

**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL, WINDLESHAW**



**ENGLISH POLICY**

**REVIEWED: JUNE 2015**

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

## English Policy

**“At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we provide a vibrant curriculum which values, challenges and supports each child..”**  
**[Mission Statement]**

English is a vital means of communication in society. It is the foundation of all learning at St Thomas of Canterbury. We aim to deliver a high-quality education in English which teaches pupils to read and to communicate confidently, both through speaking and listening and through writing. Using these skills, our pupils are empowered to access the whole curriculum, build upon what they already know, learn independently and prepare for the world of work and other aspects of everyday life. We work particularly hard to develop a love of literature and to enable pupils to play a full and active part in their own development in spoken language, reading and writing so that they can reach their full potential.

### AIMS

We aim to help our pupils to:

- Speak clearly, fluently, confidently and listen patiently and carefully so that they can communicate effectively in a range of situations, including formal presentations
- Develop their ability to learn through discussion, elaborating and clearly explaining their understanding and ideas
- Read fluently and with good understanding
- Develop a love of literature and language
- 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
- Write clearly, accurately and effectively for a range of audiences and purposes.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we deliver the above aims and the requirements of the National Curriculum in England (2014) through the following practices in (1) oracy, (2) reading and (3) writing.

#### 1 Oracy

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we know that ‘Fluency in the English Language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.’ (The National Curriculum for England 2014)

Teaching staff ensure that opportunities for speaking and listening permeate the whole curriculum throughout the school. Pupils are enabled to clarify their thinking and organise their ideas for writing as they are taught to:

- Speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English
- Justify their ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop their vocabulary
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas.

Specific practices include:

- Talking/discussion partners
- 'Think/Pair/Share'
- 'Each One Teach One'
- Participation in group and class discussions
- Listening, reciting and responding to rhymes, poems, songs, stories and non-fiction
- Role play
- Drama
- Participation in 'Superchunk' activities
- Daily writing tasks
- Weekly extended writing task
- Opportunities to draft and re-draft writing
- Participation in Collective Worship and assemblies.

### *Assessment and Evaluation*

- Assessment and evaluation is an ongoing process which feeds back into the teacher's planning.
- Speaking and Listening skills are assessed formally using the Foundation Stage Profile and progress against specific criteria recorded and tracked.

### 2 Reading

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we recognise the crucial role that reading plays in enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, building upon what they already know, and we know that 'through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.' (The National Curriculum for England 2014)

We also recognise that 'reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.' (The National Curriculum for England 2014)

Teaching staff work hard to promote a love of reading and encourage pupils to read widely. A well stocked library is timetabled for use by all classes, pupils are given daily

opportunities to read in class (including opportunities for paired reading), they have opportunities to talk about books they are reading and recommend books and authors. Teachers act as role models for reading by talking about their own reading and being seen to read for pleasure. Each class has its own mini library and these are supplemented by loans from the local authority library service, which supply a range of high quality fiction and non-fiction books to each class every half term. Reception-Y3 are paired with older children as 'reading buddies' and they are guided in what to look for when reading together.

We also set ambitious targets for reading at home. In Key Stage 1, the Reading Diary is packed with information for reading and writing at with family members. In Key Stage 2, children are given journals to make records of their own personal reading journeys and to reflect on what they have been reading.

Pupils enjoy high-quality whole texts (both fiction and non-fiction) through English lessons and the wider curriculum. They are taught to read fluently and understand a wide range of texts through:

- Weekly 1:1 reading sessions for every child in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- Daily 1:1 reading sessions for target pupils
- Daily phonics sessions for pupils on the Read Write Inc programme in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- Daily phonics sessions for target pupils in Key Stage 2
- Exposure to a wide range of quality literature
- Planned opportunities for independent, paired and shared reading
- Weekly guided reading sessions which focus on specific success criteria (Assessment Focuses) and seek to engage pupils in their own progress against these
- Regular written comprehension activities (Y2 to Y6)
- Oral rehearsal of comprehension responses in R-Y1 with some written activities
- Links made between reading and writing activities and the wider curriculum
- The use of ICT to enhance reading experiences and to learn from visual English.

