Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

ENGLISH POLICY
(including writing, reading, phonics and handwriting)

Reviewed: Spring 2023
Next review: Spring 2025

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

English Policy

Mission Statement

Holy Cross is a Catholic school which seeks to build a closer partnership with parents, Parish and the wider community. We work hard to provide an environment which is secure, stimulating and happy and where everyone is appreciated and enabled to give of their best.

We encourage all to have respect for each individual, to be honest, tolerant, just and forgiving and to develop a closer relationship with each other and through this, a closer relationship with God. We recognise Jean Baptiste Debrabant's vision that: "A Christian based education is a sure hope for the future of religion and society."

Rationale

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas 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 society; pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and English by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas

- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening; making formal presentations, demonstrating to other and participating in debate.

2   Teaching and learning style

2.1 In Holy Cross School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through a daily lesson that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. During these lessons children experience whole-class shared reading or writing activities, whole-class focused word or sentence activities, guided group or independent activities and whole-class sessions to review progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonics resources and scaffolds to support their work. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. We encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum and we ensure that English is taught across the curriculum in other areas frequently.

2.2 There are children of differing ability in all classes at Holy Cross School. We recognise the diversity of learning styles and provide suitable opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In both Key Stages, pupils work within ability groups in each class. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. Some lessons will require the use of mixed ability groupings which assists the children in teaching and learning to and from each other.

3   English curriculum planning in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

3.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

3.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum details what we teach in the long-term. Each Key Stage follows an English Medium Term Plan that is based on a whole class text approach and is being produced by class teachers informed by CLPE planning; these are reviewed by the English Subject Leader and Key Stage Leaders. English Medium Term Plans list the core texts for each term and the reading and writing outcomes expected for each unit. They cover a wide range of texts throughout the year to engage and motivate and cover a range of genres (see appendix A). Medium term plans work alongside the skills progression map which lists the key skills that should be addressed in each phase.

3.3 Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the National Curriculum and using CLPE's 'The Power of Reading', give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. VIPERS is used to support teachers planning of questioning throughout reading sessions. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Individual teachers are responsible for feeding back to the English Subject Leader regarding the implementation of the English Medium Term Map.

3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and success criteria for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and how the needs of all children are met, including scaffolding and challenge.

Reading

Children are assessed on their reading skills, taking into consideration word recognition, knowledge of vocabulary and fluency alongside comprehension skills including inference and deduction techniques. Children in Early Years and KS1 are assessed using Read Write Inc phonics testing. Children in KS2 are assessed using this tool as is deemed necessary by the class teacher and English Subject Lead. Children in Years 1-6 are also assessed against the National Curriculum age related expectations using a NFER termly assessments (years 3 – 5) and teacher assessments. Children in Years 2 and 6 are additionally assessed using end of key stage tests and using the Teacher Assessment Framework for the end of KS1 and KS2. Children in Reception and Nursery are assessed against the Development Matters Document and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

3.5 (i) Guided Reading
This gives the children the opportunity to develop as individual readers while participating in a socially supported activity. Teachers have the opportunity to observe individuals as they process new texts. Individual readers have opportunities to develop reading strategies so they can read increasingly difficult texts independently.
It promotes skills in speaking and listening with each other as well as with the teacher and confidence in responding to text. It develops the skills needed for independent reading and writing. The process of learning to read must be supported by interaction of text reading and good teaching practices. A variety of texts are employed, including Newspapers (children's publications) children's education magazines, fiction and non-fiction texts, appropriate articles and information books.

3.5 (ii) Whole Class Comprehension
The process of whole class comprehension allows the teacher to pitch questions appropriately at a range of abilities, but also to allow lower ability children access to the answers and knowledge that is being shared by the higher ability children. A large focus is placed on vocabulary acquisition and inference and deduction skills, looking at what the text tells the reader and what the text suggests to the reader.

3.6 Individual reading. Home reading journals and individual texts are given to all pupils and are monitored on a weekly basis and with relevant comments written to parents. Children are given banded books according to their attainment in reading until they are deemed 'free readers' and able to read age appropriate books of their choice. Awards are given in weekly achievement assemblies for those children who have read 5 times (in EYFS and KS1) or 3 times (in KS2) in a week or and had their home reading record signed by an adult. Children also have access to Oxford Reading Buddy and Read Write Inc books where they can read reading books matched to their ability and take part in quizzes to assess their comprehension.

