

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed: January 2025

To be reviewed: January 2027

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study'
- DfE (2013) 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2'
- DfE (2020) 'Headteachers' standards 2020'
- DfE (2023) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Assessment Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring a broad and balanced English curriculum is implemented in the school.
- Ensuring the school's English curriculum is accessible to all pupils.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Appointing an appropriate subject leader.
- Establishing and sustaining high-quality, expert English teaching across all phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.
- Ensuring English teaching is underpinned by high levels of expertise in English and approaches which respect the distinct nature of English as a discipline
- Ensuring effective use is made of formative assessment.
- Ensuring a broad, structured and coherent English curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught.
- Establishing effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities.
- Ensuring that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading.
- Ensuring valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the English curriculum.
- Establishing and sustain culture and practices that enable all pupils, including pupils with SEND, to access the curriculum and learn effectively.

The subject leader is responsible for:

- Encouraging staff to provide effective learning opportunities for pupils.
- Helping to expand on colleagues' areas of expertise in English.
- Organising the deployment of resources and carrying out an annual audit.

- Liaising with teachers across all phases.
- Communicating developments in English to teachers and the SLT, as appropriate.
- Leading staff meetings and providing staff with the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities regarding English skills.
- Ensuring common standards are met for recording and assessing pupils' performance.
- Advising on the contribution of English in other curriculum areas, including cross-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Collating assessment data and setting new priorities for the development of English in subsequent years.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy.
- Ensuring progression of pupils' English skills, with due regard to the national curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of teaching methods are used to cover the curriculum.
- Liaising with the subject leader about key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring the progress of pupils in their class and reporting this on an a termly basis.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of the subject to the subject leader or a member of the SLT.
- Undertaking any training that is necessary in order to effectively teach English.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Liaising with the subject leader in order to implement and develop specialist English-based learning throughout the school.
- Organising and providing training for staff regarding the English curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Advising staff on how best to support pupils' needs.
- Advising staff on the inclusion of English objectives in pupils' individual education plans.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Ensuring they complete work on time and to the best of their ability.
- Ensuring they behave in accordance with the Pupil Code of Conduct.

3. The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum will be followed for all English teaching.

During Reception, in accordance with the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', focus will be put on the seven early learning goals (ELGs), with the English aspect of pupils' work relating to the objectives set out within the framework. The ELGs cover:

1. Communication and language: listening, attention and understanding; and speaking.

2. Personal, social and emotional development: self-regulation, managing self, and building relationships.
3. Physical development: gross motor skills and fine motor skills.
4. Literacy: comprehension, word reading, and writing.
5. Mathematics: number and numerical patterns.
6. Understanding the world: past and present; people, culture and communities; and the natural world.
7. Expressive arts and design: creating with materials; and being imaginative and expressive.

From Years 1 to 6, teaching follows The National Curriculum (2014), which clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a Primary School.

The English programme of study is based on four areas;

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

The National Curriculum is divided into 3 Key stages; Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). 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.

Spoken language

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be *'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'* (p10)

They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

Developing strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English at Holy Family. Teachers place a high emphasis on spoken language and plan for the discreet teaching of skills as well as incidental learning opportunities. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to enable them to internalise language patterns and understand how language changes in different situations. This enables our children to understand and manipulate language for different purposes and audiences. To do this teachers provide authentic contexts, giving children opportunities to use a range of spoken language. Teachers provide a range of purposeful opportunities through role play, drama, discussions and

debates. The strong emphasis on spoken language is evident in the Early Years and continues throughout the school; Key Stage Two take part in regular debates and discussions as well as drama and role play. Teachers model the use of Standard English masterfully, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken English. Speaking frames are used, often to support children with EAL particularly when discussing the differences between formal and informal talk. We ensure this is done with care, as we understand language and identity are closely intertwined.

