

English Curriculum Aims & Rationale

Intent

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that 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
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At Sacred Heart School the intention is to provide a high quality English curriculum that develops children into fluent readers, writers and speakers, enabling children to express themselves articulately and creatively and communicate clearly with others. We understand the importance of reading as a source of knowledge, culture and enjoyment and therefore we aim to foster a life-long love of reading through access to a range of high quality fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts, both within English lessons and across the curriculum. Our objective is to encourage children to read widely across a range of genres, cultures and time periods, both for pleasure and to support the acquisition of knowledge. We aim to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of socio-economic status, background or ability are able to read fluently and with understanding by the end of Key Stage 2.

We are committed to nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing and enjoy writing in a range of contexts and across a variety of genres. Children learn the necessary grammatical structures and spelling rules to be proficient writers within an engaging and text rich curriculum, ensuring that personal creativity and enjoyment of writing is developed alongside technical proficiency. Through opportunities to express themselves through drama, debate, discussion and high quality talk, children become confident and articulate. Underpinning all elements of our school curriculum, is our Romero Child Charter, which aims to develop every child as a whole person. The opportunities given to children through author visits, immersive learning experiences and high quality teaching allow children to truly shine.

Reading Implementation

Our Reading curriculum begins in Nursery, where children become adept at Stage 1, Letters and Sounds, followed by set 1 of the Read Write Inc Phonics Programme. This is then continued through Reception, Key Stage 1, and where necessary, Key Stage 2. The phonics scheme covers all National Curriculum requirements and ensures students develop both their reading fluency, comprehension and spelling. This is overseen by our Read Write Inc manager, who monitors the quality of sessions, assesses and provides coaching for staff on a weekly basis. Any children, who are falling behind at any stage, are quickly identified and receive 1: 1 phonics intervention. Phonics groups are fluid and set across foundation stage and key stage 1 with children being assessed frequently to ensure the curriculum is tailored to their individual needs. The various elements of the phonics programme then filter into English lessons, where teachers make use of strategies to ensure a consistent approach. On completion of the phonics programme, children have weekly reading lessons, where they continue to focus on fluency, alongside comprehension skills. Children across the school access high quality texts and extracts, exposing them to a range of authors, styles, genres and time periods and use book talk to discuss them in a meaningful way. A text rich curriculum, carefully chosen for its width and breadth of fiction and non-fiction supplements these reading lessons. All children take home a weekly reading book, carefully tailored to their reading ability and have access to a wide range of books in the school library. Our wider curriculum offer allows students to participate in author visits and a range of opportunities tailored to developing a rich reading culture.

Writing Implementation

A 'Talk for Writing' approach is central to our writing curriculum: this allows pupils to be fully immersed in the plot, grammatical features and language of a text before they begin the writing process. Teachers plan writing units which encourage plenty of oracy – discussion, questioning, imitating and learning texts along with actions. Each English unit begins with a 'hook', an exciting event, which engages the children in the text and inspires high quality writing. Children then proceed to learn about, and practise using, stylistic and grammatical features appropriate to each writing outcome. Our curriculum is carefully scaffolded to ensure children are exposed to writing a wide variety of text types, for a range of purposes, and teaches grammar skills progressively and creatively, providing plenty of opportunities for consolidation.

Our children begin developing their transcription skills in EYFS, with gross motor activities and playful fine motor activities. When ready, they learn accurate letter formation, use hold a sentence activities and develop their own compositions, following the Talk for Writing process. Children in EYFS and KS1 learn to spell as part of their RWI phonics lessons where children use strategies such as 'Fred Fingers' to segment. On completion of the RWI programme, children use the Spelling Shed scheme, which follows the National Curriculum for spelling. This scheme includes an online home-learning element and children across the school enjoy the competition aspect, practising their spellings daily to accumulate points. A high standard of joined, cursive handwriting is modelled from Year 2 and children are encouraged to imitate this. Our handwriting policy is taught and practised regularly in separate books but is expected to be evidenced throughout all work produced. Children, who are having difficulties with transcription are quickly identified and receive intervention for fine motor skills or spelling.

Reading Impact

Within the RWI programme, children are continuously assessed and the RWI manager carefully tracks the progress of every child. Any child needing additional support is quickly identified and receives tailored intervention. Children continue with the programme until they are confident in decoding and can read with fluency and additional support is provided for those children identified in KS2. From KS1, comprehension skills are assessed termly and in-depth question-level analysis allows teachers to identify next steps for individual children and groups. Children have access to a varied, text rich curriculum, which allows students to develop a love of reading and understand that reading is an important source of both knowledge and enjoyment. By the end of KS2, children read with both fluency and understanding.

Writing Impact

Teachers assess children's progress within the writing curriculum continuously and we use an on the spot marking approach where possible so that children receive immediate feedback and next steps. Children are assessed each term against our Romero Writing Trackers and teachers hold writing surgeries with every child to provide in depth feedback on their progress. Learners are therefore confident in expressing both their successes and development points. Children take pride in both the presentation and the content of their writing and are eager to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, where children have numerous opportunities for writing. On leaving KS2, pupils can write for a range of purposes and audiences, and are confident and effective communicators. They will have amassed a varied vocabulary that they can use across the curriculum and can apply spelling rules and grammatical concepts in their work. Children become confident and expressive readers, writers and public speakers.