



ENGLISH POLICY

At St Matthew's, we are committed to providing a stimulating and engaging English curriculum: one that teaches pupils the fundamental skills of reading and writing, whilst providing them with opportunities to have fun and be creative.

Reading

The development of reading is a school priority that underpins every area of the curriculum. Early reading is taught through a specific phonics scheme – Monster Phonics – which is a new approach brought in at the start of the academic year (2020/2021). This multi-sensory approach uses ten characters (monsters) that bring the scheme to life. This fun and engaging scheme is enjoyed by pupils and teachers alike.

From Year 2, Active Reading is taught, this is a whole class reading session that allows the pupils to be immersed in a small section of text; they learn to read at a good pace and they are encouraged to identify words and phrases that are unknown. The use of dictionaries and thesauruses is built into this activity from Year 3 onwards. In these lessons, pupils are taught to answer different styles of questions that are in line with the reading domains set out in the National Curriculum.

Reading Detectives takes place four days a week. It is a guided session that is delivered by the class teacher or teaching assistant to a small group of pupils of similar ability, this activity is then followed up with an independent reading activity at school. During sessions where the pupils are not reading with an adult, they have the opportunity to read independently, use different materials; for example: The First News, comics, magazines and their own reading book, pupils have opportunities to respond accordingly to what they have read. Other tasks involve the development of the different reading domain skills or phonic consolidation.

Learning to read is the most important skill pupils will learn at school. The staff want pupils to be confident and fluent readers with a passion for books and a love of reading when they leave St Matthew's!

Speaking and listening

Speaking and listening is developed across the curriculum and is done through paired work and 'powers of three', which is where pupils work in groups of three on different tasks. All teachers provide the pupils with the opportunity to participate in drama and we work closely with two local drama specialists. These specialists work with us as a school to develop the staff and also work in classes to immerse pupils in new or difficult topics.

This academic year, we have participated in the Shakespeare Festival and this has allowed one class to study the works of Shakespeare through drama.

Writing

At St Matthew's we believe that every child is an author and should have the opportunity to publish their own work. We use Focus Education as the foundation of our writing curriculum, we use specified texts and follow the model: explore the text; teach writing features; write an extended piece: edit and then publish. Each half term, we have a winning author from each class and they receive a certificate and a voucher. The winning pieces are displayed in the library and are available to read for the whole half term. Every child from Reception to Year 6 has a writing portfolio where all their published pieces are showcased.

EYFS

As Focus Education does not have a programme for EYFS, we choose texts that underpin all the learning. These texts are carefully planned and follow a similar approach to Focus. Pupils are taught how to hold writing implements, form letters and numbers and to start name writing. A lot of focus is given to oral retelling at the beginning of each academic year. There are many opportunities for pupils to write in all the different areas of the learning environment.

Key Stage 1

As the pupils move into KS1, sentence writing is developed, along with the development of vocabulary. Pupils are exposed to a wide variety of genres and are encouraged to write longer, more sustained pieces of work.

Key Stage 2

In lower KS2, the pupils are expected to write at length using a variety of grammatical features with increasing accuracy in different genres. By the time pupils reach upper KS2, they are expected to draw upon their knowledge of different genres and use appropriate features; accurately considering the purpose and the audience throughout a piece of work. They are taught to edit and redraft their work to suit the purpose and develop their independence.

As well as using Focus, the class teachers use a variety of creative approaches to teach writing and it is often cross-curricular to enhance subjects such as science, humanities and RE. Pupils are provided with a purpose or an outcome to ensure that writing is inspiring and of interest to them. At least once in an academic year, we undertake a themed writing week and this uses a whole school 'hook' that is developed creatively by the staff.

As a school we are continuing to work on the presentation of pupil's work and a handwriting standard is completed at the start of each term and that sets the expectation for all the work that they produce. We want the pupils to feel a sense of pride in their work and to strive to be the best they can.

English and inclusion

At St Matthew's, English underpins all areas of the curriculum and through our teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Pupils; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at different factors from classroom organisation to different teaching styles. Additional or different action will be taken to enable the child to learn more effectively. Where this is the case, pupils will have a modified programme of study suited to them as individuals, to build on their own needs and for some individuals this may involve outside agencies such as: SALT, Speech Bubbles and Learning Support Services (LSS). Early intervention programmes such as: Tales Toolkits and Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) are delivered in our Early Years.

Progress

Progress in reading and writing is monitored termly by the subject leader and the headteacher. The monitoring is carried out with the class teacher and from these monitoring meetings, pupils who need support are identified, and interventions and targets are set for specific pupils.

Our goal at St Matthew's is to ensure that all pupils make good progress in reading and writing regardless of their individual starting points.

Policy Review Date: April 2023