

ENGLISH POLICY

*St. Joseph's
Catholic
Primary
School*

This policy has been developed in order to ensure that the teaching of English contributes to the fulfilment of the school's mission statement:

"Trusting in God, Creating tomorrow, helping today."

As a school, we firmly believe that outstanding English today will enable our pupils to take their place in the world, creating a successful tomorrow.

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this one:

- Phonics Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Marking Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Homework Policy

Rationale

A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

Intent

The intent of the St. Joseph's English curriculum is to ensure that all children are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for futures post-18. We aim to provide an ambitious and engaging English curriculum along with high quality teaching to produce individuals who are confident speakers, careful listeners, competent readers and imaginative writers. It is our intent to provide a stimulating environment and adequate resources so that pupils can develop their English skills to the full.

The intent for all staff at St. Joseph's is for all of our children to be successful in English because they:

- meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and EYFS Statutory Framework.
- communicate effectively in speech so they can talk appropriately with confidence to different audiences.
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- develop reading skills so that they become proficient, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and responsive readers to a variety of texts.
- develop reading skills so that they can analyse and extract meaning from increasingly challenging texts.
- develop a love of literature that will last a lifetime and have a positive impact upon their writing capabilities.

Implementation

English is planned and taught from Nursery through to Year 6 following the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and Early Years Statutory Framework.

Reading

Reading is the foundation for all learning for pupils at St. Joseph's. Phonics is taught immediately as pupils enter school in EYFS, following the Letters and Sounds approach, which is supported by the school's synthetic phonics-based reading scheme. (See Phonics Policy)

EYFS and KS1 Reading Groups

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised is used as the systematic synthetic phonics programme for teaching early reading in EYFS and Key Stage 1. Children are taught in carefully matched Little Wandle reading groups, which are formed following regular assessment to ensure teaching closely aligns with each child's current phonic knowledge. Reading sessions follow a consistent structure and use fully decodable texts that are precisely matched to the phonics being taught in class. Each group takes part in a three-session reading sequence focusing on decoding, prosody, and comprehension, enabling children to develop accuracy, fluency, and understanding. Ongoing assessment and half-termly reviews ensure children make secure progress, with targeted support and timely intervention provided for any child who is at risk of falling behind.

Fluency Programme

The Little Wandle Fluency programme is used to support children in Year 2, Year 3, and any pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 who require continued development of reading fluency. This programme builds on the secure phonics knowledge taught through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised and focuses on developing automaticity, pace, expression, and comprehension. Children are grouped according to assessed need and take part in structured fluency sessions that include repeated reading, modelled reading, and targeted discussion to deepen understanding of the text. Progress is monitored regularly to ensure pupils build confidence and independence as readers, with timely intervention and ongoing support provided where necessary to enable all children to become fluent, confident readers.

KS2 Guided Reading

In Key Stage 2, guided reading is structured around the reading domains outlined in the National Curriculum to ensure comprehensive coverage of reading skills. These domains include vocabulary (2a), retrieval (2b), summarising (2c), inference (2d), prediction (2e), viewpoint (2f), word choice (2g), and comparing texts (2h). Guided reading sessions incorporate a range of 'SATs-style' questions alongside opportunities for longer written responses, enabling pupils to develop both accuracy and depth in their reading comprehension. The number of marks available is clearly indicated next to each question so that pupils understand the expectations and the level of detail required in their responses, supporting independence and preparation for statutory assessments.

Children who require additional support are provided with pre-reading opportunities to prepare them for guided reading sessions and build confidence. Across all Key Stage 2 sessions, there is a strong emphasis on developing understanding of new vocabulary, fostering independent reading skills, and providing regular opportunities to listen to teachers read aloud. This approach ensures that all pupils are exposed to rich language, develop comprehension strategies, and experience the enjoyment of high-quality texts, supporting both reading fluency and reading for pleasure.

Reading Areas

All classes throughout St. Joseph's provide a designated reading area within the classroom. These areas are carefully developed and themed around a high-quality text selected by the class teacher and are refreshed with a new theme each academic year. The reading areas are accessible to pupils throughout the school day, promoting a positive reading culture and encouraging children to engage with books independently and for pleasure.

