



# Saint Patrick's Catholic Primary School

*Live, Love and Learn Like Jesus*



*Our Mission in St Patrick's is to develop each child's talents and potential in a caring Catholic community inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ.*

## ENGLISH POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

At St Patrick's Primary School, we aim to immerse children in a culturally rich, diverse and engaging range of books and spoken language. We encourage active questioning and engagement with language. We love learning new vocabulary and encourage curiosity and exploration of the new words we're reading and challenge children to use these words in their own writing. We celebrate modern foreign languages as well as learning Latin in key stage 2 for word etymology and language structures. We recognise the need to provide a wide variety of enriching activities and experiences in which children are encouraged to communicate and express themselves effectively, creatively and above all confidently. Whenever possible, English should be fun and meaningful and therefore, memorable.

English is defined as the united skills and knowledge of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In order for children to become literate they must understand that the written word is a representation of the spoken word, and that both have a variety of forms related to purpose.

At St Patrick's School the links between Reading and Writing are crucial to developing effective skills of English. It is essential that children internalise high-quality language, the method of doing so being talking, and learning and applying Reading and Writing skills in a meaningful context.

Some key features of St Patrick's English teaching are:

- As part of our book-based approach, we use quality core texts that each class listen to, read and explore within each year group (**see Appendix 1 – Core Texts**). These include a range of genres and styles, including narrative, poetry collections, non-fiction and picture books.
- The 'Centre for Literacy in Primary Education' is an evidence-based research centre which is used by the school as a book-based resource for high quality texts and teaching sequences.

- Our writing planning process is based on the Emma Caulfield book, *Planning to teach writing* which embeds the curriculum and children’s learning, engaging and enthusing them in exciting texts.

**Member of staff responsible:** English Subject Leaders: Rosie Wilkinson, Rachel Warman and Pippa Tate

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## 2. AIMS

At Saint Patrick’s Catholic Primary School we **expect** pupils to be able to:

- Recognise the link between reading and writing, using skills in one to support the other.
- Develop a positive attitude towards their school work, taking pride in achieving the highest personal standard in all areas of English.
- Acquire the skills and strategies to plan and carry out their work.
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Articulate their ideas confidently through discussing reading and writing comprehensively, expressing opinions, explaining techniques and justifying preferences, about a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, using suitable technical vocabulary.
- Have opportunities to perform their own work to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes.
- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment.
- Have an interest in words, their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- Following on from the highly successful phonetic approach to spellings in KS1, our aim is that children should develop an independent and interested approach to spelling words correctly through learning different strategies, using Key Stage and topic lists and ‘non-negotiable’ key words.
- Understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the purpose, situation and audience.
- Be developing the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.
- Review, edit and improve their own and others written work against Learning Ladders or for a particular audience.

## 3. TEACHERS WILL:

- Endeavour to share their passion for words, stories, non-fiction, plays and all written and spoken language.

- Have a clear understanding of the objectives being taught, openly sharing these with the children
- Plan for well-paced lessons which drive learning forward.
- Pass on their optimism and high expectations for success to the children
- Create a relaxed and happy yet stimulating and thought-provoking environment where children enjoy learning.
- Appropriately use a range of teaching strategies, including
  - Direction
  - Demonstration
  - Modelling
  - Scaffolding
  - Explanation
  - Targeted questioning
  - Initiating and guiding exploration
  - Discussing and challenging ideas generated by the children
- Listen and respond to children in a sensitive and supporting manner, discussing and evaluating children's successes
- Actively seek the opportunities for developing English skills across the curriculum
- Be mindful of the English needs of the child in all subject areas, and differentiate questions and activities to allow all children access.
- Be an effective model of writing, reading and speaking and listening as a means to learn and express oneself

#### **4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All children have the right to equal opportunities in English, irrespective of gender, race, background or ability. Every effort is made to ensure that each child receives equality of opportunity. We have a range of diverse books suitable for KS 1 and 2 which address these issues in interesting and engaging ways.

