



Approach to Reading and Phonics

Our approach to the teaching of English, including Reading

At St. Mary's, we aim to encourage our children to become articulate, independent learners who are self-motivated, literate and confident to meet new challenges.

Language is the major means by which we think and communicate. It is the tool we use in every area of the curriculum.

Listening skills are essential if a child is to make optimum progress in other areas of language: speaking, reading and writing. Children need to be competent in the skills of verbal communication. Speaking and Listening skills are an essential foundation for reading and writing.

Children begin to read using a variety of graded books. We want children to enjoy reading and we encourage them to take books home so that they can share that pleasure with their parents. They are also taught how to use books to research information, and an acquisition of study skills is an essential element in the projects we teach.

The Primary National Strategies and the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum consists of three strands: Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing. Whilst keeping the curriculum we provide under review, the school aims to continue teaching within the National Literacy Strategy, as appropriate to our children's needs. The strategy will be adapted as deemed appropriate. We believe that the combined knowledge, professionalism and expertise of our staff allows us to judge which aspects of the strategy should be kept and tailored to suit the needs of our children. The National Literacy Strategy teaches children skills in interpreting the meaning of a whole variety of texts: children learn to pick up on implied meaning and identify writing techniques that they can apply in their own writing, not just the literal meaning. The children are then encouraged to use these skills in their own writing.

Our approach to the teaching of Phonics

The teaching of Phonics is an integral part of the curriculum in both the Foundation and Key Stage 1 classrooms.

We follow the National phonics programme, 'Letters and Sounds', where children are taught the 44 phonemes that make up all the sounds required for reading and spelling. These phonemes include those made by just one letter and those that are made by two or more. As the children grow in confidence and experience, they are

introduced to alternative ways of representing the same sound, eg 'ee' can be represented as 'ee', 'ea', 'e-e', 'e' ... The teaching of phonics is of high priority to all teachers as it enables pupils to decode for reading and encode for spelling.

We ensure that our teaching of phonics is rigorous, structured and enjoyable. Children have discrete, daily phonics sessions where they are introduced to new phonemes, can practise and revise previous learning and have plenty of opportunities to apply the knowledge they have.

We use a range of multisensory strategies to enthuse and engage the children, including the use of interactive whiteboards, magnetic letters, speaking and listening, songs, rhymes and practical activities. Children work with pace and are encouraged to apply their knowledge across the curriculum with any reading or writing activities.

Alongside the teaching of Phonics, children have access to a language rich environment where they are able to apply their decoding skills and develop language comprehension in order to 'read'.

Literacy Policy

Aims

The aims of this policy are: -

- To establish an entitlement for all our pupils
- To establish expectations for teachers
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school

Objectives

We adhere to the statutory requirements for English as stated in the National Curriculum. We use the Revised National Literacy Framework as a guide for teaching and each teacher teaches Literacy, in some form (drama, reading, analysis of spoken language through film or making models / puppets to assist with creative thinking) on a daily basis.

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is incorporated in to daily Literacy teaching whenever possible and appropriate to support the needs of the pupils and is a valuable resource. Interactive whiteboards, visualisers, software packages, word processing tools, digital and video cameras and on-line resources are becoming ever more evident in teachers' planning and pupils' work.

The teaching of Literacy

Each teacher uses the Revised National Literacy Framework (RNLF) as a long term (yearly) structure for the teaching of English. It is divided into Year Groups, and sub-divided into the key areas for teaching and learning within these Year Groups (e.g. spelling, sentence level and text level objectives). The RNLF is also presented by teaching and learning objectives (e.g. Speaking and Listening FS – Yr 6) to enable teachers to plan for those pupils working above or below their peers. Teachers use the RNLF to structure their medium term plan, which in turn informs their literacy teaching sequences.

Each term's work is focused on a particular genre of reading and writing (chosen at the teacher's discretion from those stipulated by the NLS (2000) for the year group). Objectives are closely linked throughout, using the texts pupils are reading to provide structure for their writing. There are four strands to the work:

1. Word level
2. Sentence level
3. Text level
4. Speaking and Listening (incorporating drama)

These strands are closely linked and essential to the term's work. Each term there is a range of work to be covered from which reading and writing tasks are chosen. The exception to this is the Reception year (Foundation stage), which has not been divided into terms but is structured as six key areas.

The objectives in the framework give teaching focus and direction. We aim for high levels of motivation and active engagement for pupils. We use a wide range of teaching strategies to accomplish this, including the use of ICT, media (TV, radio, music and film), creating artefacts for inspiration and visiting drama companies.

Teachers will use their professional judgement when teaching, and as Literacy is planned as a continuous learning sequence with no strict 'daily' plans, variations in lesson length, content, quantity of written work and literacy activities are to be expected and encouraged.

Learning to Read and Write through Phonics at St. Mary's ***Foundation Stage***

The emphasis at this stage is multi-sensory, linking the teaching and practising of letter shapes and patterns with the development of pupils' ability to listen to, and

discriminate between, the constituent sounds which make up a word. Much of this occurs through games and activities which encourage focused listening in music, dance and physical education, as well as literacy activities where there is a focus on rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. Letter sounds, as opposed to letter names, are used at this stage to support blending and segmenting of phonemes. The development of phonological awareness is a priority in the Foundation stage. Through songs, rhymes and games children will be taught to hear sounds in words and identify rhyme. Their attention will be drawn to print in the environment around them. Emergent writing will be encouraged.