Author of the term

Each term, every class will focus on an *Author of the Term*. This author will be promoted within the classroom reading area to support children's familiarity with a range of authors and writing styles. Pupils are encouraged to bring in and share books by the chosen author with their class, helping to foster enthusiasm and engagement with reading. The *Author of the Term* will also be shared on each class page of the school website to strengthen links between home and school and support reading for pleasure.

Each class authors are as follows:

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Nursery	Axel Scheffler	Eric Carle	David McKee
Reception	Oliver Jeffers	Sue Hendra	Nick Sharratt
Year 1	Claire Freedman	Giles Andreae	Dr Suess
Year 2	Jill Murphy	Tom Fletcher	Rachel Bright
Year 3	Francesca Simon	Steve Cole	Alan Macdonald
Year 4	Chris Riddell	Michael Morpurgo	Pamela Butchart
Year 5	Elen Caldecott	Phillip Pullman	Robert Swindells
Year 6	Anthony Horowitz	Emma Carroll	Eoin Colfer

Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure is actively promoted across the school through a range of engaging and inclusive initiatives. Reading cafés are held to model effective reading aloud to parents and carers, encourage shared reading, and strengthen positive home-school links in reading. Children who read regularly at home are recognised through school rewards and additional Dojos, reinforcing the importance of daily reading. Opportunities to engage with books are further enhanced through annual Book Bus visits, World Book Day celebrations, and themed reading activities. In addition, a Book Buddy scheme operates across the school, pairing Year 5 pupils with Key Stage 1 children who require additional support, providing regular opportunities for pupils to read together, build confidence, and develop fluency in a supportive and nurturing environment.

All pupils have daily opportunities to read independently, allowing them to practise decoding, fluency, and comprehension at their own pace. Additionally, every class has a daily session after lunchtime where the teacher reads aloud, exposing children to high-quality texts, modelling expression, and fostering a love of reading across the school.

Library

All classes have weekly timetabled access to the school library, providing regular opportunities for pupils to explore a wide range of high-quality texts and develop a love of reading for pleasure. In addition, each class takes part in a termly visit

to Shirebrook Library, organised on a rota through a valued partnership with the local library service, further enriching pupils' reading experiences and promoting lifelong reading habits beyond school. The school library is supported and maintained by a pupil reading voice group, who act as school librarians and take an active role in organising resources, promoting books, and contributing to decisions that support reading for pleasure across the school. This pupil-led approach encourages ownership, responsibility, and enthusiasm for reading within the school community.

Writing

At St Joseph's, we have established a Sentence Knowledge Curriculum to strengthen and support the teaching of writing across the school. This curriculum is organised by year group and outlines the specific knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to develop. It has been carefully designed to align with the requirements of the National Curriculum, ensuring that progression in writing is both structured and consistent throughout each stage of learning.

Throughout the academic year, the teaching of writing is organised into seven blocks of learning. Each block integrates a balance of either fiction and non-fiction, making use of a wide range of media and text types. These include poetry, traditional tales, explanation texts, biographies, non-chronological reports, fiction writing with a focus on character and setting development, and extended story writing. This structure ensures that pupils are exposed to a broad and rich variety of genres, enabling them to apply and refine their writing skills in different contexts (please see Writing Overview document).

Each block of learning follows a six-week structure. During the first two weeks, teaching focuses on the Sentence Curriculum content for the relevant year group, delivered through a consistent series of twelve tasks. These tasks remain the same from Year 1 to Year 6, providing a clear and progressive framework for grammar and sentence-level teaching.

The tasks move from explicit, teacher-led instruction to independent application, enabling pupils to build confidence and mastery over time. As pupils progress through the sequence, scaffolding is gradually reduced until they can apply their new sentence knowledge independently within their writing.

Pupils are taught to develop automaticity in sentence construction, enabling them to write accurately and fluently. Regular practice ensures that skills are embedded and consistently applied, with pupils continuing to practise until they can write correct sentences independently.

During Weeks 3 and 4, pupils take part in a shared writing process. The teacher models a scaffolded shared write, including planning on one day and writing on the next, to support the application of sentence-level learning within a full piece of writing. Through this process, pupils learn to construct coherent and purposeful texts by applying the sentence knowledge gained in previous teaching—particularly from Weeks 1 and 2. This stage focuses on the scaffolded application of sentence knowledge.

