

St Alban's C.E Primary School



English policy

February 2025

Review: February 2025

Our school vision



Our vision is that all our pupils should grow in:

Faith in God, or be inspired by faith, and in their own ability to fulfil their potential,

Hope to be the best of examples, to work to change themselves and the world for the better, and

Love, reflecting God's love in unselfish love for others.

Our vision is based on the God given virtues of:

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:13

Updated February by Fiona Daly (English Lead)

1. AIMS

We aim for excellence in English achievement throughout the school. We aim to ensure children can read, write and speak with confidence, fluency and understanding.

We seek to ensure that all children achieve their full potential in all aspects of English by the time they move from Primary to Secondary Education.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the communication and language, literacy and physical development (fine motor skills) sections of the Statutory Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework (2021).

In the Foundation Stage (Reception and Nursery) children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print
- hold conversations and discussions in small groups, class and one-to-one
- listen to and retell familiar stories, recite nursery rhymes and sing songs.

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

Children learn to speak confidently and learn to listen to what others have to say. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3 - 4)

Children learn to effectively change the way they speak to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works (use grammatical terminology).

Pupils at St. Alban's Church of England Primary and Nursery School will leave Year 6:

- with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment.
- reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies to take responsibility for their own learning including self-monitoring and correcting their own errors.
- with an interest in words and their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in relation to grammatical terminology.
- understanding a range of text types, media types and genres.
- able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- using their developing creativity, imagination, initiative and critical awareness.
- having a suitable technical vocabulary to respectfully articulate their responses in any discussion.

The Governing Board receives regular reports on the progress of English provision. The link Governor for English, Allan Jenkins, visits the classrooms and meets with the school English Lead termly to discuss progress against action points.

3. SUBJECT ORGANISATION

A balance of individual, group and teacher-led methods of teaching will be used throughout every year to facilitate learning outcomes. Activities will be challenging, motivating and will extend children's learning. All lessons will have a clear learning objective and success criteria which are shared and reviewed with the children effectively.

Children will be taught a range of speaking and listening, reading and writing skills including; handwriting (Using the Letter Join programme- see handwriting policy) and spelling (Using Read Write Inc. in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2). They will have opportunities to develop these skills and take responsibility for the development of their learning.

Reading skills are taught within English lessons through high quality texts, during guided reading sessions, in which the teaching of vocabulary and comprehension is a high priority.

Foundation Stage

In Reception, children have daily discrete phonic lessons where children begin to learn letter sounds and blend letters together in order to read. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child initiated activities.

In Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, daily discrete phonics lessons continue and are taught in attainment groups while children have daily mixed ability English lessons with an emphasis on real texts. Children take part in both guided reading and individual reading sessions and have daily storytime to develop a love of reading. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes, adaptive class teaching and targeted groups in English and reading comprehension sessions. In Key Stage 1 children are expected to sit the statutory phonic check at the end of Year 1 and attainment tests at the end of Year 2.

In Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, children have daily English lessons. Whole class English lessons are taught through texts. Lessons are planned around the text making all teaching contextualised, including the teaching of grammar.

Writing is taught through modelled writing (by the teacher) shared writing (with the whole class) guided writing (with a small group and a specific focus) and independent writing followed by marking which highlights success and contains next step comments. Effective feedback allows the children to reflect on their learning and gives them time to return to their writing to edit to improve their work. Both reading and writing opportunities are provided across the curriculum. Guided reading sessions are carried out daily. Provision is made for children who require extra support through targeted teaching; intervention programmes and adaptive class teaching.

4. APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupil's development across the whole curriculum – spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. Opportunities to develop these skills include: sharing in Collective Worship, class poetry recitals, Key Stage 1 Nativity, End of Year Performance in Key Stage 2, group discussions, talk partners within class lessons and assemblies, drama in English and other curriculum subjects and many more planned and incidental opportunities. As the National Curriculum says:

'All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.' (pages 3,4 and 7, 2013)

All of these speaking and listening skills are taught in English, across the curriculum and during extra-curricular activities.

