



English Policy

Updated: September 2021

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Our Vision

St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School is a 'Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum' where wisdom and love guide and influence learning and teaching for our whole community. We treasure each child and enable them to flourish, using their God-given potential and establishing a secure foundation for them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Intent

At St Mary's we believe that a quality, pre-eminent English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion, enabling them to communicate their ideas and emotions to others. Through our vision, we aim to inspire an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and a habit of reading widely and often.

We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening, using discussion to communicate and further their learning.

Our committed team believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge base in English, underpinned by high expectation, modelling and marked by rigorous progress, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum employing these skills through all subjects. We believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society, nurturing their spiritual, emotional, cultural and intellectual well-being.

Implementation

As we believe that the consistent, accurate teaching of English is the bedrock of a valuable education, these aims are embedded across our English lessons and the wider curriculum. We have a rigorous and well-organised English curriculum and framework that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. We use a wide variety of quality texts and resources to motivate and inspire our children. Teachers also ensure that cross-curricular links with concurrent topic work are woven into the programme of study, with opportunities for reading and extended writing across Science and foundation subjects. This is underpinned by the cohesion of short-term planning to long-term plans (see Appendix 1) and progression documents, which ensure high expectation and levels of progress through the implantation of relevant skills, objectives and vocabulary. This enables children to reach age-related expectations with an increasing number gaining the Greater Depth standard, the rigour of this being fortified by summative and formative teacher assessment.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening underpins good writing and therefore staff in our school model the use of higher-level vocabulary within their speech (and expanding children's vocabulary is a key focus from EYFS.). Subject specific vocabulary is embedded across the curriculum, through teacher modelling, in context. Contextual learning helps children to understand new words and supports them in including them in their work. This model is reflected in shared reading sessions and topic presentations where children are given the chance to explore unfamiliar vocabulary and expand their knowledge of words. We model the correct grammar in speech, for example using 'we were' instead of 'we was' and encourage children to reflect this in their use of spoken and written language. Children are given the chance to orally rehearse ideas for writing regularly.



Reading

Phonics is timetabled in EYFS and Year One every day. Guided reading is taught for 20 minutes a week for KS1 and KS2, three times a week, through a range of targeted and focussed whole class teaching and intervention activities. This is recorded in English books, signifying a focus on each reading strand - inference, retrieval, summarising:

- **Role models and authors:** reading is not only celebrated in classrooms, but also around school in the Reading Shack, Library and in reading corners. Displays celebrate authors and children's writing and favourite books. In addition, throughout the school year the importance of reading is enhanced through World Book Day, together with author and poet visits. Parents support readers in school. West Sussex Schools Library Service visit the school to present the best new reads to all classes.
- **Reading interventions support pupils:** Accelerated Reader (AR) is used as a whole school initiative, along with Rapid Reading, Precision Teaching and reading daily.
- **Library:** we have a wonderful school library, geared towards delivering a wide breadth of curriculum, which children visit on a regular basis to change their book. Teachers give input to the class about how to use the library effectively and offer guidance on book choice. The children in KS2 are encouraged to make independent choices of books based upon ability which is determined by summative assessment through the AR scheme. (See Accelerated Reader below)
- **Class books:** stories are read to the children consistently throughout the school and you will see class texts displayed in classroom doors. Reading Spine delivered and cross-referenced with the curriculum overview. Modern authors sourced and books reviewed annually to ensure that there is diversity across the school and to develop a love of reading through different genres.
- **A banded reading scheme** operates across the school, comprised of a range of different schemes. Children work their way through the Big Cat in EYFS and Key Stage One and in Key Stage Two the children read the Treetops scheme and then become free readers with Accelerated Reader.
 - **Links to parents:** each child has a reading record book, which logs the books the children have read to an adult in school, in Guided Reading sessions, and comments about their reading when they have read independently or to an adult at home.
 - **Reading at home:** children are encouraged to read at home every day; this is given high priority.

All year groups use the PIRA (Progress in Reading Assessments) for assessing reading. Please refer to Appendix 3.

Phonics

At St. Mary's we use a systematic synthetic phonics programme built upon the Letters and Sounds documentation (2007). This then progresses across into the new Spelling Curriculum for Key Stage One and beyond (published 2014). A multisensory approach to children's learning of



phonics ensures provision of engaging, practical, hands-on, fun activities and games, through which children learn, consolidate and apply their growing knowledge.

Daily phonics sessions are timetabled throughout KS1, each session is 20 – 30 minutes long including a 15-minute focus on application to a different area of the curriculum.

