

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspiring everyone to REACH through Faith, Hope, Love

At St Joseph's, we strive for academic excellence through encouraging resilience, empathy, aspiration and challenge. We have high expectations for ALL so that we can be 'The best we can be.' With Faith, Hope and Love at the heart of our school family, our children feel safe, secure and supported.



English Policy

Our ethos is one that nurtures education through recognition and celebration of all children's experiences and achievements, whatever the context. Each child is unique and made in the likeness of God. Every child should succeed at their own level and be praised for this success

Approved by: Full Governing Board

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Aims

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. We intend to provide a Writing, Reading and spoken language curriculum, which is accessible to all children, starting from EYFS, across the whole of the primary phase to **inspire everyone to REACH through Faith, Hope and Love**. Improved performance at reading, writing and spoken language will enable our pupils to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, accurately and, ultimately, to their greater satisfaction. This will also help them to be more **resilient** and deal more successfully with other curriculum subjects, while enriching their lives beyond school and enabling them to **REACH** in all they do. The teaching and learning of language skills are, therefore, given a high priority in our school.

We deliver sessions that are engaging, **aspirational** and well-resourced to enable access to learning for all children including children with FSM, EAL, PP and SEND. Our children **REACH** and strive for excellence, and are able to work both independently and co-operatively with a developing **resilience**.

Our aim for English is to promote high standards of language and English by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature and **aspirations** through widespread reading for enjoyment.

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

- reading easily, fluently and with good understanding
- with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment
- having acquired a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciating our rich and varied literary heritage
- writing clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- using discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- able to speak/perform confidently and appropriately to an audience

We encourage all children to become independent learners, who have high **expectations**, and are **confident** in all strands of learning. The children will be given opportunities to speak in a variety of contexts (including during local competitions and events) and learn to listen to and value the views of others.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are explained 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 Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework (updated 2025) and Development Matters (updated 2023). The Writing Framework (reworked in 2025) has also been used to develop our curriculum.

Curriculum Delivery

From reception to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through adaptation and the support of teachers and teaching assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential. Children may receive additional support, if necessary, outside of the English lessons. Evaluative marking is used and next steps identified. Assessment informs planning and reference is made to the National Curriculum in medium term plans. We provide a rich and varied experience for pupils to draw on in their writing and reading skills across the curriculum. We use guidance from the EEF and the latest educational research to continuously review and refine our curriculum, ensuring it reflects current best practice.

Foundation Stage

In Reception children have daily discrete phonics lessons using our SSP Unlocking Letters and Sounds, and English lessons four times a week. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child initiated activities. This includes developing a love for stories, learning to speak clearly, recognising letters and sounds, and beginning to write familiar words and sentences both dictated and from their own creative imagination using full stops and correct capitalization, all through play-based learning.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1 daily discrete whole class phonics lessons continue (using our SSP Unlocking Letters and Sounds), as well as daily English lessons. Children take part in daily group reading sessions where they will work with the class teacher, carry out a follow up task, complete a Look, Cover Write Check(LCWC) activity which all help to reinforce their phonics learning. Handwriting is taught daily following the ULS scheme, which aligns with the phonics programme. There will also be daily Reading for Pleasure times to develop a wider vocabulary and a love of reading. English skills are practised and developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through, targeted teaching groups in English, extra group reading sessions and specific individualised interventions following the SSP.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 children have daily English, group reading and spelling lessons. Grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are initially taught discretely through VCOP sessions and are then embedded across the curriculum. Additional English sessions, where appropriate, include grammar, handwriting (refer to Handwriting and Presentation Policy), Reading for Pleasure and daily story time. English skills are practised and developed across the curriculum. Provision and adaptations are made for children who require extra support as for KS2.

Approaches to the spoken language

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The four strands of spoken language: speaking, listening, group discussion and drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be

able to speak **confidently**, clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and **empathy** and contribute to group discussions effectively.