5. APPROACHES TO READING

We use READ WRITE Inc programme to deliver daily discreet phonics lessons in EYFS and Key Stage 1, enabling children to decode efficiently. This is continued in Key Stage 2, where necessary.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers which are booked banded along with a structured RML reading scheme. Teaching assistants support reading activities to ensure that children have more frequent opportunities to read with them. We also have professional volunteers from local businesses who come to read with selected children on a weekly basis. To inspire a love of reading in EYFS and Key Stage 1, the English lead holds a morning storytime session with parents and children once a week during the Autumn and Summer terms.

Guided Reading Sessions

We strive for all children at St Alban's to become confident, keen and capable readers. Teachers model and teach reading strategies within English lessons, when working with the whole class text. Focused small-group guided reading sessions take place in all classes every afternoon. During these sessions, children are specifically taught a range of skills to develop automaticity and good comprehension of texts. Within guided reading sessions, children are supported in applying these learnt skills within dedicated comprehension activities. Teachers promote the development of a love for books and independent reading by planning in sessions as part of a carousel of activities during Guided Reading. This allows children to self-select books while also providing them with the opportunity to read for a sustained period of time.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, i.e. celebrations during World Book Week, visits by published authors, workshops by skilled story tellers from many cultures, performances by professional theatre groups, book sales and book swap events.

Key Stage 1 and 2 children all participate in The Camden Reading Road Map initiative. The children are rewarded with certificates and stickers for the amount of reading they have completed throughout the year. Their achievements are celebrated during Collective Worship on Friday. Across the whole school, children are actively encouraged and expected to complete their reading records accurately and clearly with specific reference to the book in question. Children who do so are also celebrated during Collect Worship and in the weekly newsletter.

Reading at Home

We recognise the positive impact that adults can have by being reading role models at home, valuing the reading process, reading to and listening to children read and being enthusiastic about stories and books. In every year group, we encourage all pupils to share a book at home with their grown-ups. This not only helps to develop vocabulary, inferential skills and improve their understanding of plots and story language but also supports a lifelong love of reading and inspires writing. Once a term, all parents are invited into their child's classroom to enjoy reading with their child. Every class has story time with their teacher at the end of the day.

Children in EYFS, take home a book every day which can be read to them at home by their adult.

In Key Stage 1, children are assigned a levelled phonetically decodable book from the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme twice a week. They also take home a book which can be read to them. Books from the class reading gardens and school library are also available for children to borrow books from. Each child has a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily and record this in the reading record. Information is provided on how to support their child in reading on our school website, at reading workshops, phase meetings and in curriculum letters throughout the year.

In Key Stage 2, children self-select books to take home and read. The books in each Key Stage 2 reading garden have a section of appropriate texts to support the range and ability of readers in each class. Children also have access to the school library. 'Barrington Stoke' books and phonetically decodable books may be used in order to support children still learning to read in Key Stage 2 which are at an appropriate interest age, but an accessible reading age. These help the lower attaining and children with SEN to continue to grow in confidence as readers with a text that appears appropriate for their age.

APPROACHES TO WRITING

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Our approach to teaching writing covers the 'transcription' and 'composition' requirements of the National Curriculum (2014). To support our teaching of writing, staff refer to Literacy Shed Plus, Storytelling Schools, Alan Peat sentences and LA strategies. Teachers are flexible and reflective in their selection of these English experts' strategies to suit the needs of the children and the text type being taught.

Teachers model writing strategies and use the phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. Once a term, teachers use short films/ animations from the Literacy Shed website or a real-life stimulus to inspire an extended independent piece of writing that will be published and displayed within the school.

Editing is recognised as an important step in the writing process. Teachers plan for and teach proofreading and editing skills. After each extended write, children use teacher feedback, self- and peer-assessment and the success criteria for the relevant text type to inform their editing.

The children have frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model for a variety of purposes and audiences. The text types which are required to be covered by the National Curriculum (2014) are outlined in our curriculum maps and pacers for each year group to ensure that there is a breadth of coverage.

