

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust



English Policy

Review date		October 2025	
Signed		Signed	
Headteacher	<i>Alison James</i>	Chair of Governors	<i>Pinto</i>
Alison James		Caroline Pinto	

At Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy we believe that the English curriculum prepares all pupils to lead an enriched, fulfilling life by teaching the skills they need to communicate effectively and confidently with others, using the spoken and written word. We aim to promote a life-long love of

reading which develops their cultural, emotional and intellectual awareness so they can participate fully in the world around them.

Aims

- To develop in our pupils the ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing.
- To listen with understanding.
- To enable our children to become fluent and responsive readers.
- To develop a lifelong love of reading and writing.

To develop our pupils as Speakers and Listeners we:

- Give them opportunities to express their ideas to a range of audiences.
- Give them opportunities to take part in group discussion and drama activities.
- Encourage them to listen and respond appropriately to others.
- Help them to understand the need to adapt their speech to different situations.
- Give them opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own speech.
- Encourage them to use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English whenever appropriate.

To develop our pupils as Readers we:

- Teach them to read accurately and fluently using a range of strategies.
- Help them to understand and respond to what they read using inference and deduction where appropriate.
- Allow the opportunity for children to reflect on and discuss what they have read, including the language and punctuation choices made by the author.
- Enhance their understanding of a variety of text types including non-fiction, fiction and poetry.
- Encourage them to develop a love of reading and become confident, fluent and independent.
- Teach them how to seek information and learn from the written word.
- Use drama and role-play, where appropriate, to engage children in the text.

To develop our pupils as Writers we:

- Teach them to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of reasons, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate.
- Encourage them to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment.
- Show them how to write in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, reports and letters.
- Show them how to evaluate and edit in order to improve their own writing.
- Show them how to use punctuation to make meaning clear to their reader.
- Give them the knowledge and the strategies to become confident and accurate spellers.
- Teach them a fluent and legible style of handwriting, promoting an understanding of how to present work appropriately.

Curriculum Organisation

In the Foundation Stage the skills of listening, attention, understanding and speaking are encompassed in the prime area of Communication and Language and are fundamental to allow children to be successful in all other learning. In Key Stage 1 Reading and Writing skills are delivered through the specific area of English and enhanced in cross - curricular activities.

Teachers provide activities which are interesting and motivating and provide the best context for increasing children's knowledge about the English language. It is also necessary to focus separately on aspects of knowledge about the language such as phonics and grammar so that children learn what they need to know in a systematic way such as through SCODE, Little Wandle or Beat Dyslexia.

Our teaching is planned from the National Curriculum programmes of study. We plan English sessions flexibly and ensure that the appropriate balance of whole class, group and individual teaching is retained. Some more time in the week is set aside for independent reading and writing when this is appropriate.

We make clear to children the qualities and success criteria we are looking for in their work. Each child is given a bookmark to record their ZPD book level and their reading. In each classroom there is a range of books from a range of publishers, in each book band that children can choose from. We encourage children to read as regularly as possible with an adult at home. We also encourage children to go to the library and take their books there too.

In the Foundation Stage the skills of listening, attention, understanding and speaking are encompassed in the prime area of Communication and Language and are fundamental to allow children to be successful in all other learning.

Phonics

Throughout the Foundation Stage, early phonetic awareness is promoted and developed through every day activities and routines such as listening games, shared reading, singing and interactive planning sessions. Children are encouraged to identify familiar letters in their name and hear the sounds they are making, identify familiar words, to listen for sounds and to remember sounds.

In Foundation 2 and Year 1 phonics is timetabled to be taught daily in planned sessions from a synthetic phonics scheme: Little Wandle. Children are taught to segment and blend words and apply their learning to reading decodable and tricky words. A wide range of activities are used by practitioners to help children achieve the goal of fluent word recognition.

Children are ability grouped in order to maximise individual learning. We use 'Phonics Tracker' to carefully track children's phonic knowledge and so the groups are re-organised on a regular basis.

Towards the end of Year 1 all children will take part in the national phonics screening test. They will achieve either a pass or fail. If a child fails the screening test they will retake it in Year 2. Children who do not pass the phonic screen in Year 1 are supported in Year 2 and continue to be taught Little Wandle phonics on a daily basis. Children that do not pass their phonic test in Year 2 will be given daily interventions in Year 3 of 'Beat Dyslexia' which has been adapted so that it follows the same teaching order of Little Wandle. Beat dyslexia is continued throughout KS2 for any child who continues to need help.