We achieve this by:

- giving our children **confidence** in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We also encourage a respect for the views of others
- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with them and with other adults in our school
- helping them to articulate their ideas with **confidence** and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in Celebration of the Word, productions, prayers in classes, reading in Mass, school council, house captain elections, yearly Look Who's Talk oracy competition, yearly Gloucestershire Wildlife Quiz, and many more, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama, talk partners and discussions
- by developing the children's ability to listen with **empathy**, attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately

St Joseph's Approach to Phonics

The teaching of phonic skills is embedded within English teaching in each class. We use the SSP called Unlocking Letters and Sounds. This is used to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1; enabling children to blend and segment effectively. This is continued into KS2 where necessary. All lessons follow the same structure; revisit and review, teach, practise, apply and assess. They comprise of learning different graphemes, focussing on oral and aural phonological skills and sight vocabulary. During these sessions, children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing skills to their writing. This structure enables children to segment for spelling efficiently. These graphemes then become an expectation in all written work across the curriculum. These lessons are reviewed daily and altered to match the individual group of children's needs. In Year 2, the phonics continue until Christmas then from the spring term, spelling sessions are planned bases on the NC programme of study. The lessons also incorporate grammar expectations during the apply part of the lesson. All children are grouped in accordance to their individual needs and are in phase appropriate groups.

St Joseph's Approach to Reading

Our moto is '**Reading Gives You Wings**' and we aim to deliver sessions that are engaging, **aspirational** and well-resourced enabling all children access to learning, including children with FSM, EAL, PP and SEND. Teachers also ensure that cross-curricular links with concurrent topic work are woven into the programme of study. Pupils have opportunities to undertake group, shared and independent reading throughout the school day. A diverse range of group reading books and a staged reading scheme are available. Children are placed on a book band appropriate to their level/phonetic level and ability based on accurate assessment completed by the class teacher. These books should be read with fluency and easy to build confidence. Children's fluency is tested throughout the year (as appropriate) and adaptations and interventions are put in place to support and develop all children's fluency.

In school, the children are challenged by their teacher during group reading to increase fluency and comprehension whilst reading at a higher level. All staff model reading strategies during these sessions to enable children to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. All children are assessed and their progression is monitored every 6 weeks. We ensure that our sessions provide many purposeful opportunities for reading. We use a wide variety of experiences, quality texts and resources to motivate and **inspire** our children following a scaffolded approach. Teachers create a positive reading culture in school as **'Reading Gives You Wings'**, where reading is promoted, enjoyed and considered 'a pleasure' for all pupils.

Each classroom features a **'Reading Gives You Wings'** display, designed to celebrate reading and promote book talk. These displays are updated with current books being read, pupil recommendations, favourite texts and reading-related work. To further support a love of reading, (where space allows) our classrooms include comfortable reading areas with cushions and blankets, creating a calm and inviting space where children can enjoy books during Reading for Pleasure time.

Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. The more children practise, the more **confident** and competent they become (see the Reading and Support at Home section for more detail on how we encourage and implement this). In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a reading record where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading. The book is written in to show that their child has done group reading.

Reading rewards are given to encourage children to read with their parents at home. Challenges are offered within school to encourage them to be **aspirational** and pupils are encouraged to undertake the annual county library reading challenge. We take part in book festivals, World Book Day, and run other competitions during the year and hold a book fair to further promote reading. Further promotion of reading can be seen through teachers reading **aspirational** texts aloud every day to their class. Reading Ambassadors (Year 2 – 6) promote reading across the school and work with the Reading Lead to do this.

To support our whole-school approach to reading for pleasure, we offer structured opportunities for independent reading during lunchtimes throughout the year. In the spring and summer months, the outdoor Reading Shed is open during lunchtimes. Stocked with a range of age-appropriate texts, it provides a quiet space where pupils can enjoy independent or shared reading. The shed is supported by our Reading Ambassadors, with oversight from the Reading Lead, who ensures resources are maintained and inclusive.

During the colder months, a weekly Lunchtime Reading Club is held indoors. Pupils can read independently, listen to stories, or take part in informal book discussions. Reading Ambassadors assist with sessions, promoting a positive reading culture across year groups. These initiatives form part of our commitment to building lifelong readers and embedding reading enjoyment into the fabric of school life.

Approaches to writing

To develop our children as writers we:

- treat children as writers, from the earliest stage, who have ideas that they will want to communicate, building on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment.

- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing.
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- use guided/shared writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, amend and revise their writing.
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning.
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons.
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways.
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers.

The school follows the Unlocking Letters and Sounds lesson structure, planned following the National curriculum, which enables the children to recap on the previous year's spelling patterns and then introduces new patterns and sight words. This programme is in line with the National Curriculum for spelling. Some children receive extra spelling and phonics support from TAs.