We recognise the important role that computing has to play in our school in the development of English skills. Interactive technology is used on a daily basis to enhance the teaching of English.

We use the Letter Join handwriting scheme to support our delivery of handwriting lessons and ensuring that all children develop a fluent, clear and legible cursive script. This is taught for ten minutes each day across the school. Children are taught pre-cursive in EYFS and begin to join letters in a cursive script in Year 2. Children in Key Stage 2 are expected to use a neat cursive script consistently. Teachers model handwriting using a cursive unlooped script during lessons. Displays in every classroom, around the school and worksheets in books use the same script.

APPROACHES TO SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum (2014). When planning, teachers refer to the English progression map. It details the expectations for the teaching of grammar and the agreed terminology (from the NC glossary) which must be used by each year group. Grammar is timetabled to take place during English lessons. Grammar is expected to be taught in a contextualised way, in reference to the text being taught at that time. We believe this allows children to understand and learn grammatical concepts quicker than if it were taught as a separate lesson and without any meaning. The teaching of grammar does increase at the end of both Key Stages, in preparation for the SATS.

The ability to spell correctly is an essential skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are then free to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's self-image. We aim to use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins of words, the structure and the meaning of words and their parts, including; the shape and sound of words, the letter patterns within them and the various ways they can learn these patterns. Children practise spelling through fun, interactive games.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, daily phonics is the key to the children's learning of spelling. This is taught using the Read Write Inc programme. Children are taught to blend sounds to read and segment to spell. At the same time, they learn words which are not phonically regular (common exception words).

From Year 2 and into Key Stage 2 the children move towards using their phonetic knowledge to help them understand spelling rules and patterns. We teach children to use their growing understanding of morphology and etymology of words to support their spelling. Helping children to understand how to use and apply known spelling patterns (and develop strategies to tackle tricky words) is the key to helping them become successful spellers.

All children are encouraged and supported in proofreading their writing for spelling and punctuation errors. Children are provided with a range of resources to support them to achieve this objective. They are expected to use dictionaries, thesauruses, words mats and banks and classroom working walls.

When actually writing children should be concentrating on higher order thinking skills and should simply 'have a go' at spelling and underline words they are unsure of. When marking children's work, we do not correct all spelling errors, instead we focus on high frequency words, topic words and those studied in spelling sessions.

6. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITES

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links where appropriate. They will plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. One piece of extended writing is expected to be produced within either a Humanities, Science and Religious Education unit per half term. All texts used within English lessons have been chosen to either link with the topics being covered by each individual class or to link with the overarching themes from the whole school curriculum map.

7. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Work will be assessed in line with the assessment policy.

8. INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment in liaison with the SENCo. Gifted children are identified in consultation with the leader for inclusion and suitable learning challenges will be provided.

9. EQUAL OPPORTUNITES

St. Alban's has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged.

In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of our children. Our texts are updated regularly to make sure topical issues are being covered in classroom too.

We believe in 'valuing what the child brings to the school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

10. ROLE OF THE SUBJECT LEADER

The subject leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English
 - pupil progress
 - marking and planning
 - curriculum coverage
 - provision of English
 - quality of teaching
 - the quality of the learning environment
 - book scrutiny
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent English development

11. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We aim to involve parents directly in the life of the school, and thus in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English. Parents are involved in hearing children read and are encouraged to discuss books with them

There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. Termly curriculum letters provide information about the English curriculum and how parents can support their children. They also emphasise the importance of reading. Parents are encouraged to read both with them and to their children at home in order to promote a love of reading. Parents are welcomed into the school to support reading in the classroom and invited to our 'Books and Biscuits' events within their child's classroom to view their children's English and Extended Writing Books.

Strategies for supporting children are shared at phase meetings and reading workshops as well as at parent helper training sessions.

SATs results are published in accordance with Government legislation.

REVIEW DATE: February 2026 (or as and when new guidance implemented)