

# ST. GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ENGLISH POLICY

### Our Mission Statement

*'With Christ at our side and St Gerard as our guide, we strive for perfection.'*

St Gerard's school motto, reinforces our Mission Statement in a child friendly way.

*'We live, love and learn together with Jesus.'*

Reviewed: October 2017  
Next review: June 2020



# **St Gerard's Catholic Primary School**

## **English Policy**

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**Introduction**

Our school's philosophy of language is that the teaching of English has a crucial role to play in equipping learners with the language skills they need to become effective members of their own community, the world of work and of society in general

'The over-riding aim of the English curriculum is to enable pupils to develop to the full, their ability to use and understand English' (English 5-16).

## **Purpose of study**

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised. **(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

## **Aims**

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- ☑ read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- ☑ develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- ☑ acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- ☑ appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- ☑ write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- ☑ use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- ☑ are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

**(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

## **Entitlement**

Every learner in our school is entitled to an experience that supports their development in areas of educational experience (particularly in aesthetic and creative, mathematical and technological, human and social, and spiritual areas)

All our pupils, irrespective of age, ability, gender and ethnic origin are entitled to participate fully in, and benefit from a broad range of appropriate English teaching and learning activities at every stage of their education. They are entitled to experience success rather than failure from their English learning activities.

## **Attitudes and competencies to be developed**

By our own attitudes towards our pupils as language users, we endeavour to foster within them respect for each other's language. We do this by:

- Building on the successful language learning which pupils have already accomplished in their own homes;
- Providing pupils with the best possible learning opportunities matched to their individual needs;
- Providing an apprenticeship approach to acquiring oral, reading and written language in which 'the adult represents the success the child seeks yet offers endless help'
- Maintaining a constant respect for the pupils' language
- Enabling pupils to reflect on themselves as language users

## **Breadth of Study**

### **Language and literacy**

6.1 Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

### **Spoken language**

6.2 Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

### **Reading and writing**

6.3 Teachers should develop pupils' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Schools should do everything to promote wider reading. They should provide library facilities and set ambitious expectations for reading at home. Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They should be taught the correct use of grammar. They should build on what they have been taught to expand the range of their writing and the variety of the grammar they use. The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

### **Vocabulary development**

6.4 Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge. They should increase pupils' store of words in general; simultaneously, they should also make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words. In this way, pupils expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write. In addition, it is vital for pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and older pupils should be taught the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions. It is particularly important to induct pupils into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language. **(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

**The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013** identifies the programmes of study for the areas of:

### **Spoken language**

The statements apply to all years. The content should be taught at a level appropriate to the age of the pupils. Pupils should build on the oral language skills that have been taught in preceding years.

### **Reading and writing Y1, Y2, Y3-Y4, Y5-Y6**

#### **Reading**

Word reading

Comprehension

#### **Writing**

Transcription – spelling

Handwriting(Y1-Y4) Handwriting and presentation (Y5-Y6)

Composition

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

### **School Curriculum**

The programmes of study for English are set out year-by-year for key stage 1 and two-yearly for key stage 2. The school curriculum for English on a year-by-year basis is available online (school website) and in teacher shared documents.

### **Attainment targets.**

By the end of each key stage pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. (**The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013**)

Schools are not required by law to teach example content in [square brackets] or the content indicated as being ‘non-statutory’

### **Key experiences**

We aim to provide the pupils of our school with the following key experiences

- Access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction and multi-media based material;
- Opportunity to browse and select from a range of books within the classroom;
- Opportunities to experience a wide range of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities;
- Opportunities to be involved in a range of cross curricular activities to develop all aspects of English;
- Opportunities to share books with children in another class;
- Visits to the local community library to listen to stories, choose books and develop library skills;
- Opportunities to experience live performances;
- Opportunities to take part in regular class assemblies, masses and school and key stage performances;
- Access to a Book Fair each year and participation in book related activities such as dressing up as a book character, quizzes, surveys, sharing opinions;
- Access to TV, radio programmes, videos, DVD’s, CD’s, computer generated text, and interactive whiteboard;
- The opportunity to present writing in a variety of formats each year, e.g. plays, posters, information leaflets, menus, comic strips etc;

- The opportunity to engage in whole class, guided, paired and individual reading and writing activities;
- The opportunity to engage in various drama and role play as a tool for learning;
- Opportunities to take part in performances for parents and the wider community.

## **Guidance notes**

Guidance notes for the following have been produced and are available on Teacher shared and in the literacy cupboard.

- Guidelines for the teaching and assessment of Spoken language
- Guidelines for the teaching and assessment of Reading
- Guidelines for the teaching and assessment of Phonics
- Guidelines for the teaching of Library Skills
- Guidelines for the teaching and assessment of Writing
- Guidelines for the teaching writing and responding to Poetry
- Guidelines for the teaching of Handwriting
- Spelling and Guidelines for the teaching children to become good spellers
- Guidelines for the teaching of Vocabulary, Grammar and punctuation

Teaching should ensure that work in speaking and listening, reading and writing is integrated.

