

ENGLISH CURRICULUM GUIDANCE

“Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savour their songs.”

Nelson Mandela

English Intent

At St. Andrew's Primary School, our aim is to ensure that all of our children receive high quality teaching that allows them to speak and write fluently so that they have the courage to communicate their ideas, struggles 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 our diverse society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are further disadvantaged. Alongside using English as a tool for communication, we aim to develop a passion for the written form. It can be magical, exciting and inspiring, take you on adventures without requiring you to do more than turn a page. We help to foster a life-long love of reading and writing, teaching our children the power of a text and how it can provide an escape from the world around us, helping them to pass on this legacy to next generation.



English Implementation

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening are of central importance to a child's development and impact on all areas of the curriculum. We know that the ability to speak and listen is fundamental to pupils' language and social development. Our pupils are provided with many and varied contexts for talk, and they also receive direct teaching in the skills of speaking and listening through a range of activities, within the four different strands of the strategy. These are:

- speaking
- listening and responding
- group discussion and interaction
- drama

Examples of activities which allow children to learn and practice the skills are: talk partner work, circle time discussions, group and class discussions and presentations and debates, role play, hot seating, class assemblies, concerts, plays and end of project presentations.

Reading

Phonics Scheme We use Unlocking Letters and Sounds which was validated by the DfE in December 2021. We begin teaching phonics in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception and children make rapid progress in their reading journey. Children begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception' words for Phases 2, 3 and 4. They use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions and sentences. Children leave Reception being able to apply the phonemes taught within Phase 2, 3 and 4.



In Year 1 through Phase 5a, b and c, they learn any alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional Common Exception Words. By the end of Year 1 children will have mastered using phonics to decode and blend when reading and segment when spelling. In Year 1 all children are screened using the national Phonics Screening Check. In Year 2, phonics continues to be revisited to ensure mastery of the phonetic code and any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive support to close identified gaps. For further details please see the Unlocking Letters and Sounds progression.

To ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression, children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up through bespoke 1-1 interventions. These include GPC recognition and blending and segmenting interventions. The lowest attaining 20% of pupils are closely monitored to ensure these interventions have an impact.

Reading Scheme

At St Andrew's we promote a 'phonics first' approach and in both our guided reading sessions at school and in the books children take home, texts are very closely matched to a child's current phonics knowledge so that every child can experience real success in their reading. In these crucial early stages of reading we primarily use books from Ransom Reading Stars Phonics, to ensure complete fidelity to the Unlocking Letters and Sounds progression we follow.

Once children progress beyond decodable texts, they move onto our book scheme so that they can continue to progress in their decoding, fluency and comprehension skills to become avid, expert readers. They are taught to develop the skills of understanding, reading for meaning and information retrieval. They will be able to compare, evaluate, analyse and comment on texts, focusing on their purpose, genre, language, impact and structure.

Our aim is to enable children to develop as effective and fluent readers who have a love of books. All children are encouraged to select books from the classroom, library or home. Our new purpose built library is designed to help create a quiet space where children can find pleasure in new and engaging texts. We also participate in National events such as World Book Day and National Poetry Day to promote a love of reading in a wide variety of contexts.



'We read to know we are not alone'

C.S. Lewis

Writing (including Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)

Writing is a complex process involving the control of many aspects of language. At St Andrew's, pupils learn to make decisions at various stages in the writing process while applying relevant knowledge and experience of the text type they are writing. The writing journey begins in Reception where the children are given opportunities to write words and then sentences with the aim of practising and applying their ever-growing phonics knowledge. From Year 1, our children are taught the spelling rules, punctuation, sentence structure and grammar outlined in the National Curriculum. Each year the children are then presented with opportunities to practise this in isolation and within extended pieces of writing. This knowledge governs their choices about structure and organisation, sentence construction and vocabulary. Children are taught writing

skills during whole class shared writing lessons, guided writing group sessions and when necessary on an individual basis.

We use two different approaches to support children with writing extended pieces of writing: text-based approach or cross-curricular. The teacher will make this decision based on the purpose of the writing. For example, if the children were learning about the Romans in history then they may write a non-chronological report based on their history knowledge. This helps to provide the children with a meaningful context for their writing and, where possible, use real life contexts. This helps to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing them with the experiences as writing based on a text can be an abstract concept. Typically, for narrative writing, the teachers would select a high-quality text which demonstrates the particular features the children are learning about.

Each unit of work is based on a learning journey. This is clearly mapped out and displayed for the children both in their books and on the teacher's slides. This journey helps the children to understand how the specific skills they are practising come together when they create their final piece.

Children are able to support each other in the writing process during paired and small group work. They are given opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. The editing process allows the children to evaluate their own work and choose to apply different grammatical skills or features to improve their writing further.



'Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart'
William Wordsworth

English Impact

Our curriculum aims to ensure that each child becomes confident in using the English language in each of its forms to allow them to communicate effectively, for their future in education and beyond. They will have the opportunity to practise their skills on a daily basis, receiving personalised feedback to help them to achieve their personal best. Teachers will formative and summative assessments to monitor progress and ensure that each child receives any additional support or challenge they require. This data, alongside planning, will be monitored by the subject leader and senior leadership

team to ensure that our children are receiving high quality teaching and gaining the knowledge to help them succeed in the future.

*“Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we
can think about”
Benjamin Lee Whorf*