Examples of spoken language opportunities within the classroom/school environment:

- Stories, songs and poems
- Organised group work with roles
- Drama activities and role play including hot seating /conscience Alley
- School plays and nativities
- Class Assemblies (Each class performs to parents and the school once a year)
- Investigations in science
- Discussion
- Debates linked to topical themes or decisions and dilemmas within books
- School council and Eco-committee meetings
- Circle time
- Individual/Group presentations
- Meeting visitors and talking to various organisations on school trips

Reading

At Holy Family we want our children to become enthusiastic, engaged readers and to develop a life-long love of books. We know that reading is important for both educational purposes as well as personal development, as it builds empathy, improves imagination and language development. We also recognise that reading unlocks the curriculum and by promoting a love of reading, we aim to ensure children are able to access a wealth of knowledge and vocabulary and have the tools to become lifelong learners.

The teaching of reading at Holy Family is based on children having lots of opportunities to read widely, read fluently, understand what they are reading and have a love of books. When choosing texts, we look for a balance of fiction, nonfiction and poetry; selecting emotionally powerful texts which deal with important human situations and strong feelings, and – in the early years - traditional tales with clear narrative structures and texts which have a strong musical quality. Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. So, while components such as grammar and vocabulary are important in the new curriculum, they will be taught in a contextualised way, through the enjoyment of shared reading.

In EYFS and KS1, children will be immersed in a variety of stories daily to empower children to be able to “read” and retell stories from a young age alongside phonics teaching that follows the government validated phonics programme Read Write Inc. They will also engage in a weekly whole class reading lesson that unpicks one of the stories in the week in a little more detail. In KS2, children will be read their Class Novel daily, will engage with a whole class reading lesson each week and be provided with further opportunities to read in order to develop their substantive and disciplinary knowledge across the curriculum.

Through the whole class reading sessions, children will be exposed to a breadth of age appropriate texts- fiction, non-fiction, rhymes, poetry and song- and concepts discussed have been designed and balanced to reflect the diverse nature of society and develop their cultural capital. The focus of the whole class reading sessions will follow the VIPERS approach but with the four key strands of reading comprehension: retrieval, vocabulary/word meaning, inference and deduction, and summarising being the minimum foci each week.

Reading Environment

Classrooms and all school areas should provide a print rich environment. Reading displays should form a part of that environment – library corners, favourite books, book reviews, book of the week, author displays and collections of books on a similar theme will help to develop enthusiasm.

Reading Books

Children take home a book daily (once Read Write Inc has been introduced), which they are encouraged to share with their parent/carers; either being read to or reading to the adult concerned. This practice begins in Reception and continues through KS1 and KS2. The teacher monitors this practice through the School's Reading Diary and uses the information to help inform them of what skills children need to develop in order to progress through the levels and when to do so.

Phonics

Read, Write, Inc. Phonics is an inclusive literacy programme for all children learning to read. It is aimed at children reading at Year 2 Emerging or below and teaches synthetic phonics. Children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and how to blend them to read and spell. The scheme includes both a reading and a writing focus.

Reading is the key that unlocks the whole curriculum so the ability to efficiently decode is essential. The R.W.I sessions are expected to occur each day with no exceptions, as the continuity and pace of the programme is key to accelerating the progress of children's reading development. Pupils work within ability groups which are defined by their performance on R.W.I. phonic tests. Pupils are re-tested every half term and the groups are reorganised accordingly.

The RWI teacher/TA, follows the relevant handbooks in order to teach the session. Each group leader has a printed format for planning ditties or storybook lessons. To this framework, is added the particular ditty/ storybook being studied, new phonic elements that are being introduced and any other points worthy of note for future use. TA's will be responsible for planning for their R.W.I groups, with the support of the R.W.I Leaders, Mrs Appleton and Miss Crouch, as required. TA's will be given preparation time prior to the sessions on a weekly basis.

Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should;

- develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- use accurate spelling and punctuation
- be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Rather than restricting the subject to the knowledge of the rudiments of writing (the rules of spelling and grammar), we focus on children being able to use the knowledge they have to produce purposeful, well-crafted, creative written work. Central to our philosophy is that writing must be for a purpose, linked tightly to our thematic approach of teaching. At Holy Family we have a 'Purpose for Writing' approach. Rather than trying to teach children ten or more different genres or text types (which can actually be used for a variety of purposes), our approach focuses on what those different types have in common: the purpose for writing.

