

Holy Cross RC Primary School



English Policy

Signed _____ [Headteacher] Date June 2026

Signed _____ [Chair of Governors] Date June 2026

Next Review Date December 2028

English Curriculum intent:

To deliver a quality English Curriculum that is exciting and innovative while enabling and empowering children's written and oral communication, confidence and creativity.

Rationale

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. The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at and using its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

Aims

The aims of teaching English are:

- ensure equality of opportunity for all children regardless of gender, culture, social background or religion
- identify and meet the children's needs, considering variation in their English experiences, ability and the learning already accomplished
- create a stimulating environment in which the children come to feel that speaking, reading and writing are an essential and natural means of communication
- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help them become confident, independent writers, through an appropriate focus on grammar, spelling and text level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantive texts;
- foster the children's ability to read with fluency, understanding, expression and enjoyment
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, narrative and non-fiction;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work

- encourage children to spell for themselves, building an individual repertoire and the confidence and strategies to attempt the unfamiliar
- work diligently towards every child becoming literate by the age of eleven

For Parents

- encourage the parents' active involvement in their children's learning both in and out of school
- promote the parents' understanding and support of all aspects of school policy regarding the teaching of Literacy
- be aware of the work that is suggested through support programmes
- take the opportunities provided to meet with class teachers to discuss learning and attainment
- be aware of and support their children's curricular targets
- over time, and through parent workshops, become more aware of the English Curriculum and the progression of skills.

Teaching and Learning style

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. The National Curriculum Programmes of study for English are used when planning units of work. This is supported in EYFS and Key stage 1 by the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds phonics programme** and in KS2 by the **Spelling Shed Scheme**. Punctuation and Grammar is taught using resources from **Classroom Secrets**. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding. A range of resources from **Power of Reading, Literacy Shed and Literary Curriculum** are used to supplement and support children to explore, through high quality texts, the thinking and creative processes of being a reader and writer.

Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and age/ability appropriate resources. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Planning

- Planning is based around the objectives from the National Curriculum.
Our plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans. Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This includes the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. These plans are stored on 'G' drive, where they can be accessed by teachers and the leadership team, who monitor these plans regularly.
- Weekly plans include a WALT and differentiated activities, ensuring personalisation to the needs of the children in each class, and including roles of teaching assistants or

support staff. Children are taught in mixed ability groups for English when possible. The main teaching activity is whole class with everyone covering the same content and WALT/success criteria at their own level. The role of the class teacher/teaching assistant during this period includes facilitating a good pace/ethos, supporting both groups and individuals in creating accurate and concise sentences, clarifying misconceptions/difficulties, assessing the learning taking place and identifying areas for future teaching.

- Lessons also provide opportunity for peer/self-assessment so children understand what they attained and where to go next. There are no specific time limits for the different parts of a lesson or a pre-determined format. Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance learning.

Marking

See English Marking Policy.

Reading

- At Holy Cross, each class text is carefully planned in order to supplement children's learning across the curriculum and to lighten their cognitive load when writing. High quality texts and teaching sequences are provided for the teacher to use. These texts are used during whole class reading sessions.
- Many of the texts we use feature in the Power of Reading scheme, The Literary Tree and Literacy Shed which provide quality texts and teaching sequences to support the teaching of reading at Holy Cross.
- Children are encouraged to read for pleasure and are offered opportunity to read silently every day, as well as whole class reading sessions with the teacher.
- Children who are not reading at the level expected for their age are identified as Priority Readers and are heard every day where possible by the teacher, teaching assistants and other adults.
- Each class has a class library stocked with a range of quality, age appropriate texts.
- A new Reading Area has also been established. This provides a range of diverse reading books to supplement those already in class. KS2 also have access to a full range of banded reading books to support children's individual reading development.

Writing

- Writing is taught following a sequence of lessons. Children will be immersed within a particular genre or style at the beginning of the week. This will be linked to their class book and will involve looking through a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like) text. By doing this, children will become familiar with different text types and their features. Following this, children will then compose their own sentences in the same style. As stated in the DfE Writing Framework 2025, sentence-level teaching focusing on building understanding of how to construct sentences should be an important component of any writing curriculum. This allows children to rehearse and apply their understanding of the given features. Children will then use this to create their own piece of writing. Editing and revising will be completed independently or with a teacher or peer, depending on age and ability.

