



St Francis Catholic Primary School

English Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

Approved by:	Peter Gough	Date: 10 th October 2025
Reviewed on:		
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SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

'I am a sign of God's love'

At St. Francis we love, learn and grow in the footsteps of Jesus and are active signs of God's love through praying, respecting and serving others.

POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to providing all the children in our school with a broad, balanced and relevant English curriculum. It will be free from gender, racial and attainment bias and it will reflect our Mission Statement and the English National Curriculum.

GENERAL STATEMENT

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to write and speak 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 and it is crucial that pupils, therefore, learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently.

We intend to cover all the programmes of study and attainment targets as set out in the National Curriculum English document (2014) for children between the ages of 5 and 11 years, and those set out in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage Document. We also aim to ensure that children develop their knowledge and understanding of phonics through daily teaching in EYFS and Key Stage 1.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the written and spoken word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

We use the National Curriculum document for English, which aims to ensure all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others, and participating in debate

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English for Key Stages 1 and 2 are laid out in the 'National Curriculum' Document and, for Reception and Nursery, in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' and the 'Development Matters' documents.

In the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) children should be given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities
- link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write
- have access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication

At Key Stages One and Two children should learn to:

- develop confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills, including role-play
- develop competence in word reading and comprehension
- develop competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition when writing
- control their speaking and writing consciously and to use standard English
- understand and use the correct grammatical terms
- develop a wider vocabulary and an understanding of the meaning of any new words learnt

APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

The major focus for the teaching and learning of English is through daily English lessons. During each English lesson, there will be a clear focus on whole-class and group teaching. Children will experience whole-class shared reading or writing activities, whole-class focused word or sentence activities, guided group or independent activities and whole-class sessions to review progress and learning. Children will have opportunities to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonics resources and scaffolds to support their work. In addition to the daily English lesson, children have regular opportunities to read and complete independent activities in Guided Reading sessions. In Key Stage 2, grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught through daily English lessons, as well as through short, discrete 'SPaG' lessons.

We believe that teaching should be:

- discursive - characterised by high quality oral work,
- interactive - pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected, and extended,
- well-paced - there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed,
- confident - teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives,
- ambitious - there is optimism about – and high expectations of – success.

The attainment targets and programmes of study in the National Curriculum document give English teaching focus and direction, and our teachers aim for high levels of motivation and active engagement for pupils in lessons. To achieve this, teachers will need to use a wide range of teaching strategies including:

- direction
- demonstration
- modelling
- scaffolding
- explanation to clarify and discuss
- questioning to probe pupils' understanding, to cause them to reflect on and refine their work, and to extend their ideas
- initiating and guiding exploration
- investigating ideas
- discussing and arguing
- listening to and responding

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

Classroom organisation is a key area to success in the teaching and learning of English. We recognise that there are children of differing ability in all classes. We also recognise the diversity of learning styles and, in turn, provide suitable opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In both Key Stages, pupils work within ability groups. In most lessons we use differentiated group work to challenge pupils of all abilities, whereas in some lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. Some lessons will require the use of mixed ability groupings which assist the children in teaching and learning to and from each other. We use classroom assistants to support children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals. We aim to ensure that, as far as possible, the needs of the full range of pupils are met within this structure, including those with SEN and English as a Second Language.

PHONICS - LITTLE WANDLE

We believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery and Reception and follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lessons and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At St Francis, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, our aim is that they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
 - sharing high-quality stories and poems,
 - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes,
 - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending,
 - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 25 minutes a day. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress:
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has Daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult.
- Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding,

- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression,
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, prompt cards and 'How To' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing keep-up support,
 - weekly in the review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - every half term to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the keep-up support that they need.
- The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
 - the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds placement assessment
 - the appropriate half-termly assessments.

HANDWRITING – LETTER JOIN

At St Francis we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resource and Lesson Planners as the basis of our handwriting policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Objective:

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims:

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Expectations:

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Consistency throughout the school

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency:

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

We provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. We use classroom assistants to support children across all ability levels, and ensure that work set is accessible to individuals. In addition, clear differentiation of tasks

within English lessons ensures that all children are able to make progress, regardless of their ability. Children with specific needs (EHCP) may be assigned a Teaching Assistant to support them 1:1 in English lessons.