#### **5. APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. These skills are developed through speaking and listening opportunities throughout the curriculum. Opportunities include:

- The driving force of all English teaching being the *imitation stage of Talk for Writing* – ensuring that children memorise many different texts, internalising the language for future use in their oral and written work.
- Engaging children talk and discussion during all stages of English teaching, based on the idea that 'You can't write it if you can't say it'.
- All children are expected to learn 6 texts/stories/extracts which they can recite fluently throughout each year group, ensuring familiarity and competency with a large range of genres and text-types.
- Children will also be given opportunities to read and perform their own pieces of work to different audiences and for a range of purposes.
- Talk homework (participating in conversations with an adult where the agenda is set by the teacher)
- Circle time/ PSHE discussions/ Show and Tell

- Use of talk partners
- Preparing and performing presentations to their class on a given subject (Independently or as small groups).
- Exploring ideas through Drama/ Role Play area.
- Paired/Guided reading
- Use of discussion cards
- Lolly pop sticks-random selection, encouraging all to take part
- Sharing ideas in whole class discussions on a daily basis.
- Taking part in assemblies and masses.
- Explicit speaking and listening tasks within the curriculum (E.G Debating a current issue)
- Social Skills groups.

## **6. APPROACHES TO READING**

*Teachers will listen to every child in their class read once a fortnight at a minimum. Other adults in the school will also listen to children read regularly.*

### **D.E.A.R**

- Saint Patrick's is committed to encouraging reading for pleasure. Therefore, three twenty minute slots are timetabled into each week across the school for D.E.A.R. time (Drop, Everything and Read). During this time children will read a book of their choice. Teachers may listen to individual children during this time or may model reading for pleasure.
- Children should be given opportunities to read in different ways (silently to themselves, out loud to themselves, to a partner, to the class etc) to encourage speaking and listening skills.

### **Story Time**

- A minimum of 15 minutes at the end of the school day should be given to Story Time. During the time the teacher may read to the class (a range of short/long texts), may allow other children to read to the class or can use this time to create class stories in the class story book. This is usually followed by a class discussion to teach the comprehension opportunities.

### **Comprehension**

Comprehension: understanding what is being read is at the heart of all the teaching. Encouraging children to be curious and excited by reading and to use their critical thinking skills through the entire curriculum.

- Comprehension is taught through **whole class shared reading** followed by discussion of meaning in English lessons – see below for details
- Comprehension of meaning is also explored more deeply through illustration/drawing and role play using the class core texts and stories read aloud
- Comprehension is taught in **group guided reading sessions** in Reception to Year 3 each week using sets of quality whole books and some extracts (Ashley Booth and VIPERS Literacy Shed resources). In Year 4-6 guided reading is carried out as whole class sessions.
- **Comprehension skills** are taught formally in Key Stage 2 each week using the ‘Cracking Comprehension’ scheme which has audio and text followed by in-depth questions on a variety of high quality modern and classic texts with a range of diverse cultural texts explored
- **Comprehension is taught through other subjects** – for example, in History and Geography using the CLPE text books in Years 3,4,5 and 6 and In Art and Design technology, through a range of comprehension activities in the Plan Bee scheme.
- Comprehension is a large part of assemblies and collective worship where children are encouraged to use all their critical facilities to find the deeper truths within bible stories

#### **Whole class Shared Reading**

- Looking at a text as a whole class for discussion, comprehension understanding and as stimuli for speaking/written work. There should be an emphasis on discussing authorial intent and the effect of writing on the reader and how this is achieved before dissecting the grammar and punctuation usage.

#### **Group or whole class Guided Reading**

- Through Guided Reading teachers will listen to each child on a regular basis. Guided reading aims to develop not only the children’s decoding skills, but also comprehension. This is a time where both the teacher and children can ask and answer questions about the text which is being read.
- Children engage in a guided reading session each week. Each class has access to a range of progressive quality Guided Reading books
- It is expected that a range of styles of writing (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) be explored through Guided Reading sessions
- Guided reading in Key stage 2 will refer to the VIPERS
- **Vocabulary**
- **Inference**
- **Prediction**
- **Explanation**
- **Retrieval**
- **Sequence or Summarise**

The 6 domains focus on the comprehension aspect of reading and not the mechanics: decoding, fluency, prosody etc. As such, VIPERS is not a reading scheme but rather a method of ensuring that teachers ask, and students are familiar with, a range of questions. They allow the teacher to track the type of questions asked and the children’s responses to these which allows for targeted questioning afterwards.

