

English Policy



St. Mary's RC Primary School

Mission Statement

We live learn and grow together with Jesus through:

- Showing love to all
- Encouraging friendship to include everybody
- Acting with honesty through prayer
- Being thankful for all God's gifts
- Remaining respectful through our actions
- Forgiving someone when they are sorry
- Displaying patience by being calm and caring
- Demonstrating compassion to everyone in God's family
- Leading in service by supporting our school community

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Policy will be reviewed: Annually

Policy will be reviewed: September 2027 or sooner if changes are made to legal requirements.

At St Mary's, we believe English is at the heart of pupils' development as confident, articulate communicators. Our curriculum enables children to listen attentively, speak clearly, read with comprehension, and write effectively for a wide range of purposes.

Through engaging and imaginative experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, pupils develop creativity, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of how language works. They apply these skills across the curriculum, ensuring high expectations, consistent progress, and a strong foundation in literacy that prepares them for future learning and life beyond school.

The aims of the teaching of English:

At St Mary's, our English curriculum is designed to develop confident, articulate and enthusiastic communicators. Through high-quality teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening, we aim to:

- Enable pupils to read, write and speak with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of strategies to reflect on and improve their learning.
- Foster a lifelong love of reading by promoting enjoyment, curiosity and engagement with high-quality texts.
- Equip children with the skills to understand, interpret and respond to a wide range of genres, and to write effectively for different audiences and purposes.
- Inspire creativity and imagination, encouraging pupils to express their ideas with originality and confidence.
- Develop a rich vocabulary and secure knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling, enabling pupils to communicate accurately and effectively.
- Provide a stimulating, inclusive and supportive learning environment where all aspects of English can be explored and celebrated.
- Ensure equality of opportunity so that every child, regardless of background or ability, can succeed and make strong progress in English.
- Develop disciplinary literacy so pupils can communicate effectively across all curriculum subjects.
- Support all pupils in achieving their full potential as readers, writers and communicators, preparing them for the demands of secondary education and beyond

Statutory requirements

The teaching and learning of English at St Mary's is guided by the statutory requirements set out in the National Curriculum for England (2014) and the Literacy and Communication and Language areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework (2024). These frameworks provide the foundation for our English curriculum and ensure progression in reading, writing, speaking and listening across all year groups. The curriculum is designed to meet and exceed these statutory expectations, ensuring high ambition for all learners.

In EYFS children should be given the opportunities to:

Teaching in Reception follows the statutory guidance in *The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2024). The English curriculum links to the Prime Area of **Communication and Language** and the Specific Area of **Literacy**, supporting children's holistic development across all seven Areas of Learning. In Reception, children are encouraged to:

- Speak, listen and express their ideas through a range of activities.
- Use communication, language and literacy across all areas of learning.
- Engage with an environment rich in print and opportunities for meaningful communication.

These opportunities build secure foundations for early reading, writing and communication, preparing children for Year 1.

In Key Stage 1, children are supported to:

- Develop early reading fluency and automatic decoding through secure phonics knowledge.
- Develop confidence in speaking and listening, expressing themselves clearly while responding thoughtfully to others.
- Read and write with increasing independence, enthusiasm and purpose, using a range of strategies to support their learning.
- Use language to explore real-life experiences and imaginative ideas, developing creativity and communication skills.
- Build secure reading and writing foundations through a systematic phonics programme, strengthening their understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters.
- Apply their growing phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words, spell accurately and develop fluency and comprehension across a range of texts.

In Key Stage 2, children are supported to:

- Adapt their spoken and written language to suit a range of purposes, audiences and contexts, understanding tone, formality and style.
- Apply reading and writing skills across the curriculum and develop readiness for secondary school expectations in reading complexity and written accuracy.
- Read widely across fiction, non-fiction and poetry, developing the ability to interpret meaning, make inferences and engage with nuanced language.
- Analyse how language is used for effect in literary and non-literary texts, exploring structure, grammar and stylistic features.
- Consolidate their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, applying them accurately across all subjects.
- Expand their vocabulary, experiment with ambitious word choices, and use language creatively and precisely to enhance communication.

Subject organisation

Teaching is carefully sequenced to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in English over time. At St Mary's, we use a range of teaching and learning approaches to support the development of English skills, including:

- Modelled and shared writing
- Direct teaching and explanation
- Effective questioning
- Discussion and collaborative learning
- Drama, role-play and oral rehearsal to develop speaking, listening and writing skills

Our principal aim is to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding through high-quality, engaging English teaching. This is achieved through daily English lessons that incorporate whole-class, group and independent learning opportunities, ensuring appropriate support and challenge for all learners.

