



Trinity St. Peter's

Church of England Primary School

where children shine

Curriculum Vocabulary Policy

Guided by Our Faith in Everything That We Say and Do

Our School Vision



At Trinity St. Peter's, we are driven by the belief that every child is a star. In partnership with our local and global community, we equip each child with the skills, values, and mindset to shine.

We are committed to creating a school where every child feels they belong, where differences are recognised and celebrated, and where every individual is valued. Our curriculum is innovative, inclusive, and engaging, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and high aspirations.

We nurture children's growth academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Through personal development and opportunities for pupil voice and leadership, we empower children to shape their futures and make a positive difference in the world.

Together, as a community, we work to ensure equity, success for all, and a deep celebration of diversity, rooted in kindness, inclusion, and mutual support.

Vocabulary Vision Statement:

Vocabulary at Trinity St Peter's enables pupils to become confident communicators who can understand, articulate and apply powerful knowledge across the curriculum. Through a rich and language-focused approach, pupils develop a deep and secure understanding of words, enabling them to make meaning, express ideas clearly and engage fully with their learning.

Our vocabulary curriculum develops pupils' ability to read with understanding, write with precision and speak with confidence. Through explicit teaching, repeated exposure and purposeful application, pupils build a broad and ambitious vocabulary, learning to use language effectively across a range of contexts.

This approach fosters comprehension, critical thinking and independence, preparing pupils for later life by equipping them with the language needed to succeed in an increasingly academic and communication-rich world. Pupils learn to understand, use and apply vocabulary as confident readers, writers and speakers.

Intent

The purpose of our vocabulary curriculum is to equip every child with the language, knowledge and understanding they need to access learning, communicate effectively and succeed across all subjects. We recognise that vocabulary is fundamental to pupils' ability to think, read, write and express themselves, and is therefore central to all areas of the curriculum.

We implement a research-informed, tiered approach to vocabulary instruction, based on the work of Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002), to deliver a high-quality, language-rich curriculum. This approach enables teachers to prioritise and explicitly teach the vocabulary that has the greatest impact on pupils' understanding. Words are organised into three tiers: Tier 1 (everyday language), Tier 2 (high-utility academic vocabulary) and Tier 3 (subject-specific terminology). This ensures that vocabulary teaching is purposeful, progressive and embedded across all areas of learning.

Our curriculum is designed to develop pupils' understanding of vocabulary through explicit teaching, repeated exposure and meaningful application. We place particular emphasis on Tier 2 vocabulary, as these words are critical for comprehension and are less likely to be acquired through everyday conversation. By explicitly teaching these words, we enable pupils to understand increasingly complex texts and articulate their ideas with clarity and precision.

In the early stages of Reading and Writing, pupils are also taught high-frequency words, which sit largely within Tier 1 vocabulary. These words are essential for developing fluency and are taught explicitly through Phonics, including as tricky words where they are not fully decodable. Pupils are supported to read these words automatically and spell them accurately, enabling them to write with increasing independence and confidence.

We recognise that pupils must understand the vast majority of words in a text in order to comprehend it effectively. Therefore, our curriculum ensures that pupils are exposed to rich and challenging language, while being systematically supported to acquire, understand and use new vocabulary over time.

Our vocabulary curriculum is carefully structured to ensure progression, enabling pupils to build on prior learning and develop a broad and deep vocabulary. Through consistent approaches across the school, pupils encounter language in a range of contexts and are encouraged to use new vocabulary in speaking and writing whilst retaining and reaffirming old vocabulary. Teachers are aware, that some children, if not all may need reteaching at the start of each year, and/or continue to reference previous year groups vocabulary whilst also be exposed to new.

