

St Mary Magdalen's RCVA Primary School

English Curriculum Statement

NATIONAL CURRICULUM PURPOSE OF STUDY

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATES THAT:

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. 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, 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.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBJECT CONTENT AT KS₁

See Appendix 1

NATIONAL CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBJECT CONTENT AT KS₂

See Appendix 1

CURRICULUM INTENT

At St Mary Magdalen's Primary School, we are committed to providing a purposeful, engaging and empowering English curriculum that fully prepares learners for the next steps in their school journey, as well as the challenges of the wider world. We believe that children who are confident and competent speakers, readers and writers are best placed to engage with the world around them; therefore, expectations are consistently high across all subjects in our broad and balanced curriculum.

A dialogic approach is encouraged in all classrooms to allow children to be critical thinkers. Through speaking and listening, children can formulate their ideas and reasoned arguments, articulating these not only in our English lessons but across the curriculum. We aim to provide children with talk opportunities so that they are able to communicate effectively, adapting their use of language for a range of purposes.

We believe that learning to read is an essential life skill that all children should access with confidence; therefore, reading is a priority within all curriculum areas. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a

broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. It is essential that we provide all children with the tools needed to read for enjoyment. Sharing great books gives children the opportunity to encounter new language and ideas, broadening their horizons and helping them to think about something in a different way. Books transport children to new places and times, allowing them to see through the eyes of others. Great texts give children a model for expressing themselves clearly in speech and writing, building an understanding of how language can be shaped for a particular purpose. We believe the benefits of a rich texts build slowly over time and allow children to leave our school with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment.

We believe that writing is strengthened by instilling a love of reading. Reading a range of genres and text types helps pupils to acquire the structures of language, so that they can be stored inside their memories and manipulated down the line in their writing. The more exposure a child has to high quality texts, the more experiences they have to draw upon when writing independently. Our reading curriculum not only provides pupils with a diverse range of themes within texts, it also provides challenge in syntax to ensure children are exposed to high quality writing models. We intend for pupils to leave our school as proficient writers who understand the importance of accuracy and intent in their writing composition.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

SEQUENCE

We use the National Curriculum 2014 as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. Planning is progressive and staff use a progression document, split into key phases, to accommodate mixed aged classes and ensure a broad and balanced coverage of the English curriculum (See appendix 2)

The Long Term Plans identify genres and texts to be studied in each year group within reading and writing. Although the plans identify recommended texts and units of work, it is important that there is also a degree of flexibility so that planning can be adapted to suit the strengths and needs of the pupils.

Medium Term Plans identify the main teaching targets for each unit of writing. High quality writing plans from 'The Write Stuff' are used to support teachers in planning writing units using a sentence stacking approach. These plans are informed by assessment and ensure an appropriate balance, emphasis and distribution of work across each term. Pupils cover a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry genres within each term. Medium Term Plans also highlight skills taught within reading lessons which take place daily. Reading 'VIPERS' and the 'Reading Rainbow' allow teachers to focus on specific reading skills within their lessons and these are identified within planning.

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English which identifies reading and writing opportunities. Specific learning objectives are identified for each lesson and planning gives brief details of how the lessons are to be taught. Class teachers keep these individual plans for their own use.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, children are taught phonics four days per week, assessed at half termly intervals and moved around groups accordingly to ensure learning moves forward with pace.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Writing: 'The Write Stuff' Approach

To ensure that children leave our school as proficient writers, we teach writing skills in sentence-based 'chunks' with intent and accuracy at the forefront, drawing upon reading where necessary. Using Jane Considine's 'The Write Stuff', lessons are split into 3 parts, each part consisting of 3 chunks: initiate, model and enable. Through this sequence, children are able to gather ideas, see high-quality writing demonstrated by teachers and independently produce their own writing through various writing lenses. Each unit of writing slowly builds to an independent write where children showcase the skills they have learnt within guided sessions. Pupils are given the opportunity to edit and improve their writing after the initial draft using editing stations and may publish writing if this seems appropriate to the task.

Our writing genre progression grid highlights the text types children are taught within each year group and how skills progress throughout each phase.

We create links between reading and writing through the use of writing journals which children use to store words, phrases and sentence structures they gather from high quality texts. Teachers often use excerpts from authors within writing lessons to demonstrate effective use of language, sentence structure and authorial intent.

Alan Peat's Sentence Structures

Sentence structures produced by Alan Peat are used across the school to support children in their writing. They are included in our writing progression grid to coincide with grammar and punctuation taught within each year group.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Children are given frequent opportunities to write in a range of contexts for a variety of purposes and audiences across the curriculum. Text types are outlined in long term plans alongside key skills to ensure a breadth of coverage. Teachers have high expectations of writing and promote high standards across all curriculum areas.