Reading

In Foundation Stage and Year 1 many activities take place which promote pre-reading skills. Children become aware of print in their environment and match pictures and words. Language comprehension is developed by talking and reading to the children. Initially, as children learn to read, they are given a picture book with no words with the intention that they will share the book and take part in a conversation generated by the pictures. Gradually as the children's knowledge of letters and sounds develop they begin to phonetically decode words.

The first books given are books, which are fully phonetically decodable and linked to the phonics phase the child is on so their learning is practised and reinforced at home. Children are able to take an additional book home, which exposes them to phonics beyond their phase to share and read for pleasure. Our reading books are organised into coloured Book Bands.

From Year 2, children begin to use Accelerated Reader as a tool to encourage reading. Children take a 'Star' assessment test and are then given a carefully selected and personalised 'range' of books to choose from to read. Each book they read has an associated quiz for the children to take and teachers are able to assess their comprehension skills accordingly. Some books also have a vocabulary quiz which allows teachers to assess their vocabulary range.

Each classroom has a bookcase with appropriate books for the age of children.

Guided Reading in Key Stage 2

In Key stage 2, the skills for reading will be developed through whole class guided reading sessions. The teacher will model reading the text. Key vocabulary and context will be taught first to enable all children to better understand the text before it is read. Teachers will explicate the text in detail.

Similarly, answers for comprehension questions will be modelled so children have a clear understanding of the expectations of the different question types.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, children receive 1 hour of reading/phonics/spelling and 1 hour of writing activities every day.

Writing

Children will be encouraged to use and develop skills in writing in many subject areas (not exclusively English.) The same standard of writing is expected in ALL subjects.

Children are encouraged and given opportunities to increase the breadth, depth and quality of their writing by:

- Being given different forms to write such as: reports, lists, stories, recounts, poetry, instructions, questions, messages, explanations and reviews.
- By being given different purposes to write with a wide variety of audiences.
- Participating in writing about their experiences and feelings.
- Talking about their writing to adults and other children.
- Evaluating their writing and that of others.
- Being given opportunities to edit their own work in order to improve it.
- Exploring the depth of a piece of writing.
- Practising their writing skills in meaningful and varied contexts.
- Planning and producing a first draft.
- Using a dictionary and/or thesaurus to introduce and explore new words.
- Reviewing a piece of writing and considering how to make it more interesting for the reader.
- Using descriptive writing to create a specific mood.
- Being encouraged to consider if they like or dislike a given piece of writing and justifying their thoughts.
- Further develop their writing skills by the provision of cross curricular activities and opportunities.

Grammar and Punctuation and Spelling

- In the Foundation Stage, children are introduced to the basic principles of grammar and punctuation appropriate for their age range. They learn through a wide range of activities such as: singing rhymes, conversations with adults, stories, interactive educational programmes, phonics, reading and writing.
- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 a more formal approach is taken with grammar and punctuation teaching taking place within writing sessions. The children are regularly assessed in spelling against the NC spellings for their year group. In Key stage 2 scode spelling scheme is taught for the duration of an hour across the week, this may be in three 20minute sessions or in four 15minute sessions.

Assessment

Children in the Foundation Stage have their attainment on entry assessed by observations and their progress is tracked and monitored through the use of Early Years Outcomes throughout FS. The Foundation Stage profile will indicate if children are reaching expected levels by the end of Reception and will be used in transition into Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 children will be assessed after every lesson using assessment for learning booklets. These assessments will be used to inform a more formal assessment, recorded on 'Target Tracker' each half term.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

- All children are given access to a broad and balanced English curriculum regardless of gender, ability, race or religion.
- Equal opportunities are provided for boys and girls, also for children with special needs, those who are talented or gifted and children from different cultural backgrounds.
- Provision will be made for individual needs in their Pupil Passport.
- Children with English as an additional language (E.A.L.) will be given access to additional resources and teaching to support their learning and to ensure they make maximum progress from their individual starting points.
- A feeling of self-worth will be engendered throughout the activities.