PLANNING

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. Clear and careful planning is important to the success of the teaching and learning of English. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 use the National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programmes of study for English. In EYFS, teachers follow the Communication, Language and Literacy sections of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum as well as the Literacy programmes of study.

The programmes of study for English are set out year-by-year for Key Stage 1 and two-yearly for Key Stage 2. The single year blocks at Key Stage 1 reflect the rapid pace of development in word reading during these two years. Here at St Francis we publish our curriculum half termly. Schools are required to teach the relevant programme of study for each year group. In addition, schools can introduce 'mastery' content at appropriate stages of the school year, if appropriate. All schools are also required to set out their school curriculum for English on a year-by-year basis and make this information available online.

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Long-term plans are taken directly from the programmes of study and attainment targets in the National Curriculum document. Medium term plans further distinguish these into objectives. Short-term plans are recorded through PowerPoint slides, with the use of curri-cucolour.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal Opportunities issues are a cause for national concern in the area of English. Girls tend to achieve higher in Reading and Writing than boys, and given the central importance of English to the development of other areas of the curriculum, this is of serious concern. At St Francis, we are committed to ensuring, as far as possible, that there is equality of opportunity in all areas of the curriculum. Gender issues will be closely monitored in relation to English.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are effectively combined to convey meaning. The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English. We encourage all children to use ICT as a source of information, and if appropriate, as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND 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 heritage and texts from other cultures.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The assessment and recording of English is part of the overall assessment of the complete child and should be seen alongside all the other areas of development. Assessment in English should reflect the general principles and procedures laid down in the school's Assessment Policy.

Daily marking of children's writing and subsequent responses by the children are a key element of the assessment process. Children are set personal targets by their teacher based on their work in daily English lessons and they are given regular feedback as to their progress towards meeting these targets. Children are encouraged to refer to their targets within the daily lessons to ensure that they are striving to meet these.

Progress and achievement in reading are recorded during the guided reading sessions on record sheets, through observations and notes, tests, marking and individual target setting. These assessments are used to inform planning and target teaching to the needs of the children as well as to track progress for end of term assessments and for pupil progress meetings for each class. Formal assessments are monitored by the SLT to check assessment is thorough and to record results for tracking.

Children's reading, writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessed at the end of every term. We use the National Curriculum and its end of year expectations to assess whether the children are on track to meet the 'Age Related Expectation' for their year group.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are judged against the 'Profile' statements for Communication, Language and Literacy, which includes reading and writing.

A written report on each child's achievements in speaking and listening, reading and writing will be sent to parents as part of an overall report on the child's progress to date in the July of each academic year. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress in all subject areas including English twice yearly.

Children will undertake the national tests in Reading, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling in Years 2 and 6. Results of all tests will be used by teachers to inform their planning and target setting at whole-class, group and individual levels.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of the English policy is the responsibility of the English Co-ordinator who is responsible to the Head Teacher and the Governors for the development of English throughout the school. This is to be achieved in a variety of ways:

- regular discussions with staff concerning progress of groups and individuals
- involvement in long and medium-term planning across the school in English
- regular classroom observation and working alongside colleagues to help identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide support to individual staff as appropriate
- regular monitoring of resources
- reviewing of assessment outcomes and data to evaluate the quality of learning in English throughout the school
- checking that within a Key Stage there is coverage of the full English curriculum in line with National Curriculum requirements and the Early Years Foundation Stage documentation
- checking that appropriate opportunities to raise multicultural and gender issues are created and taken
- ensuring that the time spent on the teaching of English is in line with national recommendations

RESOURCES

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. Classes have their own stock of resources appropriate to age and ability. Children have access to the internet through computers in the Computer Suite and laptop computers, which can be used in each classroom.

Every child will be provided with an age appropriate text to take home and read from, they will also have the option to access and take home a 'book for pleasure'. In Nursery, chatter bags will be sent home. Every child will be provided with a 'reading journal,' which they will continue to take home and work in until it is completed and replaced. Every child will be provided with a 'home reading record' at the start of each academic year.

CHARGES

Charges will be implemented as follows for replacement English resources:

Replacement:	Charge:
Reading record	£2.50
Reading journal	£2
Reading book	£3 - £5 dependant on text

The English lead and Head teacher will confirm charges. Parents will be made aware of charges through the school website and notification in the Reading Newsletter. They will also be notified at the time of replacement.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.