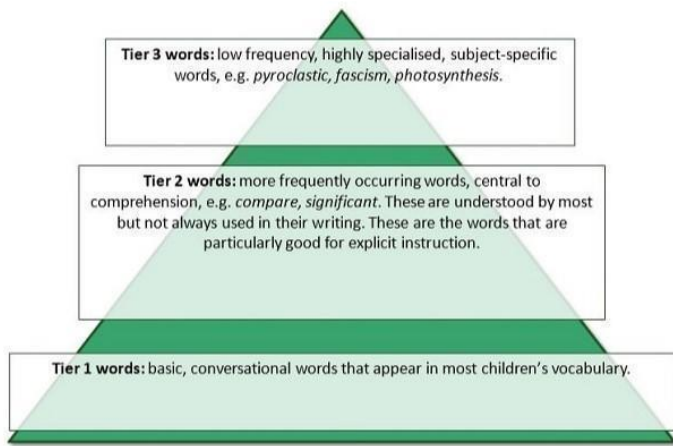
Through this approach, we aim to develop pupils who are articulate, confident and thoughtful communicators, with the vocabulary knowledge required to access the curriculum, engage critically with texts and succeed in the next stage of their education and beyond.

Implementation

All of our pupils have consistent access to a **broad, balanced and high-quality** vocabulary curriculum which enables them to:

- Develop the language and understanding needed to access the full curriculum
- Build a broad and deep vocabulary that supports reading, writing and communication
- Apply vocabulary effectively across subjects, enabling them to articulate ideas clearly and precisely
- Understand and use subject-specific language in meaningful contexts

Our vocabulary curriculum is delivered through a systematic, research-informed approach, using the **tiered vocabulary model (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3)** to ensure that teaching is purposeful and progressive across all subjects.



- **Tier 1 vocabulary** (including high-frequency words) is taught and reinforced daily, particularly through phonics and early reading
- **Tier 2 vocabulary** is explicitly taught across the curriculum, with a clear focus on words that support comprehension and communication
- **Tier 3 vocabulary** is taught within subject disciplines and embedded within knowledge-rich lessons

High-Frequency Words and Early Reading

In the early stages of learning, pupils are taught **high-frequency words (also known as common exception words)**, which are essential for reading fluency and early writing.

- These words are taught explicitly through Read Write Inc. (RWI) Phonics in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and are introduced as “red words” where they are not fully decodable.
- Pupils are supported to read these words automatically and spell them accurately through daily phonics sessions and repeated practice.
- From Spring Term in Year 2 and throughout Key Stage 2, high-frequency words continue to be revisited and are incorporated into daily spelling practise and weekly tests to ensure retention and accurate application.
- Regular practice through Reading, Writing and Spelling ensures pupils develop fluency, confidence and independence, allowing them to focus on comprehension and composition.

SHINE

Serve – Hope – Imagine – Nurture - Enjoy

Serve

With Christ at the centre, language is a powerful tool for communication and connection. Pupils are encouraged to use vocabulary thoughtfully to express ideas, support others and engage respectfully in discussion. Vocabulary enables pupils to participate fully in their community and beyond.

Hope

Our vocabulary curriculum promotes resilience and aspiration. Pupils are encouraged to take risks with language, explore new words and learn from mistakes. Through repeated practice and exposure, pupils develop confidence in using ambitious vocabulary.

Imagine

We foster curiosity and creativity through language. Pupils are encouraged to explore and experiment with words, develop rich oral language and see themselves as confident communicators who can express ideas creatively.

Nurture

We provide a language-rich environment where all pupils feel safe to speak, listen and learn. Through modelling, discussion and collaboration, pupils develop confidence and self-belief as communicators.

Enjoy

We aim for pupils to enjoy language and vocabulary learning. Through engaging texts, discussion and purposeful application, pupils experience the satisfaction of understanding and using new words effectively.

We support children in becoming happy, healthy individuals who feel safe, included and confident to succeed.

4C Thinking Model

We also embed the school's 4C Thinking Model into vocabulary teaching across the curriculum.

The 4C Thinking Model (Comprehend, Connect, Creative, Critical) underpins all vocabulary teaching and learning. It supports pupils in developing a deep understanding of new words, making connections between previously learned and unfamiliar vocabulary, applying ambitious language in a range of contexts, and evaluating the effectiveness of their word choices.