The four purposes to write being taught across KS1 and KS2 are:

- to entertain
- to inform
- to persuade
- to discuss

Although coverage of the four purposes of writing is prescriptive, the order in which teachers complete them is up to teacher discretion, their knowledge of the curriculum approach and progress of children in their particular year group.

Below is an overview of the different text types that can be taught with each purpose. It is set out in phases to show progression throughout the school. **It is expected that two main outcomes are chosen for each half term's purpose** e.g. Year 2 in Aut 1 may focus on 'write to entertain' and write a story and piece of poetry.

Year 1 & 2 (KS1)	Story (including retellings) Description Poetry In-character/role	Recount Letter Instruction NCR		
Year 3 & 4 (LKS2)	Narrative Description Poetry Characters/Settings	Explanation Recount Letter Biography Newspaper NCR	Advertising Letter Speech Poster	
Year 5 & 6 (UKS2)	Narrative Description Poetry Characters/Settings	Report Recount Biography Newspaper Essay NCR	Advertising Letter Speech Campaign	Balanced Argument Newspaper Review

The delivery of our English lesson is planned and delivered using the Lancashire Guidance for Unit Planning Document for English. Lessons are planned and delivered so children develop a love for books, write for a range of purposes and audiences and are inspired to

become the writers of the future. Children will explore a variety of text types as they progress through school, developing and applying skills they learn.

The Lancashire Planning Documents ensure the coverage of the National Curriculum specific to each year group and skills are taught in a progressive sequence.

Our agreed teaching sequence for the English units are;

- Phase 1: Creating Interest and shared outcome
- Phase 1: Reading: responding and analysing
- Phase 2: Gathering content
- Phase 3: Writing
- Phase 3/4: Presentation

The amount of time spent in any one phase is tailored to each unit and each cohort's needs.

Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions regularly for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group.

Extended Writing Outcomes: Each unit of work should result in at least two (and possibly three) extended, written outcomes. This allows children several opportunities to practise and apply newly acquired skills in context. Outcomes are identified as follows:

1. Scaffolded outcome

This is completed on a daily basis during the writing phase. It is supported through daily, whole-class, shared and modelled writing. It is further supported by small-group, guided writing. In guided writing, teachers will work with a different group each day to help guide children's writing, offering additional support and challenge. Each section of the modelled writing is supported through teaching, with the children working on their own version following the teacher's model.

The effectiveness of this model is enhanced by:

- feedback and marking on a daily basis and pupils being given time to respond;
- use of ideas and vocabulary gathered during earlier phases displayed on the working wall;
- displaying the shared and modelled writing from across the writing phase.

2. Independent extended writing outcome

This is a second opportunity for the children to write in the same genre or text-type, but this time, more independently. Generally, this would take one (or at most two lessons) and should take place soon after the completion of the unit. The children should have time to think, plan and discuss their ideas and they should also have access to prompts created through the unit, e.g. content from the working wall, genre checklists, word banks, dictionaries etc.

Crucially however, **there should be no adult modelling of writing to support the completion of this second outcome.**

As well as giving children another opportunity to apply their skills, this outcome is very useful to inform assessment and next steps in teaching and learning.

3. Cross curricular application

This works best for non-fiction units. It usually takes place after the completion of the English unit and in another area of the curriculum. This provides an opportunity for children to revisit text types and revise skills. Pupils should be given time to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the text type, looking back at their own writing and prompts created. Again, this outcome is particularly useful for assessment purposes and children should be given the opportunity to edit and improve their own writing.