### *Assessment and Recording*

Teachers aim to assess each child at least once a week through individual reading and/or through guided reading.

Formal guided reading is introduced in Reception and continues through to Year 6.

During a guided reading session, children's progress is recorded against their individual stage appropriate sheets. Teaching Assistants perform an important role in supporting the teaching assessment of guided reading and related activities, with guided reading/reading activity sessions planned into their respective timetables. Weekly assessment informs future planning.

Pupils' progress against specific reading success criteria is tracked during guided reading sessions. Pupils also have opportunities to reflect on their own progress against these criteria, as well as that of their peers, through paired reading.

### *Monitoring*

Formal assessment of reading is currently monitored by the Head Teacher and the Assessment Co-ordinator on a termly basis. Outcomes help to inform termly pupil progress meetings with each teacher.

Individual Guided Reading assessment sheets are kept in Guided Reading files. The English subject leader collects these on a termly basis to monitor reading progress throughout the school.

### 3 Writing

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we believe that writing is essential to thinking and learning and strive to promote enjoyment of this complex skill. We know that 'teaching pupils to develop as writers involves teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence.' (The National Curriculum for England 2014)

Pupils are taught to:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Spell and punctuate sentences with increasing accuracy
- Use an increasingly wide range of grammar correctly
- Write down ideas fluently using clear, neat handwriting
- Use an increasingly wide vocabulary
- Communicate ideas effectively with a clear awareness of audience and purpose
- Expand the range of their writing.

Specific practices include:

- Planning meaningful and, where possible, real life purposes and audiences for writing within and beyond the classroom.
- Planning purposes for writing which require pupils to write in a wide variety of forms
- Planning writing activities into creative teaching sequences which engage and inspire pupils
- Providing weekly extended writing opportunities for pupils, from R to Y6, as opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt
- Providing pupils with opportunities to evaluate their thinking and writing independently and with their peers and teachers
- Teaching pupils to plan, proof-read, redraft and present their work appropriately.
- Celebrating new vocabulary found in reading and writing
- Explicitly teaching handwriting skills (up to Year 4)
- Providing daily phonics sessions for pupils on the Read Write Inc programme in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- Explicitly teaching spelling rules and patterns in accordance with the requirements of The National Curriculum for England 2014 (Y1 to Y6)

### *Assessment and Recording*

A programme of target setting and review involves pupils in their own development in writing. Specific success criteria (adapted from the Assertive Mentoring stage appropriate target sheets) are used to track the progress of pupils against targets set. Progress against targets is recorded by teachers and marking advises pupils in next steps. Monitoring of progress against targets informs weekly guided writing sessions and regular 1:1 or small group interventions.

A piece of writing is set and marked as a formal test twice a term to review pupils' progress against age-related expectations.

### *Monitoring*

Half termly writing assessment results are reviewed by the Head Teacher and Assessment Co-ordinator on a termly basis to monitor progress towards end of year targets. Outcomes help to inform termly pupil progress meetings with each teacher. Samples of written work are also moderated as part of the monitoring process.

## PLANNING

We seek to ensure that planning delivers the requirements of The National Curriculum for England 2014, is suited to the needs of particular groups of pupils and provides a creative, enjoyable sequence of learning in oracy, reading and writing, culminating in weekly opportunities for extended writing. Our planning ensures that:

- There is a clear focus on outcomes
- There are appropriate and achievable learning objectives for all pupils
- Addresses the needs pupils work below or above age-related expectations
- Teaching is differentiated by task, where appropriate
- There is continuity and progression in pupils' learning
- There is balanced coverage of word, sentence and text-level learning
- There are opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own progress
- Draws links with other areas of the curriculum, where appropriate.

