



St Michael's Church of England Primary School English Policy

Issue: September 2025

Review Date: September 2027

Our School Vision

As a school community, we aspire to develop life-long learners who have the confidence to explore the world around them and grow as unique individuals. We provide a safe family environment, inspired by Christian values, in which the flourishing of each enables the flourishing of all.

'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!'

'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' Matthew 5:15

This policy should also be read alongside the National Curriculum and other documents from The Standards and Testing Agency.

Our Curriculum overview, medium and short term planning can help support this policy alongside the relevant schemes of work:

1. Phonics
2. Grammar and Punctuation
3. Spelling
4. Handwriting Policy

Introduction

English is fundamental to learning across the whole curriculum, developing children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and is the main medium through which we express our ideas, needs and understanding of the world in which we live. We acknowledge the different skills, experiences and knowledge that the children bring to school. From these starting points we aim to develop confidence, enjoyment and creativity.

Aims

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At St. Michael's CE Primary School, we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole

curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.’ (p10 National Curriculum)

At St. Michael’s we are an inclusive school, setting high expectations, recognising the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that ‘pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised’ (p13).

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be ‘taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English’. 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

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

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
- Competitions to promote public speaking
- Representing St. Michael’s at events within the wider community
- Poetry recitals
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Pupil participation in weekly assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council and House Captains
- Talk partners
- Book talk sessions
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time

Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually'. Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

Ways in which we support this:

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Early Years and Key Stage One
- Pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2 are given opportunities for regular reading to adults in school and more often for those who may not get support from home
- Pupils who are struggling with reading or making slow progress are given extra opportunities to practise their reading with the class teacher or with support staff
- Providing a whole school Reading For Pleasure Competition in which children are awarded certificates in assemblies for reading for pleasure in their own time; a visual display supports this initiative in each classroom
- Each class has a range of fiction and non-fiction books in which pupils are encouraged to choose from to support their wide range of reading
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, class Top-Reads, reading records, library visits (both within school and to the local community library) and high quality attractive books in classrooms
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read, whole class reading and the various methods outlined above
- Pupils read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school career
- Pupils regularly experience a range of books in focused guided reading sessions
- Providing a good role-model ourselves by telling children about our favourite children's books or parts of stories
- Encouraging discussion about favourite stories, books and other texts

Reading Schemes

We have a wide range of reading books however the main schemes we use are:

- Read Write Inc Phonics scheme
- Collins Big Cat Reading Books
- Reading VIPERS

The Library

The main aims of our school library are:

- To provide a well-planned, attractive and stimulating environment
- To provide a central resource centre of books for the entire school community
- To provide a well-equipped resource centre to support teaching and learning, and to extend the school's curriculum and raise achievement and standards
- To provide a range of reading material, which reflects all ages, cultures and interest levels, and also supports the National Curriculum

Through the children's regular use of our library we aim:

- To stimulate a love of books and reading
- To encourage children to develop their own enjoyment, interest, knowledge and opinions about books
- To develop children's referencing skills
- To develop children's understanding of how libraries are organised and used and how books are categorised
- To promote care and respect for books and other resources

Writing

The National Curriculum 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

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

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

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and vision for teaching writing:

- We teach a balance of spelling, punctuation and grammar both integrated within literacy lessons and as separate, discrete lessons
- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate)
- We have a systematic approach to teaching writing (St Michael's Approach to Writing); each unit explores high quality texts and models to identify features of a particular genre, skills sessions focus on the grammar and features of a certain genre, then children are encouraged to plan, write, edit and improve

- We revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing'
- We provide writing frames if needed to support the least confident
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- Pupil's work is marked in line with the school marking policy, including the use of highlighters to signify correct examples of work, errors and areas for development
- Over the course of the term, each child will receive live verbal feedback on some of their work, given during one-to-one writing conferences
- We use success-criteria checklists for pupils to self -assess or peer assess, when appropriate, so they can evaluate effectively
- We teach and promote joined handwriting when letters are formed accurately to support spelling and speed
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view and to support with their writing

Vocabulary

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Aim: to encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary.

Ways in which we support this:

- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses
- Using texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Targeted one to one/small group support where appropriate
- Use of BIG CAT and class Guided Reading books which provide lots of new vocabulary

Spelling

Within EYFS, phonics is taught systematically through the Read Write Inc scheme. Where additional support is required in the teaching of phonics, interventions will be provided. The teaching of phonics is continued through the implementation of the Read Write Inc scheme across Key Stage One. Children are grouped according to their ability to receive the phonics teaching.

Across Key Stage Two, the focus for the teaching of spelling is on teaching the rules, patterns and exception words, an understanding of which allows the children to confidently spell the key words for each year group (as listed in the National Curriculum). Spellings are taught through the Spelling Shed programme. The children's spellings are learnt through activities and games in school.

Planning, Assessment and Moderation

Planning

- Teachers create long-term overviews and short term plans for their year groups
- English is planned for separately to other subjects using the relevant proforma
- Schemes of work for phonics are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions

Assessment

- Teachers assess pupil's learning during and as part of every session. They adapt their practice accordingly and adjust daily plans. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.
- Formal assessments of reading comprehension and grammar, punctuation and spelling are carried out at relevant points of the year to support teacher assessments
- Children are assessed termly on where they are in relation to age related expectations in reading and writing and this is recorded in line with the school assessment policy; this data forms the basis of discussions within termly pupil progress meetings
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Co-ordinator and Head teacher and feed into the school SEF, development plan and performance management

Moderation

- Teachers attend moderating sessions with other schools within TKAT
- Moderation of writing takes place within school with all teaching staff
- Regular meetings take place throughout the year between the Literacy Subject Co-ordinator and the Governor responsible for the subject
- Book scrutiny takes place on a termly basis, involving the Literacy Subject Co-ordinator

Professional development

- The English Co-ordinator attends English Subject Leader meetings provided by TKAT
- Staff are provided with the opportunity to attend relevant courses during the school year
- Moderation takes place in house and across TKAT schools