Handwriting

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. As soon as children are ready, they are taught the correct posture for writing and the correct grip to hold their pencil in order to develop a legible handwriting style.

In EYFS and Year 1, children follow a handwriting programme which enables them to print letters in the correct formation. From Year 2, children follow a continuous cursive programme which develops a fluent handwriting style throughout KS2. It is expected that all members of staff model the school handwriting

style. By the end of KS2, all children should be displaying an efficient, neat and legible handwriting style that is effective in recording their ideas.

Spelling

To be able to spell correctly is a life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, children are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning; therefore, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's self-image.

In EYFS and Year 1, spelling is taught through the Read Write Inc Phonics Programme. Children are taught to blend sounds to read and segment to spell. At the same time, they learn words which are not phonetically plausible (common exception words).

From Year 2 onwards, 'Spelling Shed' is used as a resource to teach spelling. Children progress by studying spelling patterns and rules as well as a growing understanding of the morphology and etymology of words to support their spelling. Spelling is taught discretely in short sessions, two times each week. A multi-sensory approach is encouraged to ensure a range of spelling strategies are covered.

Reading: 'Hooked on Books' Approach

Early Reading

From the beginning of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children are taught using the Read Write Inc. Phonics Programme. Once pupils complete the programme, they take part in lessons which focus on developing fluency within reading as well as reading comprehension.

Establishing and Practising Fluency

During reading lessons, a range of strategies are adopted to fit the purpose of the lesson. Children may engage in choral reading (teacher and pupils reading simultaneously), paired reading (alternating after each paragraph), repeated reading (reading a section multiple times), teacher modelling or reading independently. As research suggests that reading aloud individually is the least effective way to develop fluency, other strategies are used to ensure reading opportunities are maximised within each lesson.

Once children have achieved fluency, silent reading is also encouraged. Evidence suggests that individual silent reading allows fluent readers to cover more text and allows them to employ strategies such as re-reading an unclear section of the text which cannot be utilised when reading as a whole class. As children progress through school, the strategies used within reading sessions will adapt to suit the purpose of the lesson and confidence of the reader.

'VIPERS' Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension skills can be divided into six categories which we know as 'VIPERS' (vocabulary, inference, prediction, explaining, retrieval, summary and sequencing). Teachers regularly refer to VIPERS within reading lessons to create links between question types and the skills needed to provide high-quality answers.

The Reading Rainbow

Alongside VIPERS, lenses from Jane Considine's Reading Rainbow are used within lessons which provide further direction to pupils as they read for meaning and become 'reading detectives' within all areas of the curriculum.

'Hooked on Books'

To ensure children receive a balance of guided teaching, independent comprehension and dialogic approaches to the teaching of reading, we use Jane Considine's 'Hooked on Books' across Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Through this approach, our pupils are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts and given daily opportunities to practise both fluency and reading comprehension skills in a range of contexts. 'Hooked on Books' consists of 4 different reading approaches which are intertwined within our reading curriculum: demonstration reading, book talk, whole class reading and independent comprehension.

- **Demonstration Reading**

It is important that our pupils develop a love of reading and our daily reading for pleasure sessions allow both teachers and pupils to share a class reader for enjoyment. Teachers ensure that reading is modelled effectively with pace, expression and enthusiasm and this is very much a part of the day that staff and children look forward to. Within this modelled session, teachers choose one sentence to 'wring for meaning' by orally deconstructing the sentence and drawing emphasis upon vocabulary and sentence structure.

- **Whole Class Guided Reading**

Whole class guided reading sessions provide pupils with high-quality modelling of comprehension skills and enable teachers to showcase an outward thinking process in demonstrating how to create in-depth answers. These sessions are essential in teaching pupils the step by step process of using VIPERS skills within a range of contexts. In Key Stage Two, pupils engage in various linked texts (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) which explore themes and provide children with a wide range of text types and genres to interrogate over a two-weekly cycle. In Key Stage One, children use their class reader within whole class sessions to ensure context is familiar; however, teachers may choose to include linked texts from other genres to include non-fiction and poetry.

- **Book Talk**

Our reading timetable also consists of Book Talk sessions which focus on pupils' ability to form answers orally. Pupils practise fluency within small groups, reading through lenses of the Reading Rainbow, then work together to create answers to comprehension questions using sentence stems and high utility tier two language. This oral approach develops confidence and fluency when reading aloud, allows pupils the opportunity to support each other in developing use of tier two language and creates a bridge from guided teacher modelling to independent written work.

