

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School



English Policy

December 2025

Renewal: December 2027

1. AIMS

At St Joseph's we aim for *excellence* in English achievement throughout the school. We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will leave Year 6:

- 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 a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment
- 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, inventiveness and critical awareness
- having a suitable technical vocabulary to respectfully articulate their responses in any discussion

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 and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2021)**.

In Reception 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
- begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and opportunities to communicate

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) children learn to:

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

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) children learn to:

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

The Governing Body, (in particular the English Link Governor), receives regular reports on the progress of English provision and visits school to keep abreast of classroom practice.

3. SUBJECT ORGANISATION

Foundation Stage

- Participate in daily discrete phonics lessons using the **Read Write Inc.** programme (please see our separate **Phonics** policy)
- Develop a love of reading
- Develop word level and comprehension skills
- Develop communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult-led and child-initiated activities
- Encounter opportunities to write and mark-make through use of role play areas, outdoor learning and child-initiated activities
- Practise early letter formation teaching through the **Read Write Inc.** programme

Key Stages 1 and 2

- Daily phonics/early writing lessons continue (using the **Read Write Inc.** programme) until children achieve the required standard
- After completion of the **Read Write Inc.** programme, children are taught English lessons within mixed-ability classes. In Years 2 to 6, three out of five of these sessions are planned and mapped using **Jane Considine's The Write Stuff**, to ensure full coverage of the writing curriculum (please see **English Writing Curriculum Overview** document) and two out of five sessions are planned and mapped using **The Oak Academy Grammar** (please see **SPaG Curriculum Overview** document) to ensure full coverage of the grammar and punctuation objectives
- Writing is taught using **The Write Stuff** and through modelled, shared and guided work that is focused on rich, precise vocabulary, sentence construction and text structure
- Children are expected to complete extended independent writing within English lessons (at the end of each **The Write Stuff** unit of work) and across the curriculum
- The **Reading Plus** programme is used to teach reading fluency, stamina, vocabulary, comprehension and motivation in Years 5 and 6, during 3 thirty-five-minute sessions a week
- Years 3 and 4 complete 3 thirty-five-minute sessions a week of **Jane Considine's Hooked on Books** reading comprehension units
- Additionally, all year groups enjoy ad-hoc sessions of **Reading Together Time** each week – where a class text is read and enjoyed in a low-pressure manner that includes and engages all children. Texts for **RTT** are selected by class teachers to ensure coverage of a range of fiction types (archaic, non-linear, unreliable narrator, etc.)
- Spelling is taught in Reception and Year 1 using **Read Write Inc.**
- In Years 2-6, **The Oak Academy Spelling** is used to explore a range of spelling rules and strategies, relating to the National Curriculum requirements for each year group; these rules and patterns are taught in discrete weekly lessons
- Literacy skills are taught, practised and developed across the curriculum
- Provision is made for children who require extra support through differentiated class teaching, targeted teaching groups in English lessons and through intervention groups
- Intervention groups for English include: 1:1 Reading; extra Reading Plus sessions; TestBase SATs targeted questioning for Year 6 pupils; IXL targeted

learning; Badger Sentence Writer sessions; Fast Track **Read Write Inc.**; Fresh Start **Read Write Inc.** and SaLT sessions

- Children are taught basic letter formation through the **Read Write Inc.** programme in Reception and the Autumn/Spring terms of Year 1
- Continuous cursive handwriting is taught from the summer term of Year 1 onwards. We use the **Handwriting Rescue Scheme**, initially to *teach* continuous cursive handwriting and subsequently to *practise* and *refresh* skills
- All children work their way up our **Handwriting/Presentation Success Ladder** during their time in school. This awards their progress with licenses for using pen, then red pen for underlining. The ladder refers to confident use of continuous cursive handwriting and also to careful use of the **DUMTUMS** system (Date, Underline, Miss a line, Title, Underline, Miss a line, Start) for presentation in books

4. APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' 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: School Council elections; debating (which is incorporated into our British Values and topic work); class assemblies; talk partners; drama sessions and school productions.

We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect or other language is of prime importance.

