

English Curriculum

Curriculum Intent

What is the intent of the English curriculum?

- The ability to read and write effectively not only has a direct impact on progress and attainment in all areas of the curriculum but also upon children's **confidence, self-esteem, and motivation** to learn.
- In line with the National Curriculum for English (2014), our aim is to provide a high-quality English education, which develops children's spoken language, reading skills, writing and vocabulary, as well as providing a key to access the whole curriculum.
- The subject leaders have designed the curriculum to develop children's knowledge sequentially; revisit, remember and apply earlier skills; and learn new skills to achieve the objectives set by the National Curriculum for English (2014).
- The curriculum design intends to provide a balance between exposure to classic texts and ambitious language as well as engaging, modern, and exciting texts, which enable children to appreciate our **rich and varied literary heritage** and develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and to gain knowledge.
- The intention of using a range of high-quality texts ensures a **cultural capital**, which expands children's horizons and exposes them to culture, gives **high aspirations**, makes children aware of all future possibilities, and empowers children to be **socially mobile**.
- The English curriculum intends to develop **powers of imagination, inventiveness, and critical awareness** in all areas of literacy.
- Through being given opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences, children will gain an understanding of what it means to be a writer and how to effectively manipulate their growing literacy skills.
- The curriculum intends children to acquire a wide vocabulary, a secure understanding of grammar and punctuation, as well as the ability to spell new words by effectively applying the spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time in primary school.
- The teaching of varied and **rich literature** inspires and nurtures a culture where children take pride in their writing and fosters confident, life-long writers; communicators; and fluent readers, who are able to **effectively articulate** their **ideas** and **emotions** as **members of society** and the wider world.

Curriculum Implementation

How is prior knowledge revisited?

- The careful planning of learning objectives and success criteria are linked to the National Curriculum for English (2014) and are planned to be coherent and sequential so that children build on previous learning, apply what they know, integrate new knowledge and skills, and develop an increasing level of fluency so that they are ready for the next stage of their education.

How does the curriculum overview allow all children to achieve?

- Our aim is to make our SEND and disadvantaged children feel valued and included and to have high aspirations. Inclusion is embedded in our practice and teachers regularly review and reflect upon their own practice to ensure progress is made. Teaching is adapted and responds to the strengths and needs of all learners.
- Opportunities for children to apply their writing across a range of genres are planned and links to the wider curriculum are made carefully when doing this.
- Each year group have a yearly overview of the writing genres - both narrative and non-fiction - which they will teach. These have been planned to ensure a wide coverage of the key genres and to build on skills from year to year. Generally, units of work will take between two and four weeks of daily lessons to complete, and the outcome of each unit will be an extended piece of writing which will be used to assess skills against the agreed success criteria. The English overview details the breakdown of skills for reading and writing for each genre covered.
- Every genre taught is linked to a carefully chosen text that acts as a stimulus and model for teaching text, word, and sentence level features that the children will be expected to include.
- A clear model is created based on the stimulus text and supports children to identify and mimic the identified features in their own writing. Non-fiction units are also taught through a quality model that may be based on a stimulus text or may be related to another curriculum area.
- Children are given a wide range of opportunities to use and develop their speaking and listening skills to help them with the writing process across all areas of the curriculum. Appropriate strategies are also used across school, where they will aid and benefit the writing process, such as rehearsing writing verbally.
- Children from Year 3 upwards are taught weekly Spelling Workshop sessions, where key spelling rules, patterns, and strategies (including etymology, root words, prefixes, suffixes and syllables) are explored and taught.
- Children are taught to print their handwriting in Foundation Stage. Pre-cursive script is modelled and taught from Year 1; continuous cursive joined script is taught from Year 2 until Year 6. Children experience consistently high expectations of handwriting and presentation across all areas of learning. Children take pride in their learning and presentation and recognise the need to write carefully and clearly.
- Whole class reading sessions are taught across the school at least three times per week using a skills-based approach. They explore texts in detail using the VIPERS skills: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explain, Retrieve and Sequence (KS1) or Summarise (KS2).
- In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, daily phonic sessions give children the opportunity to revisit previous learning then practise and apply new skills in structured but engaging ways.
- Phonics teaching is carried out progressively. In Foundation and Key Stage One, children are taught through Twinkl Phonics, a government validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, which offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons that supports the effective teaching of phonics. This is designed to support both reading and writing. Each year group progresses through the levels, starting with environmental sounds and progressing through to Level 6. These levels are regularly revisited and recapped through daily phonics sessions. This cycle supports the retention of knowledge, allowing children to process, apply, and consolidate their understanding. In Foundation Stage, parents receive an electronic sheet via Tapestry (an online learning journal) summarising the sound their child has learnt that day to further support their phonic learning at home. Further details can be found in the St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Phonics Policy. Children still at a decoding stage regularly read individually with an adult.