To ensure all of the above, planning will consist of:

Long Term Planning: We have adopted the National Curriculum for England 2014 as our framework of skills to be taught. Each year group has its own English Map for reference.

Short term Planning: This is detailed on a weekly planning sheet and outlines the skills taught and the texts chosen to enable that teaching. It includes the learning objectives (taken from the National Curriculum for England 2014) the methods of teaching, the resources which will be used and the group/individual, differentiated activities which will be undertaken, as well as evaluation.

## CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

English, by nature, is a cross curricular subject. Where appropriate, written tasks in other subject areas are used for the teaching of specific English skills (e.g. report writing in Science, instruction writing in Geography, letter writing in History). These are included in English planning and/or cross curricular thematic planning.

Wherever possible, ICT is employed to enhance the English curriculum.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a vital aspect of an efficient and effective teaching policy. Therefore, it should be a continual and integral part of the planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Short-term assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils in English. This is carried out informally by teachers in the course of their teaching. It takes the form of various AFL techniques, such as observation and feedback during the learning process, self and peer assessment. Feedback, both verbal and written, celebrates good practise and suggests specific steps for further progression.

Medium-term formal assessment is carried out each term in reading and writing to review pupils' progress in relation to key objectives and targets.

Pupils are involved in setting their own targets and meet with their teacher regularly to review progress. Foundation Stage Practitioners continually assess pupils' progress using the Foundation Stage Profile.

### Feedback to pupils

Feedback to pupils about their progress in English is achieved through discussion during the learning process, marking of work and discussion of progress following marking. Effective marking:

- Aims to help pupils learn and comments are intended to be constructive, positive and forward-looking
- Is often undertaken while a task is being carried out through discussion between teacher and child and is appropriate to age and ability
- Is used sensitively and with discretion so that pupils assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time – this varies with age and ability
- Informs discussion with pupils in relation to personal targets.

### REPORTING

At the end of each school year, pupils receive a written report which outlines their progress and targets. Parents are welcomed to evenings every term to discuss progress. At the end of each key stage, levels are reported to parents. Each year, information about the pupils (including targets) is passed to the next teacher. Foundation Stage Practitioners use the Foundation Stage Profile to report on progress.

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION

All pupils at St Thomas of Canterbury have equal access to a broad and balanced English curriculum. Pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs in English are brought to the attention of the Special Needs Co-ordinator and appropriate intervention and support is offered. Individual Education Plans are provided, as appropriate. Differentiated materials are available for pupils with additional requirements.

### USE OF ADDITIONAL ADULTS

The work of Teaching Assistants at St Thomas of Canterbury is very much focused on helping teachers to bring about progress in learning. Their time is carefully timetabled to ensure individuals or groups of children receive support within the English curriculum.

Pupils receiving specific support, and the nature and frequency of this support, is detailed in the school's Provision Map.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is set on a regular basis to support the English curriculum. All pupils are expected to read regularly, Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils are expected to learn weekly spellings (National Curriculum 2014) and written homework varies according to year group (see Homework Policy).

## DEVELOPING AND MONITORING THE CURRICULUM – THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LEADER

The English Leader is responsible for the development and monitoring of the English Curriculum. He/she is available to help with planning and teaching and learning in English. He/she is also responsible for updating the English Policy and leading curriculum development work in English, as dictated by the School Improvement Plan. In order to improve current provision, the Leader:

- Takes the lead in policy development
- Attends LA and other courses and disseminates the contents at school Inset Meetings
- Leads the development of whole-school approaches to English teaching and shares best practice.
- Monitors teachers' planning and pupils' books, and engages in team teaching with colleagues.
- Organises outside speakers and visitors, where appropriate, to further staff development
- Helps track the progress of pupils after testing using termly assessment and SATS results
- Takes responsibility for monitoring resources and the purchase of new equipment.

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