Approaches to Handwriting (also see Handwriting and Presentation policy)

Handwriting begins in the E.Y.F.S with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early fine motor skills. The needs of left handed children, or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention.

Pupils are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. We believe that discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen should take place at least once a day and frequently in the foundation stage. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds Handwriting scheme.

The national expectation for children working at greater depth in Year 2 is that they join their handwriting. The national expectation at the end of year 6 is that all children will join their handwriting. Unlocking Letters and Sounds enables teachers to teach individual letter joins with the leader feeder cursive style. This begins in year 2, once correct letter formation is secure, with discrete lessons following a clear scheme of progression. As the children move up through the school they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluent hand-writing.

Approaches to Grammar and Spelling

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.

The teaching of grammar and spelling is delivered in line with the National Curriculum (2014). Staff are expected to refer to and use the National Curriculum Glossary, which outlines the required grammatical knowledge and the age-appropriate terminology to be taught in each year group. Consistent use of this terminology across the school ensures clarity and progression in pupils' understanding of grammar.

Children across the school are given spellings to learn at home weekly. The list is generated from the week's phonics/spelling lessons and come from the words that the class are finding more challenging. They are tested the following week. KS2 have four spelling sessions a week which have the same key elements as the KS1 phonics session: – rapid recall; focus words; spelling rule explored; new words explored; grammar and sentence work with the new words.

In addition to this, LCWCs are done during a group reading session. Helping the children to understand how to use and apply known spelling patterns (and to develop strategies to tackle tricky words) is the key to helping them to become successful spellers.

Spelling skills are used daily and are also embedded in English lessons so that strategies and rules can be taught in the context of writing. When actually writing children should be concentrating on higher order thinking skills and should simply 'have a go' at spelling that 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 phonics/spelling lessons.

Cross-Curricular links

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links wherever possible. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons across the curriculum. Opportunities for extended writing are expected throughout the wider curriculum and Religious Education work.

Assessment and target setting

Assessment and target setting are integral to monitoring pupil progress and ensuring that teaching is responsive to individual learning needs, enabling all children to achieve their full potential in English.

- Writing is assessed using the LWCET Writing Standards Grids, which have been developed for each year group from Reception to Year 6. These grids support consistent assessment of pupils' writing against age-related expectations and are used to inform planning, target setting, and next steps. These standards are on Insight so teachers can record the children's progress throughout their English journeys.
- Moderation meetings take place three times per year across the LWCET Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). These are conducted in year group teams to ensure consistency and accuracy in assessment across schools, and to support professional dialogue and development.
- In addition, Pupil Progress Meetings are held termly between class teachers and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These meetings focus on reviewing individual pupil progress, identifying

gaps, setting targets, and planning support to ensure all pupils make good progress in writing and reading.

Teachers provide formative feedback to support progress in writing throughout the learning process. This includes:

- Highlighting in green to show where pupils have met elements of the success criteria,
- 'Think bubbles' (written in pink) to prompt children to revisit and improve specific parts of their work,
- Next step targets (also in pink) given during the writing phase to guide further development.

This formative assessment approach ensures pupils receive timely and constructive feedback, enabling them to reflect on and improve their writing as they work.

- Year 1 take part in phonics screening during June
- Year 2 children undertake KS1 SATs in May
- Year 6 pupils undertake SATs in May

Inclusion and support

We are committed to ensuring that all children achieve their full potential in English, according to their individual abilities. Support is embedded within Quality First Teaching, where teachers create an inclusive environment that fosters **confidence** and maintains **high expectations** for all pupils. To meet diverse learning needs, teaching incorporates:

- Adapted planning and resources tailored to varying ability levels
- Scaffolded learning tasks to support access and understanding
- Use of visual aids (widget), concrete materials, and modelling to reinforce concepts
- Targeted questioning and group work to engage learners at different stages
- Regular formative assessment to identify and address misconceptions promptly
- Flexible grouping to allow for focused support or challenge as appropriate

Teachers encourage all pupils to take risks with their learning and celebrate effort and progress, helping to build self-belief and motivation.

Pupil progress meetings are held termly to identify pupils or groups who may be under-achieving. Following these meetings, the class teacher and SENDCo collaborate to review progress and agree on appropriate next steps. This may involve planning targeted interventions, adapting teaching approaches, or seeking additional support.