Short writing outcomes: Writing skills need to be constantly practised and revisited throughout the reading and gathering content phases. Outcomes should be linked to a specific learning objective e.g. *LO: To infer character thoughts and feelings – Outcome: diary.*

Examples of short writing opportunities include:

- diary entries
- character profile
- dialogue exchange
- fact file
- book review

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG)

Spelling

We want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers; and we believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers need to spend less time and energy in thinking about spelling to enable them to channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

A balanced spelling programme includes five main components:

- understanding the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological);
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words;
- practising and assessing spelling;
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading;
- building pupils' self-images as spellers

A good spelling programme gradually builds pupils' spelling vocabulary by introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced. Experience has confirmed that short, lively, focused sessions are more enjoyable and effective than an occasional skills session. For these reasons, as a school we use and follow 'Spelling Shed.'

Each week a set of words is provided, these words are examples of the spelling pattern. Each lesson has a main objective from the National Curriculum appendix for spelling and contains a revision section for children to revisit sounds and spelling patterns from earlier weeks in the scheme. The lessons are designed as a number of modular components which can be taught as a single lesson per week or split into a number of sessions to be delivered over the course of a week. The lesson sequence is planned to systematically build upon acquired knowledge. Challenge weeks are lists of words made up from the statutory word lists found in the National Curriculum English Programme of Study Spelling Appendix 2.

Spelling strategies will also be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross-curricular words and individual pupils' words. Proofreading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting. Children are encouraged to use dictionaries to check and correct spellings. Children are given a weekly spelling list to learn at home and are tested on these spellings every Friday.

Handwriting

Holy Family aims for a consistent whole school approach, which sets high expectations and maintains a constant awareness of the importance of presentation. We teach a fluid style which enables the pupils to write speedily and legibly. An initial and final flick is used to facilitate cursive writing. Descender letters will be taught using a joining loop, as this is quicker.

Other than when printing is required (maps and labels) this style will be employed in all writing activities. Opportunities will be given to produce well set out and well-presented work of a highly finished standard. Teachers and other adults will employ this style on the board and in their markings.

The teaching of handwriting is linked to the teaching of spelling and phonics. Children are taught to print letters in Reception and Year 1 expecting that the vast majority of children will write in a cursive style by the end of Year Two.

Handwriting and presentation is given a high priority and is commented on in both literacy and other subjects.

For children who find handwriting difficult, the following can be used to help:

- Pencil grips
- Writing slopes may be supplied to pupils to aid writing style
- Handwriting intervention groups

Grammar (KLIPS)

Grammar is most effective when taught in the context of reading and writing.

Playing with words, investigations, puns, jokes, and rhymes can all enrich and inform grammatical knowledge and understanding and develop a genuine interest in how language works.

An age-appropriate grammar and/or punctuation focus is selected for each writing unit, based on the genre or text type from the unit but also considers the children's current skills in relation to grammar and adjusts this focus if necessary. In conjunction with the Lancashire Planning for writing, the Lancashire KLIPs (Key Learning Indicators of Performance) provide specific focus for grammar and/or punctuation by year group. Teachers use this to revisit previous learning in way of revision starter activities and with a view to the focus in subsequent years.

As well as the acquisition of grammar skills, knowledge and terminology, it is important that children are shown how to apply these appropriately in their own writing.

The process involves:

- Short, sharp grammar warm-ups - a highly effective way of introducing and practising the skills initially;
- The teacher modelling the appropriate application during the writing phase;
- Establishing the expectation that the children will apply the skills appropriately in their own writing;
- The children having opportunity to self and peer assess;
- Teacher feedback and marking which reflects the grammar or punctuation focus.

It is advisable to address one or two objectives for grammar and/or punctuation within a unit; this allows skills to be taught and secured through a 'little and often' approach.

4. Cross-curricular links

Where possible, the English curriculum will provide opportunities to establish links with other curriculum areas. This includes but is not restricted to:

History/ Geography

- Some of the quality texts chosen may link to current or previous units of works in History/ Geography to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding while motivating them to learn through stimulating, interconnected topics.

Science

- The reading, writing and speaking skills pupils learn in English will help them understand scientific reports and explain their own findings.

Drama

- As well as reading, performing and viewing drama texts in English, the skills pupils develop in oral expression and understanding narratives will build their confidence in participating in discussion and dramatic performance.