Writing

3.8 Extended Writing

All Key Stages regularly focus on writing for a sustained period of time and follow the Holy Cross Writing Journey (see Appendix B). Extended independent writing pieces are completed at the end of a genre in English and at least once within a topic in RE, History, Geography and Science. Writing is then assessed and evidence is marked off from the assessment criteria and dated.

Handwriting Targets

By the end of Foundation Stage children should be able to:
- Hold a pencil effectively using a comfortable and efficient 'tripod' grip.
- Produce a controlled line, which supports letter formation.
- Write letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- Form recognisable lower and upper case letters.

By the end of Year 1 children should be able to:
- Develop their handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.
- Use the correct movement sequences to write upper and lower case letters in the agreed formation for Holy Cross School.
- Write patterns that develop proportion and correct formation of letters.
- Use guidelines to write letters in correct proportion to each other.
- Begin to show confidence and fluidity in joining letters, particularly in key words.

By the end of Year 2 children should be able to:
- Join letters confidently, using the correct joins and following the school's handwriting code.
- Form upper and lower case letters correctly, with ascenders and descenders correctly formed.
- Recognise the rules for joining – not joining upper case letters or numbers.

By the end of Year 3 children will be able to:
- Continue to develop their cursive style of handwriting.
- Write showing consistency of size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- Begin to develop handwriting speed, fluency and legibility.

By the end of Year 4 children will be able to:
- Use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.
- Write ensuring consistency of size and proportion of letters and with correct spacing between letters and words.
- Know when to use clear neat hand for finished, presented work and informal writing for everyday informal work.

By the end of Year 5 children will be able to:
- Write in a clear, fluent and legible joined hand.
- Use a variety of tools to write with.
- Use a range of presentation skills e.g. Print script for captions, sub-headings and labels.
- Use capital letters for posters, title pages and headings.
- Use a range of computer generated fonts and print sizes.

By the end of Year 6 children will be able to:
- Write in a clear, fluent and legible joined hand.
- Use a range of presentational skills.
- Use computer generated fonts and print sizes.

In the Foundation Stage children will be involved in a variety of activities to develop their gross and fine motor control:

Developing gross motor control through:
- The physical development curriculum to develop good posture and balance.
- Consolidating the language of movement through talk in P.E. sessions.
- Making large movements in air with arms and hands.
- Moving and handling large pieces of equipment such as bikes, construction pieces and apparatus.

Developing fine motor skills through (amongst others):
- Paper tearing
- Colouring within lines
- Finger painting
- Kneading play dough
- Pattern making with paints, wax crayons etc.
- Cutting, sticking
- Arts and crafts with small pieces
- Lego

In all other years and, from when appropriate, in the Foundation Stage, children will practise their handwriting skills frequently in stand alone handwriting lessons and throughout Curriculum lessons using the Letterjoin Handwriting Scheme. Children from Year 1 upwards will continue to practise their joins and develop letters of consistent size. Children will be taught the correct way to hold a pencil/pen from the Foundation stage onwards and will be

corrected if seen holding it in the incorrect position. Teachers will model the Letterjoin style of handwriting from the Letterjoin Handwriting Scheme when writing in front of the children and when marking books. In Nursery and Reception classes, teachers will model writing using pre-cursive handwriting. From Year 1 upwards teachers will use joined handwriting when demonstrating writing for any purpose.

Phonics

See phonics policy.

4   The Foundation Stage

We teach English in Nursery and Reception classes through the subject areas of Communication and Language, Reading and Writing.
The format of a typical English lesson in Foundation Stage consists of a short whole class teaching session, followed by differentiated guided group activities alongside opportunities to practise the skills taught in independent play and exploration. The pupils follow the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the Development Matters documents and they are assessed against these also.

The children are given the opportunity to use a wide range of media (including books, tapes and videos) when exploring stories and reading, children are encouraged to mark make and write letters, names and simple captions within the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Children practise fine motor skills daily in order to develop the muscles in their hands, including pencil skills, colouring skills and cutting skills. They also develop the muscles in their hands through the use of malleable resources, such as Play-doh or sand.
We give all of the children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. The children have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations. All Foundation Stage classes use a range of Internet websites and English programmes to enhance the children's learning experiences.
The Early Years Foundation Stage follows a topic-based approach and therefore English is cross curricular.