At St. Mary's we understand the importance of building from the child's current level, whilst exposing them to the next phases in order to maximize the learning opportunities. In light of the current situation with Covid-19, a specialist phonics teacher is delivering targeted catch-up support across the school.

EYFS. primarily focus on Quality Foundations and Phases 2-4 of Letters and Sounds, with elements of Phase 5a being introduced during the summer term. We have invested in the Big Cat Letters and Sounds Reading Scheme (Pink to Turquoise bands) in order to maximize children's access to books containing previously-taught phonemes.

Key Stage 1 focus on Phases 5a, b and c intertwined with the new Spelling Curriculum, consolidating and building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning.

Quality Foundations are taught throughout EYFS and KS1, and to any other child throughout the school identified as an Early Reader, alongside the application of children's growing phonics knowledge. Children are challenged to stretch words out when segmenting them in order to identify individual graphemes within the adjacent consonants that occur within more complex words (CCVC, CVCC, CCCVC, etc). This is explicitly included within the growing bank of Interactive White Board resources that are being developed by the Phonics Lead and other staff.

The technical vocabulary of phonics is used consistently throughout the school. This begins in the EYFS where the terms phoneme, grapheme, digraph and trigraph, segment and blend are first introduced.

Across all phases, the learning of phonics is linked to the St. Mary's Phonics mnemonics, promoting connections between different graphemes for each phoneme. Phonics lessons follow a logical 'Review-Teach-Practise-Apply' format allowing children time to practise and rapidly expand their ability to read and spell words. When first teaching patterns, these are presented using words in groups containing the same grapheme. Once patterns are recognised, a randomised presentation is used to support consolidation.

Children are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words' alongside phonics at each phase. The KS1 Curriculum defines these 'exception words' as:

'words containing graphemes which have not yet been taught as widely applicable, pointing out that this may be because they are applicable in very few age-appropriate words rather than because they are rare in English words in general.'

The KS1 Spelling Curriculum explicitly teaches the connection between pronunciation and spelling. For example, the three different ways of pronouncing the past tense suffix 'ed' are specifically referred to (/t/, /ed/ and /d/ as heard in helped, hunted and spilled respectively).



Children are taught from EYFS, and throughout KS1, to break multi-syllabic words into chunks through 'Chin Talking' them. Teachers model how each chunk is then segmented to identify phonemes/record graphemes in order to build the word up on their page. They are also taught that every syllable has a vowel sound to help the identification of 'chunks' when building longer words.

The grammatical element of the KS1 Spelling Curriculum provides continuous teaching of grammar throughout KS1. This is more relevant to the words, graphemes and patterns that are being taught. Teaching these spelling rules earlier also improves accuracy through regular opportunities for consolidation and application.

A six-week baseline assessment of children's phonics and high-frequency (decodable and tricky) word recognition occurs, alongside use of a past phonics-screening test (Y1), at the beginning of each academic year, or when a child transfers to St. Mary's. Subsequent half-termly assessments of phonic knowledge and high-frequency word recognition are then completed. This data is collated on the class tracking sheets and monitored by the Phonics Lead/SMT, in order to identify areas of need. During the summer term, Year 1 take part in the Phonics screening as set out by the government. Specific children identified from Year 2 also complete this as a re-take. A new diagnostic assessment has been introduced, this is to take place in September and mid-year.

Working Walls within EYFS/KS1 should include reference to the week's phonics coverage, and contain visual references for the children to hook to the phonemes. These are best when suggested by the children.

EYFS/KS1 classrooms all have the St. Mary's Phonics wall frieze displayed;

- In EYFS these should be added to the display as they are taught, reflecting progress through the phases and supporting children's familiarity with their location.
- In Year 1 Phases 2-5a should be displayed from the beginning of the year, and then Phases 5b/c added as taught.
- In Year 2 ALL Phases should be on display from the beginning of the year.

Each child in EYFS/KS1, as well as any other identified Early Readers across the school, will have access to a phoneme mat linked to the St. Mary's Phonics mnemonics, which they will be taught to use to support their application of their expanding phonic knowledge. Asking the Question cards and Spelling Mats (Y2) are also available to support children in applying their knowledge.

Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is a pupil progress system designed to improve children's comprehension in reading at Key Stage Two. The system links directly to the books within the school library, providing accurate banding of difficulty for books, so that children read books at the right level and can do this independently.

The system adds motivation to children because when they finish a book they complete a quiz on the computer or iPad and earn points based on how well they answer the comprehension questions. AR allows the school to set individual targets and track each child's progress in reading.



Expectations for use in KS2

Following the Star Reading test (summative test taken twice termly to show and record progress) teachers are to inform children of their book banding so they can choose appropriate books from the library.