- SPAG lessons are taught 2 X a week before a writing lesson using **Classroom Secrets**, the skills taught will be linked to that week's genre and style. Children will be given the opportunity to apply this to their writing.
- Children should have opportunity to produce 2 extended pieces of writing every week; one from their class genre focus and one within an RE session.
- Children are given opportunity to proofread and edit their work with age/ability appropriate guidance.
- Across the school, children are introduced to new vocabulary through the class texts that provide the focus for their English lessons but also through a wide range of historical, geographical and religious units. Any new vocabulary will be displayed on classroom working walls and pre-teaching of vocabulary will be offered to children who have English as an additional language or any identified special educational need.
- Writing is celebrated by each class choosing a Writer of the Week to be awarded each week in celebration assembly.

Phonics

- In EYFS and KS1, the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** scheme is used to teach the requirements of the new National Curriculum for phonics.
- Phonics lessons are taught daily and teachers assess children at the end of each phase.
- Year 1 children are prepared for the Year 1 Phonic Screen in June and the teacher carries out practise tests in order to track progress towards achieving a pass score. These are shared with the English Subject Leader.

Handwriting

- As stated in the DfE Writing Framework 2025, handwriting will be taught precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression starting from reception, to support their gradual acquisition of skills.
- In EYFS and Year 1 children are taught correct letter formation through daily handwriting lessons. These lessons will focus on the correct letter formation and the correct joining pattern. Letters and joins will be re-visited and consolidated before moving on.
- Teachers will demonstrate good handwriting at all times.
- As soon as children are able to form most letters correctly and have a good pencil grip, we teach a joined handwriting style.
- Handwriting awards are also awarded in weekly celebration assemblies

Spelling and Grammar

- **Spelling Shed** is used in years 2 -6, when children have mastered phonics. Children need systematic teaching of spelling that is continually practised and reinforced. This spelling programme is used to provide this structured and systematic teaching. Children in year 1 are taught spellings in line with their phonics lessons.

- Children in Years 1 (after Christmas) - 6 have weekly spellings to learn for homework and a weekly spelling test.

The Foundation Stage

Drawing Club is the approach we use in Reception in our school to teach English. It was created by a practitioner called Greg Bottrill and it brings the magic of story into the classroom. It is a way to share skills including fine motor, early writing, vocabulary, maths and most importantly, imagination and excitement!

Drawing Club is all about doing what is right for our children, to meet their needs and develop their interests. It is not a scheme. It is meant to be fun and exciting and give children the opportunity to explore a world of adventure so that they are fuelled ready to develop their writing skills as they move up through school.

The great thing about Drawing Club is that anything can happen. The more the children hear different ideas, think of their own and talk about stories in a 'What if...' way, the more their imagination will ignite and they will become amazing little storytellers.

Reception children are taught phonics through the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** scheme. They take part in daily handwriting sessions.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

Mathematics

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. They are encouraged to explain their thinking. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices, and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and

appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together, and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

Equality of Opportunity

All pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills to the best of their ability. All home languages are given status and treated with respect. Teachers ensure all pupils have opportunities to express themselves and know that their genuine contributions will be valued. Pupils who are more able are stretched through more challenging questioning. Pupils who are having difficulty are identified and supported. A system is in place for children who are newly arrived for whom English is not their home language. They are given small group support with learning basic survival English. Those who continue to have difficulty are assessed and supported in line with the schools SEN policy.

Assessment for learning

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgments about how they can improve their own work.

Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work.

Teachers in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 use NFER reading, SPAG and Spelling assessments, within years 2 and 6 past SATs papers are used to assess children a minimum of 3 times a year in Reading. These assessments are tracked. Teachers make final assessments towards the end of the school year and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. These assessments are reported to Parents in Interim and end of year reports. Marking of English work is in accordance with the marking policy. Children are encouraged to self-evaluate against learning intentions.

Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and thesauri. All classrooms have a reading area with a selection of diverse fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through laptops and ipads. Access to the Internet is also available in school. The library in KS2 contains a range of books to support children's individual research. All classrooms have an interactive white board.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to monitor standards and progress the following systems are in place:

- At Pupil Progress meetings the class teacher and English Subject Leader/Headteacher monitor and evaluate the progress of children in English (Reading and Writing)
- Targets will be set by the class teacher 3 times a year and their work will be formally assessed 3 times year.

- The English Subject Leader is given time to observe lessons, monitor planning and give oral and written feedback, and also to see children's work and carry out book scrutinise.
- Staff meet regularly to engage in whole school moderation and will also participate in cross-school moderation.
- The progress of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is reviewed with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) each half term.
- The school's English Action Plan is part of the School Improvement Plan – this is reviewed and updated annually by the English Subject Leader and Leadership Team.
- Data is analysed and reports are generated 3 times a year and shared with governors.