Developmental writing is encouraged to give pupils confidence; it is crucial that pupils at this stage in their development as writers do not become over-concerned with spelling accuracy. Support is given to spelling by reminding children of letter sounds (phonemes) and how these are formed when writing, providing writers with aids such as letter charts, simple word banks and picture dictionaries to stimulate interest in, and enthusiasm for, words.

Key Stage 1

The *Letters and Sounds* programme is taught on a daily basis with children from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 working in mixed-age ability groups based upon the phonic phase which best suits their level of understanding. Lessons last for 15 minutes each day and assessment is ongoing through the week. Most pupils will have completed the programme (Phase 6) by the end of Year 2. For spelling purposes, the emphasis is on the pupils' ability to segment words into phonemes and then match the most likely letter or letters to each sound.

In addition, the pupils learn how to spell a number of sight words, high frequency words and common irregular words as listed in *Letters and Sounds* to enable them to write fluently. They investigate and learn to use common spelling patterns, and frequently used prefixes and inflectional endings in their own writing.

Pupils become increasingly independent. They identify reasons for misspellings in their own work and are taught how to use a simple dictionary, a range of word banks (including those on computers) and their knowledge of word families. Risk-taking in the spelling of unknown words is encouraged through the use of jotters or whiteboards. Pupils should know what their responsibilities are in terms of spelling and when they may seek assistance from an adult.

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2 there is an emphasis on the recognition of letter strings, visual patterns and analogies, the application of spelling conventions, the use of a range of word resources and the morphology of words. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some pupils will need to consolidate the phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.

Class spelling lessons occur at least three times a week, as a starter to Literacy lessons, and are based upon the Key Stage 2 *Support for Spelling* (2009) document.

The National Literacy Strategy details the National Curriculum programme of teaching, but teachers will use their professional judgement in order to pitch the teaching at the

appropriate developmental level. Building on the approaches introduced in Key Stage 1, there is an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. It is expected that pupils assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources (including spellcheckers and a variety of dictionaries and word banks) for making corrections.

Inclusion

In Key Stage One the mixed-age Phonics groups allow for children to spend more time consolidating their learning if they are not ready to move to the next phase. A teaching assistant is deployed to support pupils who are underachieving in their spelling, through extra support in Spelling lessons or through booster sessions.

Individual programmes for teaching and support are drawn up as appropriate by the teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator and parents. On rare occasions children in KS2 may join the Phase 5 and 6 Phonics group for continued support.

Assessment and Recording of Phonics

Children in Key Stage One are assessed informally during daily Phonics sessions through observations of white-board writing, oral segmenting and reading aloud. Phonic Phase Assessment Sheets and Phonic Progress Tracking Sheets are used throughout Key Stage One to formally monitor progress in reading and spelling and are used to inform teachers of areas of weakness.

Year 1 children are formally assessed in the Summer term through the Phonics Screening Test and these results help to form targets for Writing levels at the end of KS1.

Year 2 children take part in a spelling test in their end of Key Stage SATs tests; words within this test are all words which should be able to be spelled through segmenting / recognition of tricky words following completion of *Letters and Sounds*.

In KS2, Spelling is assessed informally through observations during Spelling lessons and through marking written work to see whether spelling patterns and rules have been used correctly, or if key words are mis-spelled. Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement as to the number of errors corrected in any single piece of writing and to be mindful of the developmental needs of pupils. Where appropriate, spelling targets are set and agreed with pupils; progress is monitored and the targets updated on a regular basis. Teachers give explicit feedback regarding the successful strategies used and knowledge employed. If a pupil is experiencing difficulty with particular words or strategies, homework may be set to reinforce understanding. Spelling tests are used from time to time but they are used sparingly and are not regarded as the main means by which spelling is taught.

Teachers pay particular attention to pupils with IEPs which relate to spelling.

The Teaching of Reading Comprehension at St. Mary's

Without a solid comprehension of text and a developed vocabulary, reading is reduced to meaningless sounds; developing reading comprehension is just as important as reading the words on a page. Being able to read the words does not mean that we are 'reading' in the true sense of the term.

Types of Reading

Shared reading: a whole class will read a book together, often led by the teacher. Key words, language and grammatical features are picked out. The use of phonics for decoding new words is encouraged. All abilities are included in this type of session. Children will be asked differentiated questions about the text to increase comprehension, asked to share their opinions about the text and develop their empathy towards characters

Guided reading: a group of children with similar reading ability will share a book with an adult. Key words language and grammatical features are picked out. The use of phonics for decoding new words is encouraged alongside contextual clues. Children will be asked to share their feelings of the text, discuss text structure and organisation, investigate the language used, predict the ending and explain events in the text.

Individual reading: a child will read on their own with an adult. This allows the child to focus on the text and allows the adult to work closely, picking up on any errors and asking specific questions.

Phonics, comprehension and links to personal experiences are used during this type of reading.

Without strong reading skills children will struggle to access the wider curriculum and their learning may be compromised.

From Year 2 children are expected to scan-read text for information and select texts for research (dictionaries, fact files, encyclopaedias and the internet)

If reading is taught correctly in the early years and the skills are regularly reinforced, then 'reading to learn' will be able to occur.