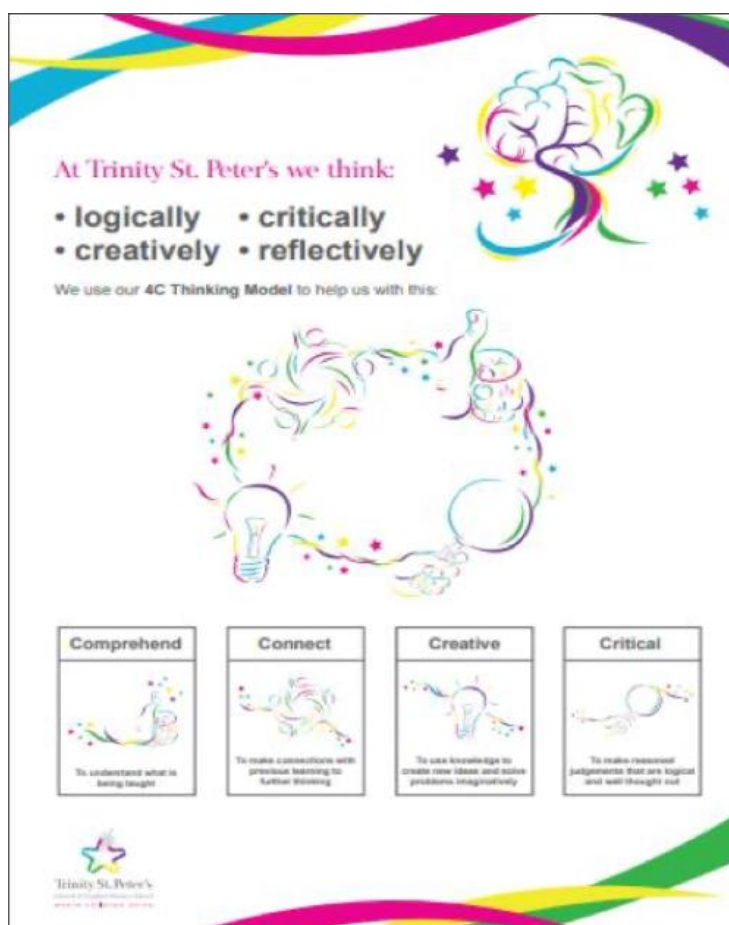
Comprehend – pupils learn and understand the meaning of new vocabulary within different contexts.

Connect – pupils link new vocabulary to prior learning, known concepts and subject-specific knowledge.

Creative – pupils are encouraged to experiment with and apply new vocabulary through speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Critical – pupils reflect on and evaluate their vocabulary choices, considering how language can be used effectively to communicate meaning and purpose.

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to engage with vocabulary at each stage of the 4C Thinking Model, ensuring words are not only learned but understood, applied and retained. Thinking Maps are used, where appropriate, to help pupils organise, connect and deepen their understanding of vocabulary across the curriculum.



Vocabulary is VITAL

Valued	We value vocabulary across the curriculum because it underpins pupils' ability to think, communicate, read and write effectively. A rich vocabulary is essential for accessing knowledge, understanding complex concepts and achieving success in all areas of learning.
Identified	Key vocabulary is carefully identified and planned for by subject leaders and class teachers. Using a tiered approach, staff select the most important Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary, alongside relevant Tier 1 and high-frequency words, ensuring purposeful progression across the curriculum.
Taught	Vocabulary is explicitly taught in every lesson. Knowledge organisers are used to support the teaching of key vocabulary and curriculum plans identify the language pupils need to learn and understand. New vocabulary is introduced, explained, modelled and explored through a range of contexts to deepen understanding.
Applied	Once vocabulary is taught, it is applied. Pupils are encouraged to use newly acquired vocabulary through speaking and listening activities, reading, writing and assessment opportunities across the curriculum. Teachers model ambitious language and provide opportunities for pupils to use vocabulary accurately and confidently.
Learned	Vocabulary is revisited, rehearsed and relearned to secure it in pupils' long-term memory. Through regular retrieval, repetition and application, pupils deepen their understanding of previously taught vocabulary. Lesson by lesson and year by year, pupils encounter and build upon key vocabulary, enabling them to make connections and strengthen their understanding across the curriculum.