- **Independent Comprehension**

Each week, pupils participate in an independent comprehension lesson which allows them to practise skills they have learnt through Book Talk and Whole Class Reading. Pupils complete written tasks independently to ensure skills are embedded and misconceptions are addressed effectively in marking and feedback.

Reading at Home

At St. Mary Magdalen's Primary School each child is expected to read at home daily, whether that is to an adult (for developing readers) or independently (for fluent readers). This should be recorded in reading journals and evidenced with a signed comment from an adult. At St. Mary Magdalen's Primary School, we know how important it is for teachers and parents to work together to give a child the best start. Reading

together at home is one of the easiest but most important ways in which parents and carers can support their children.

From EYFS, children work progressively through the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. They begin using picture books then move onto phonics books which closely match their phonics learning – allowing them to feel confident when practising their early reading skills. Early readers are encouraged to re-read books to develop fluency and confidence and also take home a book of their choice to share with their family to promote a love of reading. Our reading scheme ensures good coverage of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books to expose children to a range of text types. Children continue to use the Oxford Reading Tree scheme in Lower Key Stage 2 and we would expect that children become 'free readers' as they progress through Upper Key Stage 2. When children are confident and competent readers, they select their reading material from a range of age-appropriate books within their class library, guided by their teacher if necessary. Reading records are monitored regularly and books changed accordingly.

KEY EXPERIENCES

We guarantee to provide all pupils of our school with the following key experiences:

Reading:

- Story Time/Reading for Pleasure - Every class, regardless of age, experiences daily story time. The aim of this session is to allow children the freedom of reading a text purely for enjoyment. This session could take many forms: teacher modelling, independent reading, class novel, sharing authors etc. We also use one session each month to allow children to experience the storytelling of other teachers in school. This session is eagerly anticipated by both staff and pupils and has proved to be a huge success in promoting a love of reading.
- Reading Raffle - We recognise that children work incredibly hard at home to ensure reading takes place regularly and feel that it is important to reward children for the effort and time spent reading outside of school. A termly raffle in each class rewards regular readers with reading prizes chosen by the children. Each week, children who have read four times at home, evidenced with an adult's signature in their reading journal, are given a raffle ticket. At the end of the term, prizes are distributed and classes choose what they would like for the following term.
- Reading Buddies - In EYFS, children 'Bag a Buddy' – choose a soft toy to take home and read to every day. This encourages children to practise their early reading skills outside of school. Children in other year groups are partnered with a reading buddy. They spend time reading and supporting each other which develops positive relationships between year groups.
- Mystery Books - Key Stage 2 classrooms showcase 'mystery books' in their reading areas. This is to encourage readers to choose books based on interest in the blurb rather than relying on cover illustrations. This also allows teachers to showcase new texts and authors throughout the year.
- 100 Recommended Books - To encourage children to read high-quality texts, the 100 recommended reading books for each phase are readily available to all children.
- Author of the Term - To encourage children to find new and exciting texts, our 'Author Spotlight' displays are located in every phase. This allows children to explore the texts of a particular author and learn more about their journey to becoming a children's author. This could be linked to topics, aimed at highlighting a new author or guiding children to reading new material linked to previous interests.
- Book and Bake Sale - Parents and carers are invited into school for our book and bake sale. This allows parents and children to purchase books and sweet treats or simply share a story. We always enjoy

sharing our passion for reading with parents and our book and bake sale is a fantastic way to engage parents and carers in something we feel passionate about.

- World Book Day and Poetry Day - Both children and teachers look forward to our themed days to celebrate reading. On World Book Day, children are invited to dress up as book characters or bring their favourite book to school to share with their class. Poetry Day brings together reading, writing and performance as children share their creative work in a whole school assembly.
- Home Reading Bags - We know just how special it is to share a story with an adult at home and our reading bags and boxes are one way to encourage adults and children to spend time together with a book in the midst of busy lives. Each week, one child from each class is allowed to choose a book and treat to share with their adult before bed. Children are encouraged to share their experience of home reading bags on our school Twitter account.

Writing:

- Spooky Writing Day – We use Halloween to inspire our writing on Spooky Writing Day. Children are encouraged to dress up as their favourite spooky characters and spend the day concocting their spookiest writing within class before sharing their work in a whole school celebration assembly.
- Weekly Awards – ‘Writers of the Week’ are shared in celebration assemblies each week. Children are chosen from each class for their effort and achievements within writing that week.
- Experience Days – Each unit of writing consists of a number of experience days which allow children to gather and explore vocabulary needed to succeed in their writing. These days can take many forms: school trips, drama, practical activities, role play, visitors and many more.