Children engage regularly with a wide range of high-quality texts to develop reading fluency, comprehension and a love of reading. They are encouraged to use a variety of resources, including dictionaries, thesauruses and vocabulary aids, to support their independent learning. Technology is used where appropriate to enhance teaching and learning, for example through drafting, editing and publishing writing, or exploring how text, images and multimedia work together to communicate meaning.

A strong emphasis is placed on vocabulary development, enabling pupils to communicate with increasing confidence, precision and creativity. Grammatical terminology is taught explicitly and applied meaningfully within reading and writing activities. Wherever possible, English skills are developed and applied across the wider curriculum, promoting purposeful communication and cross-curricular learning. Adaptive teaching and formative assessment are used to ensure all pupils make strong progress.

Handwriting

At St Mary's, we provide a structured and progressive approach to the teaching of handwriting across all key stages. Daily handwriting sessions in EYFS and Key Stage 1 support children in developing correct letter formation, pencil grip, posture and control, establishing the foundations for fluent, legible and efficient writing. As pupils progress through the school, they are encouraged to develop a joined, consistent cursive handwriting style that supports effective written communication across the curriculum. This supports fluency in writing and enables pupils to focus on composition and transcription simultaneously.

Phonics and Spellings

At St Mary's, we follow the Red Rose Phonics programme, which is taught daily throughout EYFS and Key Stage 1 to provide a consistent, systematic approach to the teaching of early reading and spelling. The programme is delivered with fidelity to ensure consistency and progression in early reading and spelling. Pupils in Key Stage 2 who require additional phonics support access targeted intervention through the Bounce Back Phonics programme. Intervention is used promptly to close gaps and secure progress for all learners.

From Year 2 to Year 6, we use the No Nonsense Spelling programme to support the teaching of spelling in line with the National Curriculum. This programme provides a structured, progressive approach to developing spelling knowledge and skills, ensuring coverage of statutory word lists and spelling rules. Learning is further supported through Spelling Shed,

an interactive online platform that allows pupils to practise and consolidate spelling patterns in an engaging and motivating way.

To support pupils with dyslexia and those requiring additional support with reading and spelling, we use IDL across the school, providing targeted intervention tailored to individual needs.

We recognise that pupils have a range of abilities, strengths and learning needs. We are committed to ensuring that all children can access and succeed in English through high-quality, inclusive teaching. Learning is adapted through:

- Differentiated tasks and group work to provide appropriate support and challenge.
- Open-ended learning opportunities that encourage independence, creativity and deeper thinking.
- Targeted support from skilled teaching assistants to facilitate learning and promote progress.
- Intervention programmes designed to address gaps in learning and provide additional support or challenge for individuals and small groups.

This responsive approach ensures that all pupils are supported to make strong progress and achieve their full potential in English.

Reading

From the Spring Term in EYFS and the Autumn Term in Key Stage 1, children participate in daily guided reading carousel sessions. These provide opportunities for focused reading practice in small groups, helping pupils to develop fluency, comprehension and a love of reading.

From the Spring Term of Year 2 and throughout Key Stage 2, reading is taught through daily Whole Class Reading lessons. This approach exposes pupils to a wide range of high-quality texts and supports the development of reading fluency, comprehension, inference, vocabulary and critical thinking through rich discussion and text analysis. This ensures pupils develop fluency, prosody, comprehension and the ability to access increasingly complex texts across the curriculum.

Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject within the National Curriculum and is planned through a three-tier approach: long-term, medium-term and short-term planning.

1. Long-term planning is informed by the National Curriculum and sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught across each key stage. Our yearly English overviews identify the key learning objectives and text coverage for each year group, ensuring breadth, balance and progression throughout the school.
2. Progression in reading and writing is further supported through our Key Skills in Reading and Key Skills in Writing documents, which outline the expectations and

progression of knowledge and skills for each year group. These are broken down into year-group-specific Key Learning Intentions and Priorities (KLIPs), ensuring clear progression and consistency in teaching and learning across the school.

3. Medium-term planning details the sequence of learning within each unit, while short-term planning identifies specific learning objectives, teaching strategies and assessment opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils.

Across Years 1–6, pupils study a broad range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry each term. Our whole-school English overview ensures a balanced range of text types and clear progression in knowledge and skills across all year groups. Individual class English overviews provide details of the focus text, writing objectives, grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) coverage, and the intended writing outcomes for each unit.

Each English unit follows a structured sequence of learning, enabling pupils to develop and apply new skills through modelled, shared and guided writing. Children produce a scaffolded piece of writing before completing an independent writing outcome, which allows them to demonstrate their understanding and application of the skills taught. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to share, publish or perform their work for a range of audiences and purposes.