5 Vocabulary Development:

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently. (see appendix 1)
Vocabulary teaching needs to be:
● active;
● progressive/ systematic;
● making links from known words;

- develop understanding of shades of meaning;
- include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations;
- subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words.

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:
- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn.
- Display of key words on working walls linked to topics and subjects.
- Using the correct vocabulary orally.
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns.
- Using dictionaries, Thesaurus and similar programmes.
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate.
- Lessons that explore vocabulary and spelling.
- Investigating vocabulary in the texts that we read.
- Teachers identify spelling mistakes in books with the letters 'sp' and children write the correct spelling underneath their work; 3 times in KS1 or 5 times in KS2.
- Where vocabulary choice needs to be improved, teachers will identify the word with the letter 'v'. Children should use a Thesaurus or word bank to find more effective synonyms.

6   Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

6.1 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 in school.

6.2 Mathematics
English contributes significantly to the teaching of Mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children from Year 2 and into KS2 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.

6.3 Computing
The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively as a research tool. Older children use the Internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

6.4 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

English contributes to the teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship through our Dot.com approach. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet and talk with many visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

6.5 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give 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 texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

7   Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary school English is all- inclusive.

We do this in a number of ways including:

• teachers adapting planning so that individuals have specific learning outcomes.

• teachers working specifically with children with SEND.

• providing extra adult support in class so that children are focused on accessing the curriculum.

• meeting regularly in staff teams to discuss provision and if it needs to be adapted.

• liaising with outside agencies to receive the best advice on how to help children learn.

• adapting buildings and furniture if necessary so that children are not restricted from using the school fully.

Accessibility

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are also committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

8: Assessment and recording

Teachers use the outcomes of our assessments to summarise and analyse attainment and progress for their pupils and classes.

Teachers use this data to plan the learning for every pupil to ensure they meet or exceed expectations. Teachers and leaders analyse the data across the school to ensure that pupils identified as vulnerable or at particular risk in this school, are making appropriate progress and that all pupils are suitably stretched.

8.1
Assessment for Learning
- Self-Assessment - All children will have opportunities to assess their own attainment and achievement through a variety of methods including:
- Success Criteria – Children can use agreed success criteria or 'steps to success' that have been generated in the lesson or as part of a previous lesson to create a 'closed checklist' to assess their learning against; either during a lesson, at the end of a lesson or at the end of a unit of work.
- Peer Assessment - As with self-assessment, peer assessment should be used in a variety of ways. Children should be given opportunities to peer assess in a 'formal' way during, or at the end of lessons; they are asked to identify an aspect of the work that is good and/or a possible improvement to another child's work with regard to the learning objective and or the agreed success criteria. Children may also comment on the collaborative skills of their peers, behaviour, citizenship and many other aspects of day to day school life.

8.2 Assessment of Learning
- One summative assessment is undertaken each term; teacher assessment and formal tests are used alternately – pupil outcomes are judged against the new national curriculum objectives.
- Writing Assessments take the form of one unaided piece of writing per term and teacher assessment based on a range of evidence gathered during the term and/or year.
- Reading assessments are as above for teacher assessment and NFER tests are used with scores converted to match newly devised assessment system, as well as previous SAT's tests for years 2 & 6.

Assessment Cycle
Each term teachers must submit teacher assessments on to Target Tracker (in line with school deadlines). Teachers make their assessment judgements using –
Informal assessment tasks
Use of assessment statements and KPI's
Moderation of pupil's work
Formal testing using NFER or End of Key Stage SAT's tests in years 3, 4 and 5 each term
Reading ages assessments twice a year

Target Tracker
At Holy Cross, we use Target Tracker as a resource to track the progress of each pupil throughout the year. Each year band has been broken down into six steps within the year group:
- beginning (b)
- beginning + (b+)
- working within (w)
- working within + (w+)
- secure (s)
- secure + (s+)

Each pupil progresses through the levels as the year evolves.

The three broader sections may be thought of in these terms;

B/B+ Beginning – Pupil learning is chiefly focussed on the criteria for the band. There may be minimal elements of the previous band still to gain complete confidence in.

W/W+ Working Within – Pupil learning is fully focussed on the criteria for the band. This is a teacher best-fit decision but could be informed by statement assessments between around 40% and 70% achieved.