During Weeks 5 and 6, pupils complete independent writing tasks based on the modelling and shared writing completed in previous weeks. This stage follows the full writing process — *talk, plan, draft, edit, review, and publish* — allowing pupils to apply and refine their skills at each step.

Pupils continue to develop their understanding of the writing process while demonstrating independent application of the sentence knowledge acquired during Weeks 1 and 2.

During Week 7, the focus is on Disciplinary Literacy. Writing is linked to wider curriculum content from Foundation subjects or involves analysis of texts studied in Reading lessons (for example, *what were the causes of the Second World War?*).

Pupils learn to understand the conventions of writing across different subject disciplines, including the appropriate structure, style, and language features for each. This provides an additional opportunity for pupils to apply their sentence knowledge in varied and meaningful contexts.

Rainbow Grammar

All staff are required to teach spelling, grammar, and punctuation in line with the *Sentence Curriculum* document, following the *Rainbow Grammar* programme. Each classroom must include a *Rainbow Grammar* display to support pupils in developing independence in their writing. Staff should consult the *Rainbow Grammar Guidance Document* for detailed information and expectations.

Each classroom maintains an English Working Wall that displays key features and high-quality examples of texts within the genre currently being taught. Examples of spelling, punctuation, and grammar may also be displayed to support pupil reference and understanding.

Pupils develop their sentence-level skills in their English books and are provided with opportunities to plan, edit, and review their writing. They then apply these skills to produce extended pieces of writing, showing improvement and progression, in their extended writing books.

Spelling

Once the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme is completed in Autumn 2 of Year 2, pupils transition to focused spelling sessions that teach the spelling rules and patterns outlined in the National Curriculum. Throughout the remainder of Year 2 and into Year 3, children are explicitly taught spelling conventions, including rules, common exception words, and strategies for applying these accurately in their writing. This approach ensures a secure foundation in spelling before pupils move on to the Spelling Ninja programme in Year 4, where spelling knowledge is further developed and consolidated through a structured and progressive scheme.

The Spelling Ninja programme is used across KS2 to support the teaching and learning of spelling. This structured approach develops pupils' understanding of spelling patterns, rules, and strategies through regular, focused practice. Spelling activities are matched to pupils' age and stage of development and are used to promote consistency, independence, and confidence in spelling. Ongoing assessment and application across the curriculum ensure that spelling skills are reinforced and embedded within pupils' written work.

SEND

Provision for pupils with SEND is carefully planned to ensure all children can access and make progress within the school's sentence curriculum. Each child with SEND has an individualised curriculum designed to meet their specific needs and reflect their current stage of learning and development. Teaching is adapted using the school's sentence curriculum alongside a range of assessment tools, including ongoing formative assessment and the use of Formative Footprints, to identify next steps and inform targeted support. This personalised approach ensures that learning is meaningful, inclusive, and progressive, enabling pupils with SEND to develop confidence, independence, and success in their learning.

Impact

Progress in English is measured through a combination of summative assessments and ongoing teacher evaluation. Pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their English skills across the curriculum, particularly through extended writing tasks completed during the Disciplinary Knowledge Week. Within each unit, pupils produce writing linked to topics in History, Geography, RE, or Science, allowing teachers to assess how effectively sentence-level learning is transferred into wider contexts.

In addition, pupils complete termly summative writing papers to evaluate the impact of the Sentence Curriculum on overall writing outcomes.

The effectiveness of the English curriculum is also monitored continuously through a range of quality assurance activities, including lesson observations, work scrutiny, and pupil interviews. These processes ensure high standards of teaching, consistency across year groups, and a clear understanding of pupil progress.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher has the responsibility for the leadership of the curriculum and delegates responsibility to key staff:

- the Headteacher co-ordinates the work of the subject leaders and ensures that the curriculum has progression and appropriate coverage.
- Subject leaders are responsible for the medium term plans and liaising with class teachers over the content and delivery of the units of work. They evaluate and monitor standards in their subject;
- Class teachers ensure that the curriculum is taught and that the aims are achieved for their class. They plan collaboratively to ensure parity across the year group;
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher ensure that the progress of each pupil is tracked and that there is appropriate challenge support and intervention.
- Governors monitor the success of the curriculum at whole Governing Body meetings through the Headteacher's report and reports from subject leaders.

Reviewed: September 2025

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