Targeted interventions are delivered, often in small groups or one-to-one settings, focusing on specific areas such as phonics, spelling, grammar, or writing skills. Parents are actively involved to support learning at home and contribute to their child's progress.

Pupils with a My Plan, My Plan Plus, or EHCP may receive additional, specialist interventions during afternoon sessions that focus on their individual needs, ensuring tailored support beyond whole-class teaching.

Children working at greater depth are identified and provided with suitable challenges. These include enriched and extended learning tasks within English lessons, as well as opportunities through wider curriculum activities and extracurricular provision to deepen their understanding and skills.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. Our aim is that all children should **'REACH through faith hope and love'** to be the **'best they can be'** and our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and resources which caters to the needs of all our children.

Role of Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through the monitoring and evaluating of the subject:

- monitoring of pupil progress
- conference with pupils regarding all areas of English
- analysing data
- monitoring the provision of English in line with the subject monitoring policy
- 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
- analysis of SATs results to identify areas for development
- checking that assessment for English is carried out in line with the school's assessment policy

Parental Involvement

At **St Joseph's**, we believe that **faith, hope, and love** underpin all aspects of a child's development, including their learning in English. We recognise parents as a child's first educators and highly value the role they play in supporting literacy development at home. By fostering a strong and respectful home-school partnership, we aim to ensure that every child is nurtured to become a **confident, resilient, and aspirational** learner.

Reading and Support at Home

Parents are encouraged to engage actively in their child's reading journey by listening to them read regularly, discussing books, and promoting a love of stories and language. Every child uses a **reading diary**, which serves as an effective communication tool between school and home, helping to maintain regular dialogue around progress and enjoyment in reading.

In **EYFS** and **Key Stage 1 Years (Reception – Year 2)** pupils bring home:

- A **fully decodable ULS reading book** that matches the phonics phase and sounds currently being taught in school. These books: are **closely aligned** with classroom teaching; reinforce **decoding skills** and phoneme-grapheme correspondence; build **reading confidence and**

fluency through repeated exposure to taught sounds and encourage **independent reading success** at home

- A **high-quality, age-appropriate text**, chosen to inspire and challenge pupils while enriching vocabulary and broadening their reading experiences.

In **Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)**, pupils bring home:

- A **Collins Big Cat scheme book**, which follows a finely levelled, dual-banded system to support progression in reading fluency, stamina, and comprehension.
- A **high-quality, age-appropriate text**, chosen to inspire and challenge pupils while enriching vocabulary and broadening their reading experiences.

Parental support is also welcomed and encouraged in:

- **Phonics** (especially in EYFS and KS1)
- **Handwriting and spelling**
- **Written tasks** set for homework across a variety of genres

These activities help to reinforce learning at home and promote a deeper engagement with the English curriculum.

Communication with Parents

Parents are offered regular opportunities to engage with their child's English progress:

- **Parents' Evenings** are held twice a year, with the Autumn term meeting focusing on sharing **Age-Related Expectations** for speaking and listening, reading, and writing.
- **Termly year group curriculum letters** outline the English units being covered and provide suggestions for home support.
- **Three Reading Newsletters** are shared throughout the year, featuring book recommendations, reading tips, and ideas for encouraging reading for pleasure, empathy, and critical thinking.

In-School Parental Involvement

St Joseph's warmly welcomes parents and volunteers into classrooms to support reading and literacy. This contribution enriches the learning environment and reinforces our belief in community and shared responsibility for education.

We also provide parent information sessions, including:

- A **Reception and Year 1 Phonics Evening** in Term 1 to share strategies for supporting early reading
- Updates on children's **Phonics Screening Check results** in Year 1

- End-of-key-stage assessment outcomes (**SATs**) in line with statutory requirements

Shared Aspirations and Values

Through consistent and meaningful parental engagement, St Joseph's seeks to develop children who:

- Are **confident** communicators and readers
- Demonstrate **resilience** in their learning
- Show **empathy** through engagement with a wide range of texts
- Maintain **high aspirations** and strive to meet challenging expectations

Rooted in our Gospel values and Catholic ethos, we believe that, with the partnership of our families, every child can achieve their God-given potential in English and beyond.

Conclusion

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

- Handwriting and Presentation Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Marking and feedback policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

This policy will be reviewed by staff and presented to governors for approval every three years.