Medium-term plans identify the key learning objectives and outcomes for each unit, ensuring appropriate coverage, progression and balance across the academic year. These plans provide a clear framework for teaching and learning while allowing flexibility to meet the needs of individual classes.

Class teachers use short-term planning to outline the specific learning objectives, teaching approaches and activities for each lesson. Planning is responsive to assessment and pupil needs, ensuring appropriate support, challenge and opportunities for all learners to make progress. The curriculum is coherently sequenced so that knowledge and skills build cumulatively over time. Clear end points are identified for each year group to ensure progressive, cumulative knowledge and high expectations for all pupils.

EYFS Literacy

In the Foundation Stage, literacy is taught as an integral part of the curriculum. Learning is linked to the objectives in Development Matters, the Early Learning Goals, and the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which underpin the curriculum for children aged three to five. Pupils are regularly assessed against these standards to monitor progress.

Children are provided with opportunities to:

- Talk and communicate in an increasingly wide range of situations.
- Respond appropriately to adults and peers.
- Listen carefully and attentively.
- Practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills.
- Explore words, texts and language in meaningful contexts.

Cross-Curricular Literacy Opportunities

The skills children develop in English: reading, writing, speaking and listening are applied across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers actively seek opportunities to make cross-curricular links, enabling pupils to communicate effectively and express their ideas in a range of subjects. For example, in RE, children use their literacy skills to explore and respond to ideas, demonstrating their understanding through discussion and written work.

English also supports learning in mathematics. In the Foundation Stage, children develop an understanding of number, pattern, shape and space through discussion with adults and peers. In Key Stage 1, stories and rhymes involving counting and sequencing reinforce mathematical concepts. In Key Stage 2, pupils read and interpret problems, explain their reasoning, present solutions, and communicate mathematically using precise language.

Through these cross-curricular opportunities, pupils develop both subject-specific knowledge and transferable communication skills, supporting progression in literacy alongside other areas of learning.

Use of ICT

Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in English are planned and implemented where appropriate. Digital tools are used to enhance learning, for example, through drafting and editing written work, exploring multimedia texts, or practising spelling and grammar skills. ICT is also employed across the school to provide targeted support for pupils with SEND, ensuring that all learners can access the curriculum effectively.

Assessment, Evaluation, Record Keeping and Reporting

- Work is assessed in line with the school's assessment policy.
- All staff have access to the school's English non-negotiables.
- Each year group has clearly defined reading and writing non-negotiables to ensure consistency and progression.
- From Year 1 to Year 6, each class uses a 'help sheet' at the front of English books to support pupils with key grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) knowledge.
- Some pupils may also use a spelling grid at the back of their books to address commonly misspelt words identified through teacher marking and feedback.
- Final independent writing outcomes in Years 2 to 6 are completed in dedicated independent writing books, which follow pupils as they progress through the school.
- Whole-school internal and external writing moderation takes place twice yearly to support consistent assessment and professional dialogue around writing standards.

Teachers assess pupils' work in English through a three-phase approach. Short-term assessments, carried out during lessons, inform daily planning and enable teachers to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. These assessments are closely linked to learning objectives and support ongoing progress.

Teachers use the Lancashire KLIP strands to assess pupils regularly and to support progression across reading, writing and GPS. Assessment is also informed by a range of methods, including discussion, questioning, observation and marking of written work in line with the school's marking and feedback policy.

The school uses the 'iTrack' system to monitor progress in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and speaking and listening. This information is used to track attainment, inform planning and identify pupils who require additional support or intervention. Progress and attainment are regularly reviewed against national expectations.

Phonics assessment is recorded termly using the Lancashire Phonics Tracker, including Letters and Sounds and Red Rose assessments where appropriate.

A range of formal assessments is also used across the school, including:

- Weekly spelling tests, including Common Exception Words
- NFER assessments in GPS for Years 3–5 each term
- NFER assessments in Reading for Years 3–5 each term, and in the summer term for Year 1 (reading only)
- Common Exception Word reading and spelling assessments from Year 1-Year 6 at the start of the year, Spring 2 and Summer 2
- Past SATs papers in Years 2 and 6 to support assessment in reading and GPS
- Phonics Screening Check is completed in Year 1, with past papers to support preparation and tracking where appropriate.
- IDL assessments at the start of the year to monitor reading and spelling ages, with continued use for pupils requiring additional support

Assessment information is shared with parents through termly data sheets, outlining performance in assessments. Teachers also provide comments on pupil progress in written reports. Annual written reports are shared in the summer term, with a copy stored on 'iTrack'. In addition, parents receive two verbal reports during parents' evenings each year. Formative assessment is used continuously to inform teaching and next steps, while summative assessment is used to identify gaps and monitor progress over time.

