, they will read 1:1 with an adult at least three times a week; the whole class is read to at least twice a day. The children are encouraged to use pictures in books for support, but to also attempt to use phonics to segment and blend sounds in words.

Throughout the year we will send home resources which parents can use to support their child's learning of phonics, reading and writing.

Phonics

The children in EYFS are taught phonics every day. Nursery focus on Phase 1 which concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills. The emphasis for the Nursery staff is to help the children become attuned to the sounds around them and to begin to orally segment and blend sounds in words. In the summer term, Nursery begin Phase 2 of the Letters and Sounds programme.

Reception teachers start the beginning of the year teaching children Phase 2 of the Letters and Sounds programme. During the phonics lesson, Reception teachers also pay particular focus and attention to the children's handwriting and letter formation. We begin to introduce handwriting lines in the reception class to enable children to form letters correctly and to develop a neat handwriting style.

Writing and Physical Development in the EYFS:

In Nursery children focus on developing their fine and gross motor skills in order to build the muscular strength required for writing, before they are taught how to hold a pencil correctly. The children enjoy many pre-writing activities, which strengthen the muscles in their hands, develop their postural strength and their hand eye coordination. They do this through using resources such as playdough, threading blocks and beads, which allow the children to improve their manual dexterity. Upper body strength is a pre-requisite for writing and children in both Nursery and Reception, develop their gross-motor skills by partaking in weekly PE lessons. The lessons see the children learn different balances, to catch different size and textured balls, to kick and throw a ball and to hang and swing from climbing equipment.

Additionally, children are encouraged to develop their pre-writing skills using various mediums such as, sand, chalks, paints, whiteboards and pens. Once children are able to demonstrate 'readiness for writing', they are then taught how to hold a pencil with an effective grip and they learn how to write their name. Children are always encouraged to give meaning to what they draw and write.

Reception teachers introduce English books at the beginning of the year and children start the year practising letter formation and how to hold a pencil correctly. Reception quickly moves from name writing to writing lists and captions, to retelling stories and ultimately to create their own narratives.

Reception teachers use Pie Corbett's and Alan Peat's recommendations for writing development to support children to retell stories such as 'The Little Red Hen' using actions and visual stimulation. This enables children rewrite the story from memory using grammatically correct and exciting sentences, starting with a capital letter and

finishing with a full stop. The structure of sentence types taught enable children to consider, who, what when, where and why events take place in a narrative. By the end of Reception children are expected to write sentences independently about characters and stories such as, traditional tales and fairy tales. Children are given the confidence to use their phonics independently in their writing.

Assessment

The Reception teachers follow the school marking policy. We use positive reinforcement and highlight what the child has done well and what they could work on next. Rewards are important, and given when children demonstrate enjoyment, curiosity, independence, effort and improvement. Immediate verbal and written 1:1 feedback is given to every child at the end of each guided session. Children in both Nursery and Reception begin to assess their own learning and Reception children use visual marking stickers, which teach the children to self-assess their written work.

EYFS Family learning and homework

Once children have settled into their new classes, teachers invite parents to observe in school, how we teach literacy in the EYFS. In Reception we invite parents to watch a phonics lesson being taught once a week. These sessions demonstrate how sounds are pronounced, how letters are correctly formed and how the children learn skills to segment and blend, which in turn aids reading and writing. We also invite parents to watch a whole literacy lesson.

In Reception and in addition to reading, children are given tasks that link to the sounds the children have been learning in their phonics lessons. This will eventually progress onto sentence work. In the summer term, children are given weekly spellings. These consist of key vocabulary, tricky/high-frequency words or words that can be written correctly using phonics. It is expected that the children complete the homework each week. We encourage parents to help their child learn their spellings, which they will be tested on each week.

Year 1 to Year 6

Phonics, Spelling and Reading:

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum at Sacred Heart. Throughout the school, a love for reading and a desire for improvement is nurtured through our use of good quality texts to develop language and writing skills, alongside reading skills.

Throughout KS1 phonics is taught discretely and daily following the Letters and Sounds programme supported by a wide variety of resources available to teachers from Planit at Twinkl, Phonics Play and TES. A catch-up phonics group for Year 1 and 2 children available three times a week follows the Sounds Write programme.

The New National Curriculum forms the basis of the words and patterns which are taught in each year group. Spelling skills are introduced through direct teaching, investigations, studies of spelling patterns and conventions and homework.

All pupils are encouraged to

- develop dictionary skills to support their spelling.
- attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies.
- write an increasingly wide range of words from memory. Focus is on those words identified in Letters and Sounds (KS1), the National Curriculum 2014 and topic related words.
- use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-check etc.

The spelling of technical vocabulary is introduced throughout the curriculum. Spellings lists are sent home on a weekly basis in KS 1 and KS2 and tested the following week.

In KS1 children are provided with opportunities to develop their reading skills through daily reading sessions either on a 1:1 or small group guided reading basis as well as using additional opportunities across other curriculum areas such as history, geography, science and RE. Children are well supported through volunteer readers in Year 1 as well as a number of Beanstalk readers in Year 2.

Parents are expected to read and ask questions about the reading at home with their child every evening for at least fifteen minutes.

Regular story sessions take place to develop a love for reading, as well as providing time in the class reading corner to read for pleasure. Two Book Clubs are run, one for Reception to Year 2 on a monthly basis and one for KS2 children on a weekly basis.

In EYFS and KS1 we use the Oxford Reading Tree, a book banded reading scheme offering a wide variety of genres to encourage early and developing reading skills supported by other book schemes including PM Plus, Jolly Readers, Collins Big Cat and Project X.