S /S+ Secure – Confidence in all of the criteria for the band. There may be pupil learning still focussed on gaining thorough confidence in some minimal elements but the broad expectations for the band have been met.

Lower attaining pupils may be working at a band outside of their current year and are supported to make progress through that band.

For children to be working at age-related expectation, they would need to reach the secure (s) step at the end of the appropriate year, although during the transition period w+ is also acceptable.

8   Resources

8.1 There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries, thesauruses and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts displayed in an inviting book corner. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer, computer suite and class set of IPADs. Audio-visual aids are also available from the central storage area. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research. Resources for Guided Reading are provided for a broad range of reading ability.

9   Monitoring and review

9.1 Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the present teaching practices and being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader reviews samples of the children's work and undertakes lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The named governor responsible for English meets with the subject leader in order to review progress and to be informed about the current practices in the teaching and delivery of English.

Appendix A - Whole School Overview of Writing Genres

Genre	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Narrative	Traditional tales	Traditional tales with twist	mystery	issues and dilemmas	legends	flashbacks
	stories from other cultures	stories from other cultures	stories from other cultures		stories from other cultures	stories from other cultures
	novel as a theme	novel as a theme	novel as a theme	novel as a theme	novel as a theme	novel as a theme
	stories by same author	stories by same author	fables	fairy tales	historical narrative	classic fiction
	stories with repetitive patterns	stories set in familiar settings	folk tales	myths	Fiction from our literary heritage	science fiction
		adventure stories	playscripts	playscripts	film & playscripts	detective/crime
	fantasy			fantasy		
Non-fiction	instructions	instructions		instructions	instructions	
	recounts of familiar events recounts in postcard	recounts in letters recounts in diaries	recounts in diaries recount in autobiography	recounts in newspapers	recount in autobiography	recounts in diaries in role of character recounts in biographies
	non-chronological reports	non-chronological reports	non-chronological reports	non- chronological reports	formal report writing	Report writing both NCR & chronological
	basic persuasion in wanted posters	persuasion in adverts	persuasion in letters		persuasion in radio or T.V	persuasion in letters and brochures
	explanations	explanations	explanations	explanations	explanations	explanations
			discussion: debating	discussion: for & against	discussion with a formal debate	discussion formal written
Poetry	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation	take 1 poet: poetry appreciation
	poems for learning by heart & performance	classic poetry for learning by heart & performance	classic poetry for learning by heart & performance	poems for learning by heart & performance	RAP learning by heart & performance	RAP learning by heart & performance
	Structure rhyming couplets	Structure riddles, shape & calligrams	Structure calligrams, couplets -kennings & cinquain	Structure kennings & cinquain	Structure haiku & limericks	
				poems with figurative language	poems with figurative language	
					-classic narrative poetry	-classic narrative poetry
	traditional rhymes			non-sense poems		free verse poetry

Appendix B

Experience Days - these are embedded throughout the writing journey to develop experiences and language related to the writing.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School - Writing Journey

Immersion –
Read a range of examples of the writing.
Identify key features of the writing and create a key features list for the working wall.
Explore the vocabulary features and create a bank of vocabulary for the working wall.

Immersion –
Generate a success criteria of key features that need to be included in the writing.
Include scaffolding resources and ideas for less able writers.
Include challenges for more able writers to work towards.
Identify key grammatical features to include in the writing.

Planning
Plan the writing structure into defined sections against the agreed success criteria.

Guided writing / modelled writing
Teacher models the writing process by chunking each section.
Teacher models how they are meeting the success criteria.
Teacher links experience days and models how they are impacting on writing choices.
Teacher models making errors and amending writing throughout the writing process.

Assessment –
Self / peer assessment is modelled against a range of criteria including –
- Punctuation
- Sentence structure
- Coherence
- Against the success criteria
Learners use this to self-assess or peer assess writing.

Developing independence –
As the teacher models a section of the writing learners have the opportunity to develop their own writing – section by section.
Build working wall with effective examples and vocabulary for learners to refer to.

Edit and Improve –
Teachers model how the self / peer assessment process makes effective changes in writing.
Learners make improvements and amendments to writing.

Independent Writing –
Writing task linked to the supported writing task with minor changes.
Refer back to the success criteria to ensure learners follow this within their writing process.

Final Edit and Publish –
Learners make improvements and amendments to writing through focussed edits.
Final task is published and celebrated.