## **Inclusion**

**The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013** sets out

### **Setting suitable challenges**

4.1 Teachers should set high expectations for every pupil. They should plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard. They have an even greater obligation to plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.

Further details of inclusion can be found in appendix 2

### **Special Educational Needs**

Once identified, pupils with special educational needs in speaking and listening, reading or writing, will have their needs assessed and appropriate action taken and support given.

### **Planning including cross-curricular opportunities**

Every learning experience is a literacy experience. We think through language. We speak and listen through language. We read through language and we write through language. Every aspect of our lives is governed by language.

Each curriculum area has its own specialized language, e.g. investigations of a scientific or mathematical kind give opportunities for speaking and listening in discussion, for planning, for making suggestions, asking questions and reporting results. There are specific formats of reading and writing e.g. non-chronological reports, explanations and instructions. Religious Education gives the opportunity for personal reflection on and explanation of understanding and belief through all three strands of the English curriculum. History gives the opportunity for developing research skills, chronological and story writing. Every subject within the curriculum contains opportunities for

speaking, listening, reading and writing. These should be exploited to ensure opportunities to practice reinforce and demonstrate skills.

Medium term plans should identify which unit (narrative, non-fiction, and poetry) are to be taught and when. Unit plans should identify texts and ICT to be used and modeled, shared, guided, and independent activities to be undertaken to teach the objectives and key aspects of learning identified for that unit.

## Teaching styles

To enable access to the whole curriculum for every pupil, to cater for the variety of learning styles within each class, and to ensure progression and reinforcement of skills and concepts throughout the year groups we employ a variety of teaching styles.

- Literacy is a basic skill and is key to creativity, imagination and critical thinking. We want our pupils to find learning exciting, compelling and intrinsically worthwhile. Therefore, we use a variety of interactive teaching and learning techniques so that pupils can respond successfully to their learning.
- We plan activities where pupils:
  - \*Integrate prior and new knowledge
  - \*Acquire and use a range of learning skills
  - \*Solve problems individually and in groups
  - \*Think carefully about their successes and failures
  - \*Evaluate conflicting evidence and think critically
  - \*Accept that learning involves uncertainty and difficulty
- We use questions as a tool for learning. Effective questioning models how learning evolves. Appropriately designed questions leads pupils from unsorted knowledge to understanding, teaching pupils how to use them for effective learning. Blooms Taxonomy of questioning will be employed by teachers when planning and shared with children to promote higher order thinking skills and give a shared vocabulary.
- We use a wide variety of materials to enable every pupil access the planned teaching and learning objectives
- We give pupils the opportunity to work in a variety of ways – whole class, groups (of different sizes and composition) as pairs and individuals, according to their needs, the nature of the activity and the learning objectives
- We build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, and enable them to become effective language users by:
  - \*Sharing teaching and learning objectives and clarify expected outcomes in a language that pupils can understand
  - \*Teaching children to self-monitor
  - \*Effective use of the plenary enabling children to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and process orally as well by in writing
  - \*Encouraging children to learn from and support one another, and to realize that they do not all have to be at the same level or arrive at the same point at the same time
  - \*Positive and constructive oral and/or written feedback
- We enable pupils to develop written and spoken Standard English through the model we set as teachers, and through sharing and providing good quality reading and writing materials and texts.

## Assessment

Assessment provides information about what a pupil knows, understands, is able to do and where they go next. It is part of the teaching and learning process, and as such is a part of everyday classroom practice. The majority of assessments are part of a continuous process rather than a separate activity requiring the use of extra tasks and tests.

On-going assessment is used to inform medium and short term plans and thus highlight pupils' strengths and areas for development.

We consider the following when assessing a pupil's progress

- The assessment technique must match the learning objectives and the activities designed to meet them
- Key assessment opportunities must be included in the medium and short term planning
- We must be selective when deciding who and what to assess
- We must be clear about what we are going to assess i.e. we must identify the key learning objectives (what we want the pupils to know, understand and be able to do); outcomes of the lesson (what the pupils will produce); and assessment criteria (how we will know whether the pupils have been successful in achieving the learning objectives).

During Y2 and Y6 children will participate in statutory assessment of English and in Y1 (and Y2 if required) children will take the phonic screening check.

## **Marking**

Marking of all work will be in line with the school's marking policy.

## **Monitoring pupils' progress and target setting**

See assessment policy

## **Links with parents and carers**

During the Spring Term of nursery, the children are able to take home a nursery book each day to share with their families. Parents/ carers are asked to attend a meeting to inform them about our approach to reading. They are given a book called "Helping your child to read" and are also asked to keep a Reading Diary recording their child's attitude and response to the books.

Parents and carers are encouraged to read daily with their children and to complete or help their child complete two entries a week in their child's reading diary throughout EYFS and key stages 1 and 2.

Children take spellings home to learn each week.