#### **Home Reading**

- Every child is expected to read at home on a daily basis. Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 should be listened to by an adult, whereas in Key Stage 2 children are encouraged to read both to an adult and independently. Any home reading should be recorded in the Red Reading books. These expectations are made explicit to parents through individual class Curriculum Afternoons and also through reading workshops for parents held throughout the year.

### **Independent Reading**

- To foster a love of reading, children are expected to read independently on a daily basis. They will spend time within each school day choosing and reading books. They are also expected to undertake some independent reading at home, particularly as they reach Years 5 and 6. Each class will give opportunities for children to share what they have read in independent reading through discussions or recording in a whole class Book Review folder.

### **Phonics and Spelling**

- Phonics is taught using the 'Unlocking letters and Sounds' programme. These sessions take place daily in FS2 and KS1, where explicit phonic knowledge is taught. A small group of children from KS2 access these resources sessions in small groups as a form of intervention to support their learning needs.
- Children across the school are encouraged to use their phonetic knowledge to help them decode difficult words.
- The link between writing and reading is made clear, as the children's reading progresses, often their writing will progress also.
- Teachers will track the progress of children's phonic knowledge and will take the phonics test at the end of Year 1. The children who don't pass will retake the phonics test in Year 2 after carefully planned phonic intervention which will be designed to meet the needs of those individual children.
- The 'Essential spelling programme' is used to teach spelling in Key Stage 2

### **Other storytelling opportunities**

- Each year the school will take part in different reading activities to raise the profile of reading and storytelling. These may include:
  - Class visits to the local library
  - Taking part in writing/reading events/competitions
  - Staff swapping to read to different classes
  - Inviting parents to read to the class (including other nationalities)
  - Book clubs/recommended reads
  - Author visits

## **7. APPROACHES TO WRITING**

### **Phonics and Spelling – (See above)**

- In KS2 and Y2 pupils learn spelling rules and patterns through the 'Essential Spelling' scheme
- Weekly spelling tests take place in each class in order for the children to learn key words, consolidate previous learning and then apply within their writing.

- In Year 2, pupils consolidate knowledge of phonics during the first half of the year.
- In KS2 - Marking may be done by teachers or pupils, however, teachers agree that these need to be seen by the teachers and checked every week.

### **Writing for Purpose**

Children will have opportunities throughout the year to write for real purposes (e.g. writing to enter a competition or writing letters of thanks/condolences /congratulation/etc which are then posted). Children will also be encouraged to think about the intended audience and purpose of their writing, when learning new skills and when learning new styles of writing. This sense of purpose gives a context to children's learning which will enable them to engage more fully with the writing process.

### **Emergent Writing**

Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to write as their own learning develops. This begins with mark making, progressing to producing meaningful print and then using words, letters and pictures to communicate meaning. Within the class there are many opportunities for free writing and writing through play.

### **Extended Writing**

At St Patricks the Extended writing process is key to developing pupils writing skills. Our three phase process leads to extended pieces linked to the Year Group's Core Text. Our work is linked to the work by E. Caulfield and the Three Phase Plan (over 3-5 weeks) is used termly to develop children's writing skills.

#### **Phase 1:**

- Immersion in text
- Shared reading
- Enjoy, explore and respond to text
- Develop comprehension skills
- Identify language / genre features

#### **Phase 2:**

- Gather ideas
- Oral rehearsal
- Plan

#### **Phase 3**

- Shared writing
- Teacher modelling
- Teacher scribing
- Supported composition
- Guided writing
- Independent writing
- Draft, revise, edit

Pupils use Learning Ladders help support the assess and review process. These are not used in end of Key Stage writing assessments.

Children from Years 3-6 write in their Anthologies at least once a term at a minimum. Any writing in these books will be either self or peer assessed or teacher assessed in detail.