5. APPROACHES TO READING

- We use the **Read Write Inc.** programme to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1, enabling children to blend and decode efficiently; this is continued into KS2 if necessary
- Teachers model reading technique and strategies during **Reading Together Time** sessions
- Children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during **Reading Together Time** as well as in other subject lessons – texts are carefully chosen to ensure that all year groups are exposed to texts from a range of fiction types (see above)
- We use the **Reading Plus** programme in Years 5 and 6 to teach fluency, stamina, vocabulary, comprehension and motivation (3 sessions each week)
- We use **Jane Considine's Hooked on Books** in Years 3 and 4 to teach fluency, stamina, vocabulary, comprehension and motivation (3 sessions each week)
- Reception children read 1:1 with an adult daily
- Children in Years 1 and 2 will read with an adult daily
- Children in KS2 who are reading below the expected standard will be identified and will read with an adult daily/each week depending on their needs
- As the children move through the school, opportunities to read independently for a sustained period of time are afforded to them
- All children are encouraged to read independently (and to an adult) at home
- Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books; World Book Day is also celebrated to help promote a love of reading
- Children in all year groups visit the library in Ross-on-Wye once every six weeks and have their own library account – during each visit, the children will spend

time enjoying books independently and with their friends, before bringing home their new books to share with family members

- Our school library enables all children to find and read books across a wide range of genres and topics – children can take books on loan and enjoy the various texts on offer

Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1

Pupils take home reading books that fit with their current learning in **Read Write Inc.** Phonics lessons. This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parents cannot read with them. Pupils can also take home stories and non-fiction texts that they cannot yet read for themselves but that can be read to them (from the school and town libraries).

Key Stage 2

Teachers identify children whose reading is not at the expected standard for their year group, and these children take home a book from our **Oxford Mixed KS2 Reading Scheme** (levels 8-20) which is carefully matched to their ability. In some special cases, these books remain *in school* to be used daily with a TA or an adult reading volunteer. All reading scheme books can be accessed from a central 'library' and to promote independent learning, the children are encouraged to take responsibility for changing their own Reading Scheme books.

Through regular use of our school/the town library, all KS2 children are encouraged to share a book at home with their family. We believe that this not only helps to develop inferential skills but also supports a life-long love of reading. The **Reading Plus** programme is exciting and engaging and helps to motivate KS2 children to read and to develop their reading skills.

6. 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)**.

- Coverage across the year groups is ensured through the use of the **Read Write Inc.** programme and Jane Considine's **The Write Stuff** approach, as well as discrete SPaG lessons that follow **The Oak Academy** scheme for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling
- Teachers model writing strategies (and the use of phonics and spelling strategies) in shared writing sessions – both **Read Write Inc.** and **The Write Stuff** are heavily reliant on modelled writing as a key feature
- Sentence construction and text structure are taught through modelled and guided writing
- In Key Stage 1, writing is taught through the **Read Write Inc.** programme
- Children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts (using quality texts as a model) and for a variety of purposes and audiences
- A high standard of presentation is expected: we use the **DUMTUMS** system to ensure dates and titles are recorded appropriately
- Children are taught basic letter formation in Reception and Year 1 and then continuous cursive handwriting using the **Handwriting Rescue Scheme**
- Children work their way up our **Handwriting/Presentation Success Ladder**

- We recognise the important role that computing has to play in our school in the development of Literacy skills; children will be given the opportunity to produce multimodal texts and develop their understanding of visual literacy; interactive technology is used daily to enhance the teaching of English

7. APPROACHES TO GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of **The National Curriculum (2014)**.

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able 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, structure and meaning of words and their parts; the shape and sound of words; the letter patterns within them and the various ways they can learn these patterns.

- In Reception and KS1, 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 phonetically regular (common exception words)
- In Years 2 to 6, children are taught to spell words from the **National Curriculum (2014)** lists for their year group following **The Oak Academy** programme, which sets out taught weekly spelling lessons
- When writing, children should be concentrating on higher-order thinking skills and should simply 'have a go' at spelling
- Children in Years 2-6 edit their independent writing at the end of each **Write Stuff** unit and part of this approach involves using dictionaries to identify spelling mistakes and correct them

The teaching of grammar and punctuation rules and techniques is embedded in **Write Stuff** and **Read Write Inc.** lessons. Complete coverage across the year groups is ensured through the additional use of **The Oak Academy** Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling planning to deliver weekly discrete SPaG lessons.

8. CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

9. ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

- Children's next steps for Reading are identified during **Reading Together Time** sessions, reading comprehension lessons and through careful consideration of tracking and data from the **Reading Plus** program. These are then passed on to parents at Parents' Evenings and in mid/end of term reports.
- Progress and Attainment in Reading is assessed informally in every session against criteria from the **National Curriculum (2014)**. This data will then be combined with information gained from termly **NFER reading assessments**, to inform the teacher's assessment of children against the required standard for their year group.

- Children's next steps for writing are presented to them in the form of whole class feedback linked to identified misconceptions in Sentence Stacking lessons and well as personalised feedback from their teacher on independent writing. Next steps in individual **Write Stuff** lessons are presented as 'Steps to Success' which the children write/stick into their books in each Sentence Stacking session.
- Progress and Attainment in Writing is assessed at the end of each Write Stuff unit, when independent extended writing is completed and teachers look at this against the standards for the year group. This feeds into termly teacher assessment of writing.
- Progress and Attainment in Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation is assessed informally in English lessons and formally through termly **NFER SPaG assessments**. This data feeds into the teacher's assessment of children against the required standard for writing for their year group.

10. INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as significantly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take appropriate steps to improve their attainment. Such steps might include adding children to daily reader lists; providing 1:1 reading comprehension sessions; placing children in intervention groups for targeted support in a specific area, etc.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St Joseph's has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their gender, 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 all our children. We believe in '**valuing what the child brings to 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.

12. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader is currently Miss Steiner, the Year 5 teacher. Miss Steiner is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- monitoring and evaluating English
- tracking pupil progress
- monitoring marking and planning in English
- monitoring and ensuring full curriculum coverage
- monitoring the quality of the learning environment
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up-to-date with recent English developments

13. 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. There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. Termly

curriculum overviews provide parents with information about the English curriculum and suggestions for how parents can support their children.

Parents are involved in hearing children read and are encouraged to discuss books with them. Workshops will be provided for parents to help them understand how best to support their children's word reading and comprehension skills at home. The same will be provided to support parents with their child's SPaG learning. Strategies will be taught to enable parents to help children achieve the targets set by teachers. Parents are encouraged to read both with and to their children at home, in order to promote reading. Parents are welcomed into school to support reading in the classroom.

Parents are informed of English homework tasks through the **Evidence Me** platform and are given information about how to support children with use of reading and spelling strategies at home.

14. SUMMARY

SATs results are published in accordance with Government legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Phonics Policy
- Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Continuing Professional Development Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect the priority of raising standards in writing throughout the school.

Handwriting Policy

Rationale

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, all children are introduced to correct letter formation from the start and to joined, cursive writing from Year 1 onwards. We believe that this raises standards in presentation and spelling throughout the school by developing confidence, accuracy and fluency.

The rules of cursive writing help:

- to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke
- with flow as letters naturally lead into each other – it is impossible to write separate letters without joining
- with spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness
- develop a child's visual memory
- all children's writing skills, regardless of academic ability
- to develop skills of punctuation and grammar

All our children write with good quality, sharp pencils until they achieve their 'pen licence' and begin writing with Frixion handwriting pens. Subsequently, they achieve membership of the 'Red Pen Club' when they meet the standards set out on the **Handwriting and Presentation Success Ladder**.

Aims

We aim to:

- provide clear opportunities for all children to achieve success in handwriting
- produce clear, concise, legible handwriting
- present work (for a variety of audiences) neatly
- develop accuracy and fluency
- help children recognise that handwriting is a form of communication and should be considered important in order for it to be effective
- promote confidence and self-esteem
- encourage children to take pride in their work
- build in cross-curricular links to broaden experience
- help children recognise handwriting as a life-long skill
- display neatly presented work around the school as a model of excellence for others to aspire to
- ensure that staff model neat, accurate cursive handwriting on whiteboards and when marking

Regular and frequent handwriting practise is prioritised for the following reasons:

- to develop effective and efficient pen hold
- to develop the habit of concentration which is crucial to excellent handwriting
- to place a strong emphasis on the insistence of perfection
- to provide the class teacher with the opportunity to help assess individuals' progress and monitor areas requiring reinforcement

We use the **Handwriting Rescue Scheme** to teach continuous cursive handwriting.

In Key Stage 1, handwriting sessions start with a warm-up activity ('air writing' or writing on each other's backs, for example) which is led by the teacher, modelling writing on the board. The main part of the session comprises children working on a particular skill or focus point and applying techniques themselves on worksheets. Children are closely monitored by the teacher throughout.

In Key Stage 2, where necessary, children refresh and practise their continuous cursive handwriting skills using the **Handwriting Rescue Scheme**. In an ongoing way, their daily practise is continuous cursive writing in all their books.

Handwriting and Reading

In school, children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop awareness for reading in print and writing in cursive, side by side in their learning.

Monitoring

Progression in handwriting and the presentation of all work is monitored through annual work scrutiny.



St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School
Handwriting and Presentation Success Ladder

When I can:	I can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form all my individual letters correctly in pencil 	Begin to learn to form cursive letters and join letters to each other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give all my letters entry and exit strokes • Join my letters to each other • Use a consistent, reasonable size for all my letters • Correctly use ascenders and descenders • Correctly use capital letters • Do the DUMTUMS correctly in all my books 	Get my pen licence and write in my books (except Maths books) using a <i>Blue Handwriting Pen</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce neat, cursive handwriting in all my books using my handwriting pen • Correct mistakes with a single, straight line drawn through 	Join the 'Red Pen Club' and double underline all my dates and titles with my red pen and a ruler

Disclaimer:

Children can be given 'points on their licence' at any point if the teacher feels that the child's handwriting standard has slipped. If a child receives three points on their licence, the licence will be taken away until such a point as the teacher feels it has been earned back.