

St. Hugh's Catholic Primary School

English Policy

Mission Statement

Learn, Love, Pray

At St. Hugh's, we grow together with Christ in our hearts. We reach our potential in a learning community and we welcome all with respect and understanding.

Aims

The 2014 National Curriculum for English in KS1 and KS2 states:

"The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment."

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Intent

At St Hugh's Catholic Primary School, we believe that Literacy is a fundamental life skill. We intend to develop children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes in a wide range of contexts. Specifically, the ability to communicate effectively is a key skill. To speak English fluently and articulately, to express ideas and interact with others is fundamental to academic success and to a good quality of life in general. We intend to prioritise children's language development, vocabulary and communication skills at all appropriate opportunities.

Implementation

A variety of teaching strategies is employed at St. Hugh's. Staff tailor their teaching and resources to the content of the lesson and to meet the diverse needs of the children in their classes. An emphasis is placed on practical, visual, multi-sensory and collaborative activities to ensure that all children, regardless of ability and EAL, can take part.

Oracy

The ability to communicate effectively is a key skill. To speak English fluently and articulately, to express ideas and interact with others is fundamental to academic success and to a good quality of life in general. Oracy increases children's confidence and capacity to learn. Therefore, children's language development, vocabulary and communication skills are prioritised at all appropriate opportunities. Talk in the classroom is deliberately planned, designed modelled, scaffolded and structured to enable the children to learn the skills needed to talk effectively. Staff are trained to support children with speech, language and communication needs. Interventions such as WellComm, Talking Partners, Talk Boost and Chatty Bats take place when required to support the specific language and/or EAL needs of children.

Reading and Phonics

The children begin the process of learning to read in the Foundation Stage using Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics. The children learn to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. Firstly, they learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend them into words. Then they learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes. They experience success from the very beginning. Reading books are closely matched to the children's increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky' words and, as children re-read the stories, their fluency increases. The children are encouraged to take home the phonics books they have been reading in school to practise and consolidate their reading and phonics skills.

Phonics is taught daily throughout EYFS and KS1. Children are grouped according to ability and taught by a trained adult. The children are assessed every half-term and groups are re-arranged to ensure they are always making progress relative to their ability. Any child falling behind is given intensive support to ensure they catch up as rapidly as possible.

Phonics teaching and assessment continue into KS2 for those children who still need it and for those children who join our school in Y3-Y6. They are taught daily by a trained adult in the same way the EYFS and KS1 children are.

When children have finished the phonics scheme, they are taught reading every day using a whole class shared reading approach. They progress through carefully crafted units of work which empower teachers to teach all aspects of word reading and comprehension through high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts. The units also provide sound curriculum knowledge to support a variety of foundation subjects. Children who are unable to access the whole class shared reading lessons due to limited understanding of English have a story/vocabulary session each day which is similar to the story/vocabulary sessions in KS1. Children who require fluency practice take part in a reading fluency intervention which enables them to re-read familiar texts and practice reading fluently and expressively using a storyteller's voice.

Starting in EYFS and throughout the whole school, children are immersed in a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhymes. Whole classes are read to by an adult on a daily basis. Every classroom is stocked with a selection of books for the children to read for pleasure. The school library is available for children to visit and to borrow books to supplement their reading at home and in school. Extra-curricular reading clubs take place in each term and we have 'Books at Breakfast' in our breakfast club. All staff work hard to foster a love of reading in their classes.

Writing

In EYFS and KS1, writing is taught through the RWI scheme. Children are also given opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

When children have finished the phonics scheme, we teach writing using 'Read to Write' which is an evidence-based teaching approach to writing. Teachers provide high-quality teaching of writing through high-quality literature. The texts chosen are engaging, vocabulary-rich and provide a wealth of writing opportunities across all genres. Approximately three weeks each half-term are spent on narrative writing and three weeks are spent on non-fiction writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught in a contextualised way through each of the texts.

In addition to the teaching of spelling through writing, we also teach spelling discretely using Spelling Shed. As well as direct teaching, it provides a multi-sensory, game-based approach to the teaching and learning of spelling which can be accessed at home as well as school.

Handwriting is taught regularly and discretely to all children. Starting in EYFS, children are taught to form their letters correctly. In Y2, they are taught to join their letters and throughout KS2 they practise a cursive handwriting style.

Writing is continuously assessed to inform teaching. At the end of each term, the children produce a piece of independent writing with no input from the teacher to inform summative assessment.

Impact

We are able to measure the impact of our literacy curriculum in a variety of ways:

- children make good progress relative to their starting points
- children develop their communication skills
- children enjoy reading for pleasure and are able to talk about books and authors they know
- children enjoy writing and are able to write using the features of different genres and styles
- children can write for different purposes and audiences
- children are ambitious in their vocabulary choices
- children have a neat, cursive handwriting style
- the progression of skills in phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation is evident in children's reading and writing

Inclusion

We are a very diverse community; most of our children have English as an additional language. Some children join our school without having any previous educational experience. Some children have SEND. Some children are more able readers and writers. Our staff are skilled at providing effective learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their barriers to learning. Children are supported to make accelerated progress in order to have the best possible chance at success.