Children may be required to complete other literacy homework (*see homework policy*)

Inspire workshops may have a literacy focus

Parents' evenings and end of year reports allow formal discussion and reporting of progress to parents. Informal and formal meetings with parents/carers may be held during the year if appropriate

## **Resources**

Resources are stored in the following locations

- Class specific resources, e.g. class fiction, poetry, guided reading, teaching resources etc, in class stock cupboards to be displayed and used as necessary

- EYFS ,e .g. non fiction, additional fiction, additional phonics, story sacks, big books etc, in the practical room between Y1 and Y2
- Key stage 1, e.g. non fiction, additional fiction, additional phonics, story sacks, big books etc, in the practical room between Y1 and Y2
- KS2 e.g. non-fiction, additional fiction, big books, in library area
- SEN – see SENCO for specific resources
- Other reference materials, such as DfES guidance, moderated writing samples, reading diaries, activity ideas, first step materials etc, are stored in the literacy cupboard by the ICT Suite.

Should there be a shortage of materials staff are expected to inform the English subject leader.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement**

Short term/weekly planning is reviewed by the class teacher at the end of each week.

Unit plans are reviewed by the class teacher, the English subject leader, phase leader and head teacher.

Writing assessments are moderated internally and externally with other schools and within the local authority (e.g. Key stage 1 SAT's).

Lesson observations, book trawls etc will take place as part of whole school monitoring and evaluation timetable.

An improvement plan identifying specific issues and actions to address these will be made and carried out annually.

September 2015

To be reviewed June 2017

Updated October 2017

To be reviewed June 2020, unless significant changes to National Curriculum.

## **Appendix 1 Breadth of study**

### **Spoken language**

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

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. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the national curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

### **(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

#### **Reading**

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- ☐ word reading
- ☐ comprehension (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

### **(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

#### **Writing**

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- ☑ transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- ☑ composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

**(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

### **Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary**

The two statutory appendices – on spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation – give an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. References to developing pupils' vocabulary are also included within the appendices.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

**(The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document September 2013)**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Responding to pupils' needs and overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils**

4.3 A wide range of pupils have special educational needs, many of whom also have disabilities. Lessons should be planned to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. In many cases, such planning will mean that these pupils will be able to study the full national curriculum. The SEN Code of Practice includes advice on approaches to identification of need which can support this. A minority of pupils will need access to specialist equipment and different approaches. The SEN Code of Practice outlines what needs to be done for them

4.4 With the right teaching, that recognises their individual needs, many disabled pupils may have little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use as part of their daily life. Teachers must plan lessons so that these pupils can study every national curriculum subject. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work.

4.5 Teachers must also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress should take account of the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.

4.6 The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects.

These principles highlight the importance of settings and schools planning literacy teaching in order to meet the needs of all children. Planning should also ensure that the needs of children within specific groups, such as those with special educational needs, gifted and talented children and EAL (English as an additional language) learners, are addressed in full. Planning for inclusion should be an integral part of a wider, coherent approach to effective literacy planning.

### **Additional inclusion information for English**

Teachers may find the following additional information helpful when implementing the statutory inclusion statement **Providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils**. Teachers need to consider the full requirements of the inclusion statement when planning for individuals or groups of pupils.

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in English, some pupils may require:

- support in overcoming specific difficulties in learning which result in an uneven profile across the attainment targets. They will require help to improve areas of weakness and strategies for managing specific difficulties
- opportunities to meet the demands for speaking and listening and other oral activities through the use of alternative communication systems, to compensate for difficulties in using spoken language
- opportunities to learn and develop alternative methods of recording, such as ICT, to compensate for difficulties with handwriting, to enable them to demonstrate their wider writing skills
- opportunities to learn and develop tactile methods of interpreting written information, to overcome difficulties in managing visual information.

In assessment:

- where pupils use alternative communication systems, judgments should be made against the level descriptions for speaking and listening. It will be necessary to note any demands that are not met, such as the awareness and use of standard English
- for pupils with disabilities who are unable to write by hand, the handwriting requirement of the writing attainment target will not be applicable

- for pupils using tactile methods, the assessment of reading will be through the use of materials of equivalent demand presented in the appropriate medium.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Once identified, pupils with special educational needs in speaking and listening, reading or writing, will have their needs assessed and appropriate action taken and support given.

Provision will be made for children for whom English is an additional language. Children learning EAL must be supported to access curriculum content while also developing cognitive and academic language within whole-class, group and independent contexts. With the exception of children learning EAL who also have learning difficulties, it is critical to maintain a level of cognitive challenge consistent with that of the rest of the class. Children who are or have become conversationally fluent will continue to require explicit attention to the development of the academic language associated with the subject and of specific aspects within the subject. Planning should identify the language demands of the objectives and associated activities. Making sure that EAL learners know and can use the language demanded by the curriculum content of the unit or lesson then becomes an additional objective. To identify the language demands, teachers and practitioners will need to consider the language children will need to understand in order to access an activity. This will need to take account of the language children will need to be able to produce, either oral or written, to demonstrate success in achieving the learning intentions.