CROSS CURRICULAR ENGLISH OPPORTUNITIES

Where appropriate, class novels are used to reinforce teaching and provide a stimulus for writing. Care is taken not to choose texts based on tenuous links; instead, texts are chosen to provide high-quality, challenging reading material (this could be through the themes explored or the difficulty of the syntax) or to add another dimension to the teaching of a topic. Where appropriate, non-fiction texts are chosen to explore reading opportunities within the wider curriculum.

Each curriculum area has its own ‘tier 3’ language which children are introduced to in knowledge mats at the beginning of each unit of work. This technical vocabulary exposes children to unknown terms and provides class discussion e.g. investigations of a scientific or mathematical kind give opportunities for speaking and listening in discussion, for planning, for making suggestions, asking questions and reporting results. History gives the opportunity for developing research skills, sequencing events and story writing. Every subject within the curriculum contains opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing.

Information and communication technology (ICT):

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Once identified, pupils with special educational needs in speaking and listening, reading or writing will have their needs assessed and appropriate action taken in line with the “Code of Practice” (see school’s Special Needs Policy).

At St. Mary Magdalen’s R.C. Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties and our More Able Pupils. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Support Plans. Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts in a variety of formats that children can read and understand
- using ICT, (other technological aids)
- carefully matching literacy support programmes
- adapting to individual children’s learning styles
- providing scaffolds
- small group work to focus on specific needs
- ‘deepening the moment’ and providing a greater freedom for more able pupils

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary and spiritual heritage and also the heritage of other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

St Mary Magdalen’s RC Primary school we believe that all children should have the right to learn in a safe and caring environment. Staff follow our ‘Behaviour for Learning Policy’ in school.

CURRICULUM IMPACT

ASSESSMENT & RECORDING

Writing

A comparative judgement approach is used to assess writing across all year groups internally (within school) and externally (at a national level). Each year group takes part in a national writing window which provides us with moderated national grades, writing ages and scaled scores to measure pupil progress.

Alongside comparative judgement, teachers use Teacher Assessment Framework to provide writing judgements at the end of each key stage.

Formative assessment is crucial in providing live feedback within writing lessons and we ensure children act upon this within lesson time. We believe live feedback provides the greatest impact; however, children may still be given next steps, if necessary, to address errors before starting the next learning chunk.

Reading

Reading is assessed in line with our Assessment Policy. Termly summative assessments provide reading ages for all children and identify areas of strength and need to inform planning and intervention.

Book Talk allows teachers to work closely with a small groups which enables them to assess children at regular intervals throughout the term. Formative assessment is used in a range of ways to suit the purpose of the lesson: verbal feedback, written feedback, whole class feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment. Children are targeted as appropriate within the lesson and smaller guided groups may be used to target the more able and less able readers.

Marking

Our school has a school marking policy for marking and responding to pupils' English work.

MONITORING & REVIEW

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English Lead alongside the Headteacher. The English Lead/Headteacher monitor planning, have an annual programme of lesson observations and monitor curricular targets through monitoring samples of children's work. The work of the English lead involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The English lead works with teachers and Headteacher in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through an annual audit and works to target areas for further improvement. An Action Plan records initiatives, staff training, use of human and practical resources and purchases made. The English lead has time allocated to review samples of the children's work, support teachers and identify further needs. The named governor responsible for English meets with the subject leader in order to review progress.

Resources and Intervention Programmes

All classrooms have reading, writing and spelling resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and a range of age-appropriate support materials to deliver word and sentence level work. EYFS and Key Stage 1 follow the Read Write Inc phonics programme. All classrooms have a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the internet and a range of ICT resources including iPads. The class library areas contain a range of books to support children's individual research.

Teaching assistants support activities during and outside English teaching time. They receive specific support from teachers and the English Lead in delivering intervention programmes and receive training where possible.

Intervention programmes currently in use:

- Lexia
- Read Theory
- Spelling Shed
- Handwriting

EXTERNAL VERIFICATION

External results show that attainment is in line with or above National Average

We work closely with Durham Advisers on key areas for development and progress through termly meetings and school 'Health Checks'. We liaise with local schools (SEALINKS and ARCHED groups) in reviewing and moderating English.

This academic year we are focussing on improving the attainment of reading and writing which will impact positively on the learning of the wider curriculum.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – National Curriculum for English

Appendix 2 – Progression document – writing progression genres and skills