

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School



ENGLISH POLICY

(including writing, reading, phonics and handwriting)

Reviewed: Autumn 2024
Next review: Autumn 2026

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

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- 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; 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, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. 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 at least twice annually using the PM Benchmarking Kit which allows us to obtain a levelled reading band for the child depending on the amount of errors that they have made and their understanding of what they have read. 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 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 The Literacy Tree (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.

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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 handwriting from

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the 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

Phonics across the school

At Holy Cross we teach Phonics by using *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics* as well as *Jolly Phonics*. Jolly Phonics teaches the children an action to pair with the sounds for the day and it is a very effective and interactive way for young learners to recall phonemes. Letters and Sounds provides us with games and resources to support our teaching of phonics. It aims to build pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as prepare pupils to learn to read, by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed programme for teaching phonic skills, with the aim of pupils becoming fluent readers by age seven. Phonics is taught from Nursery to Year 2 and then in Lower KS2 if the children require additional support.

The Phonics programme is broken down into 6 phases. Phase 1 is taught in Nursery and recapped in Reception. Phases 2, 3, 4 and the beginning of Phase 5 are taught in Reception. Phase 5 is taught in full in Year 1 and Phase 6 is taught in Year 2. Please refer to Appendix C for a breakdown of the Phases.

We recognise that children learn at different speeds and sometimes there are children who are not secure in their phonics at the expected level by the end of the academic year. Therefore, we set lessons across KS1 so that children can be taught at the relevant phase for their needs.

At the end of Year 1, all pupils undertake a Phonics check. This is designed so that we can see if the children are at the expected levels in their phonics knowledge. The Phonics check draws on many aspects of Phase 5 phonics and children need to be secure in this phase in order to pass the phonics check. Those children who do not pass the Phonics check will retake it at the end of Year 2.

4 The Foundation Stage

We teach English in Nursery and Reception classes through the subject areas of Communication and Language and Literacy.

The format of a typical English lesson in Foundation Stage consists of a short whole class teaching session then go off to child and adult led activities linked to the book and topic, which gives them opportunities to practise the skills taught in independent play and exploration. The children 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 when exploring stories and reading. ~~The, The~~ The 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:

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- 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.