- Children from Year 2 to Year 6 use Accelerated Reader (AR), which is a reading management and monitoring programme that aims to foster independent reading. Teachers dedicate at least 15 minutes daily to AR, either as a stand-alone session or as part of other curriculum subjects.
- In Year 2, children are assessed using Accelerated Reader to indicate their readiness to begin the programme. Some children will continue to develop their reading fluency with phonetically decodable books, which are carefully matched to the child's phonic phase and are used alongside books which encourage other reading cues such as context and grammar.
- Reading for pleasure is encouraged throughout the school with opportunities to enjoy listening to stories for enjoyment in classes, book areas, the library, the Quiet Area, and Year 6 Snug.
- Teachers are upskilled with regular CPD sessions either through whole-staff CPD training or dissemination of information by English leaders.

How is cultural capital developed through the curriculum?

- Teachers plan reading and writing linked to quality texts inspired by CLPE, Pie Corbett and The 5 Plagues of Reading, which provide **high-quality texts** in order to successfully navigate reading with confidence. These are complex beyond a lexical level and demand more from the reader than other types of books, whilst **expanding children's horizons** and **exposing them to a wealth of culture and language**.

How is assessment used to identify and fill gaps?

- Assessment is used consistently and strategically to evaluate children's progress, knowledge, and understanding. It is a valuable tool used by teachers to be able to identify individual strengths and areas for development to inform next steps in planning and teaching. Teacher, peer and self-assessment; oral and written feedback; and formative and summative assessments inform next steps, interventions, amendments, and provision to ensure children are supported and extended.
- Writing is assessed at appropriate times and next steps identified by the teacher, as well as through self- and peer-assessment and 'purple polishing', which equips children with the skills to understand how to improve their own learning: improving content rather than just error-spotting.
- Teachers are supported by documents which outline key expectations of genres of writing. Each year group has a set of Year Group Expectations documents to apply in all writing: these skills are adapted directly from the National Curriculum for English (2014).
- The Accelerated Reader scheme assesses children from Year 2 to Year 6 at five points throughout the year. This assessment allows teachers to monitor how the children are progressing and identify any children who are not making the expected progress. It also allows teachers to monitor specific pupil groups.
- Gap analysis is utilised to target support for those who are not at an age-appropriate level and to ensure children are accessing the correct content to support their development.
- Interventions such as Better Reading Support, Early Literacy Support, and IDL meet the needs of children identified as requiring further support.
- Differentiated phonics classes allow those children who have not passed the phonics screening check, or who need help to apply their phonic knowledge, the opportunity to close the gap with their peers.
- Pupil progress meetings take place in both whole staff and individual year group formats. This allows for all staff to be supported in understanding and responding to their data as well as year group and whole school trends. This also enables staff to see children's journeys before and after their time in a specific year group.
- Staff attend writing moderations in school as part of staff meetings as well as external moderations with local schools.

- Children who need support are identified and provided with interventions, when necessary, which are tracked and analysed using Edukey. Teachers plan and teach English lessons which are differentiated to the particular needs of each child.
- Children are supported by both teachers and learning support assistants through scaffolding and access to additional support materials such as success criteria, word banks, assistive technology, or a greater level of adult-led modelling.
- Children are given opportunities to extend their writing in a variety of ways, including through showing greater control in their writing, a deeper understanding of the impact that their writing has on the reader, and by using a higher level of vocabulary and grammar features.

Impact

What does impact look like?

- Assessment for learning strategies are used on a daily basis. These allow a picture to be built up of the children's progress and any areas of strength or weakness can then be addressed in teachers' planning.
- The impact of interventions are routinely and regularly monitored using provision mapping across the school. This enables support for children, especially disadvantaged or those with SEN, to be adjusted accordingly so that all children make sustained progress.
- The subject leaders will empower and support staff in the following ways:
 - Keeping up to date on current issues; disseminating relevant information; and providing training for staff members (either directly or through other professionals).
 - Leading by example through hosting open classrooms or modelling key strategies.
 - Having a clear knowledge of the quality of reading and writing provision across the school.
 - Identifying and acting on development needs of staff members.
 - Monitoring expectations, provision and attainment across the school and providing feedback in order to develop practice and raise standards.
 - Supporting teachers to be knowledgeable and skilled to deliver the curriculum.
- The English leaders will provide a termly summary report to the Head teacher and governors in which the impact of our school development plan is evaluated.
- Children will demonstrate progress in knowledge and understanding from their relevant starting points.
- Children will have a range of skills and knowledge that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for English (2014).
- Children will be able to transfer their literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum effectively.
- Children will have a wider vocabulary and understand how reading plays an important role in continuing to widen this.
- Children will be enthusiastic and capable readers who enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Children will have a clear understanding of how to adapt their writing to meet different contexts, audiences, and purposes; therefore, they will achieve meaningful writing.
- Children will be able to apply spelling rules and patterns effectively and approach unknown words with resilience.
- Children will be equipped with **powers of imagination, inventiveness, and critical awareness** in all areas of literacy.

- Children will have **high aspirations** for themselves and **feel empowered** by the range of literature to which they have been exposed. This will enable them to be **socially mobile** and **aware** of all **future possibilities in the wider world**.
- Children will leave St Thomas More with creativity, the confidence to articulate their ideas, and **high aspirations** which will **continue to grow and develop**.