STAR Vocabulary

We follow the **STAR** approach (**Select, Teach, Activate, Revisit**) to teach new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

- **Select** – identify the most important vocabulary that pupils need to know and understand.
- **Teach** – explicitly teach the meaning, pronunciation and use of new words.
- **Activate** – provide opportunities for pupils to use vocabulary in meaningful speaking, reading and writing contexts.
- **Revisit** – return to previously taught vocabulary regularly to strengthen retention and support long-term learning.

 Our STAR Vocabulary is:	 What does it mean?
 How does this word connect to the topic?	 How can I remember it?

Through the VITAL and STAR approaches, we ensure that vocabulary is not only taught, but understood, retained and applied confidently by all pupils.

Oracy in Vocabulary

Oracy is at the heart of vocabulary development at Trinity St Peter's. We recognise that pupils must be able to hear, understand, discuss and use new vocabulary orally before they can confidently apply it in reading and writing. Structured opportunities for talk are embedded throughout the curriculum, enabling pupils to develop confidence, clarity and precision in their spoken language.

Teachers explicitly model ambitious vocabulary and provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse, discuss and apply new words through partner talk, group discussions, questioning and whole-class dialogue. Sentence stems and talk structures are used to scaffold responses and promote the accurate use of vocabulary.

Examples include:

- "I know this word means..."
- "This word is similar to..."
- "I can use this word in a sentence because..."
- "I can connect this word to..."
- "I chose this word because..."
- "A more precise word would be..."

Through our school values of **Service, Hope, Imagine, Nurture and Enjoy**, pupils are encouraged to speak respectfully, listen actively and communicate their ideas with confidence. Oracy provides a foundation for pupils to explore new vocabulary, develop their thinking and engage meaningfully with others.

By regularly discussing, explaining and applying new vocabulary, pupils deepen their understanding of language, strengthen their comprehension and become confident communicators who can articulate their ideas effectively across the curriculum.

Appendix A: Tier 2 Vocabulary Spine

At Trinity St Peter's, we recognise that a rich and secure vocabulary is fundamental to pupils' success across the curriculum. To ensure a consistent and progressive approach to vocabulary development, we have identified a **Tier 2 Vocabulary Spine** for each year group. These carefully selected high-utility academic words are chosen because they are transferable across subjects, frequently encountered in texts and essential for supporting comprehension, communication and critical thinking.

The vocabulary spine provides a shared language for teaching and learning across the school. These words are explicitly taught, revisited and applied through our **VITAL** and **STAR** approaches, enabling pupils to develop a deep understanding of language over time. While teachers continue to teach additional Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary linked to specific subjects and texts, the vocabulary within this spine represents the core academic language that all pupils are expected to understand and use confidently by the end of each year group.

Through regular exposure, discussion and application, pupils build upon previously taught vocabulary, making meaningful connections between words, concepts and curriculum knowledge. This cumulative approach supports long-term retention and ensures that pupils become increasingly articulate, confident and successful communicators as they progress through Trinity St Peter's.

Reception

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
notice	big	same	explain
remember	small	different	describe
predict	tiny	similar	tell
choose	enormous	match	because
explore	gigantic	sort	share

End of Reception Expectations

Pupils can:

- Use newly learned vocabulary during play and discussion.
- Describe objects, events and stories.
- Explain ideas using full sentences.
- Talk about similarities and differences.

Year 1

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
identify	explain	compare	first
remember	because	similar	next
predict	describe	different	then
recognise	discuss	same	finally
notice	suggest	group	sequence

End of Year 1 Expectations

Pupils can:

- Explain their ideas using "because".
- Compare objects, characters and events.
- Retell learning using key vocabulary.
- Use vocabulary in both discussion and simple writing.

Year 2

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
observe	evidence	classify	improve
investigate	explain	contrast	choose
organise	justify	similar	recommend
discover	conclude	different	suitable
process	discuss	category	effective

End of Year 2 Expectations

Pupils can:

- ☐ Justify answers using evidence.
- ☐ Explain learning clearly.
- ☐ Apply taught vocabulary in speech and writing.
- ☐ Make simple evaluative comments.