Intervention

Intervention is given to the lowest 20% in the class (we will focus PP children within that grouping as well). These children will:

- Read 3 times with an adult during the week, with entries recorded in their reading log.
- Complete comprehension quizzes on the computer as soon as they have finished a book.
- Take the Star Reading Test more often to measure progress.

Writing

Teaching sequences are based around initial immersion in a quality text, with an exciting hook and the understanding of key features, supported by Talk for Writing. This supports and models the planning, drafting and editing process, providing extended writing opportunities for assessment. The Talk for Writing approach will be used as often as possible to applicable texts including non-fiction.

Through writing for an audience, we ensure that the teaching of writing is purposeful, robust and shows clear progression for all children. Teachers have been able to model and share the writing process; this is what helps children to adapt their tone and style, but they need to have an awareness of when is the right time to use that writing. (For example writing is a valuable tool for diary entries and more relevant to a child than a 'recount'. A biography might not be that interesting, but a character's obituary in a newspaper might be.)

In line with the National Curriculum, we ensure that each year group is being taught the explicit grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives required for that age group (see Appendix 7).

Children develop their vocabulary and knowledge in the subjects they learn with a focus on pre-teaching vocabulary.

All year groups use the same format for assessing writing, which have been produced in line with the end of Key Stage assessment frameworks as published by the Department for Education Appendix 4.

Summative assessment will take place once per half term and will be recorded on the assessment framework sheets.

Children show evidence of progress through drafting and editing in their books. They will then produce a 'final' piece. This is kept in the same exercise books to clearly show progression. Marking will be live marking as far as possible to enable children to progress and to provide immediate feedback.



GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

GPS is taught within English lessons as a lesson starter so that the children see the learning first. We teach Grammar as a lesson focus at the beginning of the week. It is delivered in this way so that the children use this focus throughout the week in their writing. As well as teaching the objectives, teachers are able to embed the skills throughout the year in cross-curricular writing opportunities to ensure that children are achieving the objectives at the expected level and that children can also achieve at a greater depth standard (GD) (see Appendix 5).

The lessons can be identified on teacher planning (see Appendix 5).

Starters will consist of 2 x 15 minutes each week or 2 x 10 minute starters.

GPS will flow throughout lesson content and will be genre-specific.

Spelling

All year groups use the Twinkl Spelling model supplemented by the statutory $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{5}{6}$ word lists (see Appendix 2).

Teaching consists of an input session of 1 x 20 minutes teaching the spelling rule and is supplemented by practice sessions of 2 x 10 minutes throughout the week.

The culmination of this is a test at the end of the same week for assessment. A record of scores is kept and formative assessment approaches ascertain whether children are using spelling rules in subsequent writing. Repetition of misconceptions are addressed.

Handwriting

See Presentation Policy.

Handwriting is taught progressively through continuous cursive script and Letter Join, an online programme. Handwriting is targeted once a week and support throughout the week when pupils are provided with opportunities to write.

Impact

The result we desire for our children is progress, sustained learning and transferable skills. With the implementation of the writing journey being well-established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children will become more confident writers and by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing will be familiar to them as detailed within progression of skills documents (Appendix ?) and curriculum maps.

- Pupils will experience writing across a range of genres.
- Work will be scaffolded to enable pupils of all abilities to access learning and demonstrate success.
- Pupils will experience a wide vocabulary which be evident within their writing.
- Pupils will have a good knowledge of how to adapt their writing based on the context and audience.
- Pupils will leave primary school being able to effectively apply spelling rules and patterns they have been taught and retained.



- Parents and carers will have a good understanding of how they can support spelling, grammar and composition at home, and contribute regularly to homework which is designed to support and enrich the concepts for each class.

Termly assessment shows that many children at St Mary's are achieving their age-related expectations in English.

Attainment and Progress

Attainment

- Whole school target of 85% ARE (Age-Related Expectation) and 25% GD (Greater Depth)

At the end of KS1 and KS2

- The % of pupils working at ARE within each year group will be at least in line with national averages.
- The % of pupils working at GD within each year group will be at least in line with national averages

Progress

- There will be no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. disadvantaged vs non-disadvantaged)
- Pupils will secure at least 6 points progress each year, and pupils achieving GD at KS1 will be expected to secure GD at KS2.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross-curricular writing and skills taught in English lessons are transferred into other subjects; this will show consolidation of skills and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and grammar objectives. We hope that as children move on from St Mary's to further their education and learning, their creativity, passion and high aspirations for English will travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.