### **Grammar and Punctuation**

It is expected that all children take part in daily Vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling activities, using both oral discussion and/or written activities as appropriate. Grammar and punctuation lessons will be taught in each class regularly, Phase 1 of English units and ensuring meaningful contexts for these skills. It will also be appropriate to teach some aspects of grammar and punctuation in discrete lessons.

### **Independent Writing**

Children are expected to write independently throughout the week during their English lessons. This gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and understanding of key skills taught.

### **Handwriting**

The school's handwriting style is taught explicitly in each class. The school's expectations for presentation are made very clear (see Handwriting Policy). Years 1-6 are made aware of our presentation agreement, which states that:

- Pupils in Reception-Y3 complete written work in pencil. Pupils in Y4 and Y5 have the choice of pencil or blue ink pens. Pupils in Y6 are expected to write in blue ink pens only.
- All written work should be titled from the left of the page and the date written in full on the header line. Titles and dates should be underlined.
- Pride should be taken in every piece of work and should show the child's best efforts. However, children are expected to recognise that different styles of handwriting are suited to purpose (i.e. best handwriting for final drafts, printed writing for completing forms/using algebra etc)

### **Classroom Environment**

The classroom environment is one that should support, encourage and aid all aspects of English

- It should demonstrate a celebration and love of story, with storytelling chairs, book corners, and appealing book shelves labelled by genre.
- Display models of writing, analysis (box-it-up), key vocabulary, on-going work, and Shared Writing should be displayed in the classroom on a working wall.
- Each class should have a working Vocabulary Board, including powerful vocabulary, 'magpie-ed' words, useful phrases, sentence openers etc.
- Resources to aid the writing process (e.g., child-friendly yellow dictionaries, thesauruses etc) should be made easily accessible to the children and independent use encourage.



- Writing frames and key features of text types of the writing genre being studied should be displayed.
- Displays should celebrate children's work. They must include purpose of writing, key learning and could include the children's writing journey
- Flipcharts/laptops should be available for guided group work and Shared Writing

## **8. CROSS-CURRICULAR ENGLISH OPPORTUNITIES**

All aspects of English are inter-related and will be taught as such. We recognise that it is at the core of all learning and develop it, across all subjects. 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. In addition, other examples of writing should be regularly seen across all books.

## **9. ASSESSMENT AND TRACKING**

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy (See Assessment and Tracking policy).

## **10. MARKING**

The marking of work in English is done in a sensitive and positive manner and is often done in a dialogue with the child.

Marking is part of the assessment of English and is a continuous process in which the class teacher indicates what has been done well and next steps.(See Marking Policy)

Children are expected to participate in regular self or peer assessment/markings. Learning Ladders are used to aid marking and self reflection..

## **11. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

In planning for pupils with SEN, teaching staff ensure all vulnerable pupils are identified in planning with activities and intervention used as appropriate. All pupils take part in whole class new learning, with support if needed. Intervention programmes take place after the main input or in afternoons.

## **12. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER**

To provide professional leadership and management of the subject is to secure high quality teaching and standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.

***(See Subject Leader Job Description)***

## **15. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

The English subject leader will:

- Keep well informed about training possibilities for all members of staff.
- Keep abreast of current research in the teaching of English through the CLPE, Talk for Writing and other research based centres.
- Update staff on recent developments as and when necessary.
- Co-ordinate training needs indicated by the school improvement plan.
- Model and lead good practise

## **16. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

St Patrick's believes that a good home school partnership is fundamental to raising standards in writing, reading and speaking and listening.

- Curriculum afternoons take place within the first term of the new school year. The purpose of these is to inform parents of teacher expectations, curriculum coverage, 'Learning to Learn' opportunities, target setting and how they parents can effectively support their children at home.
- Each child will keep a reading diary in which comments concerning his or her progress in reading can be recorded by the teacher, parent or child.
- Annual Reports will be written to parents outlining each child's progress in each of the attainment targets: speaking and listening, reading, writing and spelling. Teachers will inform the parents of the child's future learning targets.
- Formal and informal parent consultations will help to inform parents of their child's progress in English. During parent consultations and individual meetings English exercise Books are available for parents to look through as evidence of progress over time.