



St Michael's Catholic Primary School

English Curriculum

Writing

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and a prerequisite for educational and social progress as it underpins the work undertaken in all other areas of the curriculum. The acquisition of language skills is of the utmost importance and therefore the teaching of all aspects English is given a high priority within our school. Confidence in basic language skills enables children to communicate creatively and imaginatively, preparing them for the future. We value the importance of English as an essential tool for life.

Our aim is to ensure that every child becomes a reader, a writer and a confident speaker. We promote high standards of language and literacy by firstly equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and we develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. We seek to ensure that all children achieve their full potential in all aspects of English.

Intention

It is our intention when teaching the English curriculum that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. We strive to ensure that our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading, writing, speaking and listening which will equip them with the fundamental tools to achieve in the school and beyond. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination.

It is our intention to facilitate language acquisition through oral rehearsing by internalising sentence structures and narratives to bridge speaking to writing.

Implementation

Our English curriculum is underpinned by the principles of Talk for Writing. At St Michael's we teach writing using a three stage process: imitation, innovation and invention. Our writing curriculum is grounded in oral rehearsing, shared exploration and guided practice, moving pupils to independent application.

The language required for success at any writing task must become part of the children's linguistic repertoire. To achieve this, St Michael's has structured units of work to provide the appropriate language patterns through our genre map. Our genre map allows pupils to build up a bank of text types so that language patterns are familiar to them and become part of their linguistic competency. In all Key Stages, a range of genres are taught, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Our genre map has been planned to ensure there is progression and challenge across each year group, building upon texts that have been previously taught. Furthermore our genre map links writing opportunities to cross curricular topics by embedding literacy across other subjects and enhancing functional writing skills.

At the start of each new writing unit, our pupils complete a 'cold task' which is an independent writing piece on a narrative. The cold task is used to assess pupil's prior knowledge and informs the teaching sequence.

During the imitation stage, pupils orally internalise exemplary model texts using visual representations of the text structure. During the imitation stage, teachers use shared writing to model composition and explicitly teach grammar, punctuation and spelling.

During the innovation stage, pupils adapt model texts by applying learned structured and toolkit language creatively.

Finally, pupils produce independent writing in a similar genre or context by crafting original compositions using language and stylistic features internalised in earlier writing phases.

Writing toolkits are used within each writing unit. The toolkits outline features, grammar, vocabulary and structural expectations.

Each class has their own set of 'rule kits' which are displayed in the classroom and on classroom displays and feature the non-negotiables for each year group.

Handwriting is taught discreetly at the start of every English lesson. Staff model handwriting using the Letter Join Handwriting programme. Once a child has fluent, legible handwriting, they become a pen writer.

To be a successful writer, we believe that children need to be able to spell accurately, knowing the relationships between sounds and letters. Spelling is taught three times per week with a new spelling rule and pattern being taught each week. Pupils are given 7 spellings each week and are tested on 10 with 3 unknown spellings where pupils are expected to apply the spelling rule or pattern.

Reading

Reading is implemented everywhere in our school. Reading is a skill that we use everyday across all subjects. The expectations of the National Curriculum puts demands both on fluency with ‘word level reading’ but also with ‘language comprehension.’ Both are allocated equal weighting within our school reading curriculum.

We strive to ensure that all our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading which will equip them with the fundamental tools to achieve in school and beyond. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination.

Intention

At St Michael’s we value reading as life skill and as a school community we are fully committed to enabling our children to become competent and life- long readers. We place reading and books at the core of our curriculum, recognising the important role it plays in extending vocabulary and developing comprehension skills in English and across subjects. For this reason, our intent to increase our children’s access to high quality texts, extend vocabulary, challenge children to become more confident, engaged and discerning readers but most of all- promote greater enjoyment of books. We understand that these elements are all intertwined, each relies on the other if our children are to become life-long readers.

Implementation

Raid the Reader- reading comprehension

We use a systematic approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills and objectives, outlined in the National Curriculum. Grounded in research, our approach utilises short texts to engage and expose children to a variety of genres and styles. Children are encouraged to ‘raid’ the text for key vocabulary and literacy techniques as well as answer comprehension questions based on National Curriculum skills and objectives.

From Years One to Six, children take part in ‘Raid the Reader’ lessons that are adapted for each learner.

Phonics

High quality phonics teaching lies at the heart of our early education, securing the crucial skills of word recognition, that once mastered, enable children to read fluently. At St Michael’s, reading is taught through a systematic programme of phonics. We follow Essential Letters and Sounds programme to teach phonics.

Phonics is taught discreetly every day in Early Years and Key Stage One. Pupils in Key Stage Two, who have gaps in their phonics ability, continue to be supported through timely and effective intervention. Their progress is monitored by the Class Teacher and SENCO.

We use phonics tracker to monitor pupil progress and assessments are completed each half term.

Reading Books

Pupils reading books are matched to their phonics and reading ability. Pupils are given two reading books each week. These books are their 'fluency' book and their 'grapple' book. In Key Stage Two, children who are identified as confident readers complete a reading test. The results of these test are analysed and children are identified as Free Readers. They can choose their Free Reading Book from an appropriate section of the school and class libraries- this is their independent reading book.

All children are listened to read by an adult at least once a week and books are then changed as required. Each class has a reading incentive chart in their classroom entitled 'Once Upon a Time' to encourage, motivate and reward regular reading. We encourage our pupils to read every day and to log their reading in their reading journal to demonstrate regular reading. For each log children will receive point and then pupils are awarded with certificates as they progress through the reading incentive chart.

Love for Reading

At St Michael's we are fully committed to enabling our children to become competent and life-long readers. Our aim is to create an environment where our pupils are motivated to read. We need our pupils to view books as both an escape and an education.

Each class has an attractive reading area where pupils are encouraged to escape into a book.

Each week, pupils across the school are chosen to take part in our 'Snuggle with a Book.' The Snuggle with a Book pack includes a sachet of hot chocolate, a reading buddy and a reading book of the child's choice from their class library.

Our school librarians promote a love for reading and each week host our school's book swap scheme 'give one get one' to encourage our pupils to read a wealth of texts and genres.