5. Teaching and assessment

Lesson planning

All relevant staff will be briefed on the school's lesson planning procedures as part of staff training.

Throughout the school, English will be taught as a discrete lesson and as part of cross-curricular teaching when appropriate. The statutory national curriculum content from the DfE's 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2', as outlined above, will be used as the starting point for lesson planning.

All lessons will have clear learning objectives, which are shared and reviewed with pupils.

Long-term planning will be used to outline the units to be taught within each year group. Medium-term planning will be used to outline the vocabulary and skills that will be taught in each unit of work, as well as highlighting the opportunities for assessment, identifying learning objectives, main learning activities and adaptations required. Short-term planning will be used flexibly to reflect the objective of the lesson, the success criteria and the aim of the next lesson, building on medium-term planning and taking into account pupils' needs.

Teaching

Pupils will be taught to use the correct grammar when writing and speaking, and the correct spelling and punctuation when writing. Lessons will help pupils develop a wide vocabulary through a variety of means, including the following:

- Providing spelling lists and key words for pupils to take home and practise
- Creating displays of key words linked to specific topics and subjects
- Practising using the correct vocabulary orally
- Encouraging the use of dictionaries and thesauruses
- Reading a variety of texts to explore new vocabulary
- Providing one-to-one support where necessary

Classroom teachers will use high-quality resources which effectively model English skills and demonstrate good practice.

The teacher, in collaboration with the subject leader, will ensure that every pupil's needs are met by:

- Setting tasks which can have a variety of responses.
- Providing resources of differing complexity, according to the ability of the pupils.
- Utilising TAs to ensure that all pupils are satisfactorily supported.

Opportunities for learning outside the classroom will be provided where possible.

Assessment

Children's progress in writing is continually assessed through next steps marking and at the end of each unit of work when their work is marked against specific objectives taken from their year group expectations. At the end of each term, teachers conduct summative assessments of children's writing using a sample of their end of unit pieces of independent writing. Children's

work is assessed against the Year group expectations, targets are drawn for the next term and results are discussed at Pupil Progress Review meetings with the Assistant Headteacher/ Headteacher. Regular writing moderation takes place during staff meetings (and termly cross-school moderation meetings) to ensure consistency in assessment throughout school.

Pupils will be assessed and their progression recorded in line with the school's Marking and Assessment Policy.

Formative assessment will be carried out informally throughout the year. This will enable teachers to identify pupils' understanding of subjects and inform their immediate lesson planning. The results of end-of-year summative assessments will be passed to relevant members of staff, such as the pupil's future teacher.

Assessment in other areas will take various forms, including the following:

- Talking to pupils and asking questions
- Discussing pupils' work with them
- Marking work against learning objectives
- Specific assignments for individual pupils
- Observing oral and performative tasks and activities
- Pupils' self-evaluation of their work
- Classroom tests and formal exams

The school will act as an exam centre for the SATs statutory assessments in English grammar, punctuation and spelling and English reading. Lessons for Year 6 pupils will be adequately tailored to prepare them for their assessments, including revision time.

Parents will be provided with a written report about their child's progress during the Summer term every year. Reports will include information on the pupil's attitude towards English, progress in reading, ability to write clearly and coherently, and the grammatical knowledge levels they have achieved. Verbal reports will be provided at parent-teacher meetings during the Autumn and Spring terms.

6. Equal opportunities

All pupils will be given equal access to the entire English curriculum, including a variety of reading materials.

Where required, pupils with SEND and pupils with EAL will be provided with additional support in order to fully engage with the English curriculum.

Where it is inappropriate for a pupil to participate in a lesson because of reasons related to any protected characteristics, the lesson will be adapted to meet the pupil's needs and alternative arrangements involving extra support will be provided where necessary.

The school aims to provide more academically able pupils with the opportunity to extend their English skills and knowledge through extension activities such as further reading material and additional writing tasks.

7. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the governing board and subject leader. A named member of the governing board will be briefed to oversee the teaching of English and will meet regularly with the subject leader to review progress.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all teachers.