Every classroom has a reading corner with a selection of books for children to enjoy and pupils are encouraged to make free choices of books based on their own interests from the class library or school library to supplement their instructional independent reading.

As a school we have good links with York Gardens Public Library who run a summer holiday reading scheme as well as drop in story time sessions for Year 1 and 2 when children are able to borrow a book to enjoy at home.

In KS2, children are encouraged to develop as independent readers, discovering favourite authors amongst the well-stocked shelves in the KS2 reading library. They are expected to read each night, and to complete 'reading sticker' questions within their reading records at least 3 times a week. Children use the Accelerated Reading system to record the books they have read and to check their understanding by taking a short quiz each time they finish a book. Each KS2 classroom has a 'we are reading' display. This interactive display states what each child is reading, and allows children to monitor their own books.

Guided Comprehension

In KS2, we have created a four day per week learning journey of Guided Comprehension. Each week the children will be exposed to a different text, with varying genres covered to ensure that they are reading, and enjoying, a wide range of texts.

The six domains of reading will be taught through the VIPERS approach:

- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Prediction
- Explanation
- Retrieval
- Summarising

On day 1 children are exposed to new vocabulary. They use this day to refine their dictionary and clarification skills. Day 2 involves class discussion around the text. Day 3 and 4 are skill based days, which hone in on one of the reading domains.

We offer many opportunities for parental involvement and support with reading such as our newly established reading café, World Book Day, Mums and Dads' breakfasts, Book Fair, Book Swaps and Sales and our Family Learning sessions. Each child has a reading record which acts as a link between home and school reading. We encourage our DBS checked parents to become volunteer readers in Reception and KS1.

Assessment

Reading is formally assessed through reading comprehension tests from Year 1 to Year 6 every half term. Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 use the Headstart Comprehension Tests while in Year 2 and Year 6 a mixture of past statutory tests and CGP papers which are more closely aligned to the national tests the children will take in the summer are used.

Writing

Composition, Grammar, Punctuation:

All children take part in a daily writing lesson.

Children are exposed to a wide range of text types, media types and genres and are encouraged to choose the Alan Peat exciting sentences to support their writing, develop their creativity and articulate using a suitable technical vocabulary.

Writing is taught from Reception to Year 6 using Pie Corbett storymapping and choral retelling and Alan Peat Exciting Sentences sentence progression. Children are encouraged to use different sentence types using a series of acronyms as an aide-memoire.

Knowledge of the use of correct grammar and punctuation is taught directly in line with the National Curriculum. Grammar for each year group is discretely taught with practise using a wide range of resources such as Planit at Twinkl, and CGP

grammar practice books. It is also planned for and embedded into writing opportunities from Reception to Year 6. Grammar is a key focus in oracy, where teachers will pick up on errors, correcting pupils where needed.

Punctuation is discretely taught using the Punctuation Progression. It is also embedded within the Exciting Sentences progression.

Handwriting

All children will be exposed to cursive handwriting in our Early Years, Key Stages 1 and Key Stage 2. Handwriting, using the Nelson Thorne handwriting programme will be taught by a teacher at EYFS and KS1 at least twice a week aiming for all children to write using cursive, joined script by the end of Year 2. Children from Reception to Year 2 will write on handwriting lines in all areas of the curriculum. The size of handwriting line will vary according to the child's stage of development. The handwriting line areas are called mud (descenders), grass, sky (ascenders)

Teachers model the correct formation of cursive letters in the following order:

Cadghtpelfuyijkrsowbvnmxzq

Enrichment

Our English curriculum is enriched through: trips, visitors, workshops, specialist teachers and theme days. Children are given as many opportunities to write about these experiences as possible – from workshop days based on Mayans, Romans, Egyptians or Victorians to opportunities to work with professional authors, poets, actors and illustrators. Trips out such as to The Tower of London, The Monument, The Thames Barrier etc are backed up by writing opportunities across the school.

Children are given a wide range of exciting 'real' opportunities to showcase their English work including assemblies, displays and prizes and competitions both in school and borough wide.

Assessment

Children are teacher assessed in English each half term through at least two pieces of independent writing using the national teacher assessment framework for each year group. Progress is reported to parents through reports and parents evenings. Teachers continue to receive training in the key areas of curriculum change as changes continue to occur to the National Curriculum Framework. We also use a range of external providers to enhance our CPD provision.

As a school we are proud of our English curriculum provision and continually strive to improve it through book monitoring, learning walks, observations and evaluation as well as meeting with the English governor.

Parents

We keep parents informed about the content of the English curriculum through the school website as well as half termly class newsletters and opportunities for parents to drop in to an 'Open Class' to see their children's learning. Throughout the year, we also offer Family Learning workshops in each year group to aid parents'

understanding of the curriculum and ways they can support their children's learning at home.

Inclusion

All children receive English teaching of a high standard, on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. Where pupils are considered to require targeted support, a variety of interventions are available to enable them to work to age appropriate objectives. These include the use of an Intervention Teacher, TA support, and support programmes, in particular the Rapid Read catch up programme, the Literacy Support Service, small group phonics support, comprehension groups, spelling and handwriting groups. Homework is supported through two homework clubs, one for Year 2 and LKS2 and one for UKS2. More able pupils are planned for to ensure an element of challenge to every lesson. Extension activities are also identified for each lesson.

Equal Opportunities

Pupils with special needs have equal access to the English curriculum through the use of differentiated learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual need. Specific teaching strategies are used to maximize access to the curriculum for pupils learning EAL. Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through the use of resources on multi-cultural themes. An awareness of other dialects and standard English is encouraged through a range of texts. Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of the English curriculum. Opportunities to address issues of gender, race etc. are provided through discussion, texts and resources.