



St Thomas Aquinas
Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

St. Mary's School

A Catholic Voluntary Academy



ENGLISH POLICY

REVISED November 2025

WE GROW WITH JESUS TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE

English Policy

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School we believe that reading, writing, speaking and listening are fundamental life skills. English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. They gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children 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.

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that the teaching of literacy skills is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school. This policy outlines the teaching and learning of English skills at St. Mary's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy. The importance of developing successful skills and knowledge in English is vital if our children are to communicate in the wider community.

1. Aims and objectives

We are an inclusive school, we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one to one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties outlined in the SEND code of practice.

1. Spoken Language:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p.10) 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

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Encouraging the use of talk partners in lessons as an assessment for learning tool – our think, pair, share and cold-calling approach-ensuring every child participates in discussions in lessons and in collective worship.
- Children in every year group have opportunities to lead Celebrations of the Word and assemblies to the whole school and visitors
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Drama / role play
- RSHE and circle time
- Whole school special events e.g. World Book Day, Children's Book Week etc.

We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect or other language is of prime importance. It is our school policy to model our own language to the children which encourages Standard English both in speaking and writing.

2. Reading: See separate policy document.

3. Writing:

The National Curriculum 2014 states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

Writing skills are divided into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

3.1 Our aims and connected provision

- Dedicated teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation which is incorporated into the children's follow up work
- Correct grammatical error orally/written work (where appropriate)
- Use of high quality texts, modelling and shared/collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice
- Provide writing frames to support the least confident
- Provide time for planning, editing and revising
- Mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with the pupil using the TAFS and termly Writing statements set by our Academy

- When the child is ready, we encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed
- Extra support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties
- Extended activities for higher achieving pupils
- Meetings with parents to help them support their child

3. Teaching and Learning/Planning

At St. Mary's, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons in order to meet the needs of all our pupils. One of our main teaching strategies uses Talk for Learning techniques, which encourages children to think and talk in partnership with supportive adults about activities relating to particular areas of learning. This enables children to use their prior knowledge and to acquire new knowledge. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We also use the Lancashire scheme as a basis for our English units and to aid delivery of a sequenced and progressive curriculum, Rainbow Grammar is taught to teach Grammar- this is a more visual system as the school has a high proportion of EAL learners. In all classes children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. The Little Wandle Phonics is taught from EYFS to Year One and then Little Wandle spelling in Year Two. No nonsense Babcock spelling programme is taught in Key stage two as the start of English lessons.

The school is moving towards whole class marking and feedback for English lessons. Writing is broken into its component parts, modelled by the teacher using the board and pupils respond independently. The teacher circulates to mark in the lesson. Pupil's work is shown on the visualiser, modelling the editing. Pupils then edit their own work using a purple pen. This is then built up into a more extended piece of writing, according to the genre taught.

In order to assure the quality of assessment in KS1 and KS2, writing units end with a **hot task** which assesses the progress the pupils have made in that unit.

At the end of each unit/ English journey the hot task must be assessed for each child using the writing STACMAT statements (TAF for Y2 and Y6) which teachers keep in a folder. This then provides evidence for data on Target Tracker. This is moderated termly in the staff meetings.

Staff have high expectations of all children and that they can achieve their full potential. Teaching Assistants work in class supporting all ability groups, specific individuals or groups of children, ensuring that work is matched to the needs of the child. We also employ qualified teachers to provide quality first teaching for children and class groups who require extra interventions – whether they struggle with particular areas of the English curriculum or are considerably able in the subject area.

Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the Curriculum.

Spelling

EYFS and Y1 teach phonics daily. Y2 teach the Little Wandle spelling as part of their English lessons. Pupils continue to have catch up phonics intervention if they did not pass the phonics screening in year One, until the assessed pass rate is achieved and the phonics phases are embedded, with the child applying these accurately in their work. The pupils will then move onto learning the national curriculum spellings for year 3 and 4 and then 5 and 6. Pupils in Ks2 are taught the spelling patterns using the Babcock spelling resource, which will be incorporated into the start of their English lessons x3 a week. Pupils record the spellings in a separate spelling book and are tested in class on this.

SEND pupils are adapted for and may have less spellings or high frequency words to learn, rather than the year group spellings.

Handwriting – see separate handwriting policy

4. The contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas.

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum, with a particular focus in our school of vocabulary and writing through all subject areas where the same standard of writing is expected as seen in English books.

5. Inclusion

All children receive quality first teaching on a daily basis whatever their ability and activities are differentiated accordingly. In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age related expectations, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and monitor progress of these pupils.

We provide appropriate, challenging planned work for those children who are more able and those with English as an Additional Language. As we have a high percentage of EAL pupils at St Mary's we have made vocabulary and oracy central to our curriculum and built a learning environment that develops children's language skills using engaging resources and adult interaction.

6. Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Our curriculum includes an ever expanding range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children. St. Mary's is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to achieve their full potential.

7. Parental/Community involvement

We value parent involvement in children's development of English and promote a home school partnership in the following ways:

- sharing information – newsletters, curriculum workshops and evenings, parents' leaflets

- celebrations – assemblies, school performances, displays, book fairs.
- parents' evenings – to discuss children's progress and view children's work
- reports - sending an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can develop their learning
- homework - in line with our homework policy and home/school agreement
- website – all current school news and availability of relevant key documents

Parents are welcomed into the school to support children in English. We encourage them to read and discuss books with their children. Guidance is provided by the teacher in line with our policy for volunteers in school.

We have strong links with local nurseries and secondary schools to ensure smooth transition. Regular visits are made to the local library and the children are encouraged to visit the library with their parents. The local library events and reading challenges are used to inform children of upcoming library events, especially during holiday time. When possible, writers and drama/theatre groups are invited into the school to talk and perform for the children.

Book fairs are organised to encourage a culture of reading both at home and at school and every class group encourages children to take part in various competitions, for which the preparation can be done with the help of an adult.

8. Assessment

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment and marking Policy. Editing and drafting are a planned element of every English lesson. The school is moving towards whole class feedback and marking in the English lessons, where feedback is given to pupils in the lesson to improve.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation and Role of English Subject Leader

English is monitored by teachers, English Subject Leaders, the Head Teacher, Senco and English Governor. Having identified priorities, the English Subject Leaders constructs an action plan that forms part of the School improvement 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. Termly reports will be delivered to the Headteacher and governors outlining strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

The English Subject Leader is also responsible for supporting, coaching and mentoring colleagues in the teaching of English, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed according to the School Strategic Plan.

Signed: _____

Date: November 2025

Review November 2027