Resources

Resources are carefully selected to support curriculum intent and ensure access to high-quality texts that reflect a range of cultures and experiences. A wide range of resources are used to support the teaching and learning of English across the school. Each classroom has a well-stocked selection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts within its reading corner to promote reading for pleasure and engagement with a variety of genres.

Pupils have access to ICT resources, including laptops and iPads, to support research, drafting and independent learning. Each class also has a supply of home-school reading books to encourage reading beyond the classroom.

Working walls are used in all classrooms to support current English units. These display key vocabulary, grammar and punctuation that has been taught, and pupils are encouraged to apply this learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Additional digital resources, such as Literacy Shed+ and Grammarsaurus, are used to enhance teaching and support learning.

Phonics displays are present in EYFS and Key Stage 1 classrooms to reinforce key learning. A range of phonics and guided reading resources are available to support early reading development, particularly in EYFS and KS1.

Reading schemes are carefully structured to ensure progression across the school:

- Key Stage 1: Oxford Reading Tree, including Floppy's Phonics and Project X
- Key Stage 2: Project X and Collins Big Cat, progressing to a wide range of novels across different genres

These resources support pupils in developing fluency, comprehension and a lifelong love of reading.

Inclusion

At St Mary's, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils make progress in English in line with their individual abilities and starting points. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), through high-quality inclusive practice and effective adaptive teaching.

Pupils who are underachieving or who require additional support are identified at the earliest opportunity. Targeted interventions are put in place to address gaps in learning and support progress, using a range of in-class support and intervention programmes.

Where appropriate, support is informed by Lancashire PIVATS assessment materials, alongside other assessment information. Adaptive teaching is central to classroom practice, ensuring all pupils can access learning successfully. Barriers to learning are identified and addressed through scaffolding, modelling and targeted support.

More able and gifted pupils are also identified and provided with appropriate challenge and enrichment opportunities to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding of English.

This inclusive approach ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported and challenged effectively so that they can achieve their full potential. Provision is regularly reviewed to ensure pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils are expected to access the same ambitious curriculum, with appropriate support to enable success. We are committed to ensuring that learning opportunities are inclusive and appropriate for all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, cultural background, or home circumstances. Teachers plan and deliver lessons that promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity, and support every child to make progress and achieve their full potential in English.

Role of the Subject Leader

The English subject leader is responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning across the school. Key responsibilities include:

- Monitoring pupil progress and attainment in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and phonics.
- Analysing English data, including phonics screening checks, NFER assessments, and internal assessment records.
- Overseeing the provision of English, including intervention and support programmes for pupils of all abilities.
- Ensuring the quality of the learning environment in classrooms and shared areas.
- Managing and deploying support staff effectively to enhance learning outcomes.
- Leading moderation of writing to ensure consistent standards across year groups.
- Conducting observations and learning walks to monitor teaching and learning.
- Scrutinising books and planning to support quality teaching and curriculum coverage.
- Leading the development and review of English policy and curriculum planning.
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their professional development (CPD).
- Purchasing, organising and maintaining English resources.
- Keeping up to date with recent developments in literacy education and pedagogy.
- Working with English ambassadors to promote pupil voice and engagement.
- Raising the profile of English across the school through events such as World Book Day, author visits, and themed activities.

This role ensures that English remains a high-priority subject and that teaching, learning, and resources are of the highest standard.

Parental Involvement

At St Mary's, we believe that the active support and involvement of parents and carers is essential in helping children achieve their full potential in English and across the wider curriculum.

Parents are encouraged to support their children by reading regularly at home, discussing books, and helping them to select a wide range of reading materials, alongside their home-school reading books.

Weekly spellings are sent home for children to learn, and pupils are encouraged to use these words in sentences. Parents are supported to help their children learn spellings, discuss word meanings, and ensure accurate, well-punctuated and grammatically correct written work.

In Year 6, homework includes a strong focus on literacy and English, providing opportunities to apply reading and writing skills through cross-curricular projects.

We also offer English workshops for parents to provide guidance on how to support children with reading, phonics and spelling at home.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body receives regular reports on the progress and provision of English, including updates from the designated English Governor. This policy is reviewed every three years, or sooner if required in response to changes in statutory guidance or school practice.

Conclusion

This policy also needs to be read in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with:

- Handwriting Policy
- Reading Policy
- Intent, Implementation and Impact in English,
- Teaching and Learning Policy,
- Assessment and Record Keeping,
- Feedback and Marking Policy,
- Special Educational Needs Policy,
- ICT Policy,
- Equal Opportunities Policy,
- Health and Safety Policy.