Year 3

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
analyse	justify	evaluate	influence
interpret	explain	effective	consequence
summarise	evidence	criteria	significant
identify	conclude	strengths	relevant
estimate	discuss	improve	method

End of Year 3 Expectations

Pupils can:

- ☐ Compare and analyse ideas.
- ☐ Justify opinions.
- ☐ Summarise learning accurately.
- ☐ Use vocabulary independently across subjects.

Year 4

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
infer	justify	evaluate	clarify
interpret	explain	criteria	precise
establish	discuss	impact	appropriate
identify	conclude	effective	communicate
relevant	evidence	strengths	perspective

End of Year 4 Expectations

Pupils can:

- Explain and justify viewpoints.
- Evaluate outcomes and ideas.
- Select increasingly precise vocabulary.
- Discuss learning confidently using subject-specific language.

Year 5

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
determine	justify	perspective	complex
formulate	explain	interpret	structure
analyse	discuss	summarise	demonstrate
investigate	conclude	relevance	indicate
infer	evidence	impact	clarify

End of Year 5 Expectations

Pupils can:

- Communicate complex ideas effectively.
- Use evidence to support opinions.
- Select vocabulary appropriate to audience and purpose.
- Apply ambitious vocabulary across the curriculum.

Year 6

Thinking and Learning	Describing	Comparing	Explaining
synthesise	evaluate	articulate	rationale
analyse	justify	communicate	implication
formulate	interpret	perspective	significance
determine	conclude	precise	validity
infer	criteria	effective	reliability

End of Year 6 Expectations

Pupils can:

- Articulate complex ideas clearly and confidently.
- Evaluate and justify viewpoints.
- Transfer vocabulary across different curriculum areas.
- Use academic language independently in speaking and writing.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

In addition to the Tier 2 Vocabulary Spine, pupils are explicitly taught Tier 3 vocabulary through individual curriculum subjects. Tier 3 vocabulary can be categorised into **substantive vocabulary** and **disciplinary vocabulary**, both of which are essential for developing subject knowledge and understanding.

Substantive vocabulary refers to the subject-specific concepts, knowledge and content that pupils need to learn within a discipline. These are the words that represent what pupils are learning about and are closely linked to the substantive knowledge identified within the curriculum.

Examples include:

- History: monarchy, empire, democracy, invasion
- Geography: erosion, migration, biome, sustainability
- Science: photosynthesis, force, atom, evaporation
- RE: incarnation, salvation, pilgrimage

These words are often identified as key vocabulary within knowledge organisers and may be introduced as STAR vocabulary at the beginning of a lesson, unit or topic to support understanding and retention.

Disciplinary vocabulary refers to the language associated with the ways in which experts think, work, investigate and communicate within a subject. These words help pupils understand how knowledge is created, tested, interpreted, analysed and evaluated.

Examples include:

- History: source, evidence, interpretation, significance, causation
- Geography: analyse, evaluate, compare, pattern, distribution
- Science: hypothesis, variable, observe, predict, conclude
- RE: interpret, justify, compare, reflect, evaluate

Disciplinary vocabulary is revisited regularly across year groups to develop pupils' understanding of subject-specific ways of working. As pupils become increasingly familiar with these terms and are able to use them independently, they become embedded within their wider vocabulary repertoire.

Effective curriculum planning ensures that pupils:

- Learn increasingly complex substantive vocabulary as they progress through each unit and year group.
- Revisit and deepen their understanding of disciplinary vocabulary over time.
- Receive explicit instruction in both substantive and disciplinary vocabulary rather than acquiring them incidentally.

Impact

Our well-planned and consistently delivered vocabulary curriculum enables pupils to develop a broad, deep and connected understanding of language. Through explicit teaching, retrieval practice and purposeful application, pupils acquire the vocabulary they need to access the curriculum, communicate effectively and succeed as learners.

We strive to ensure that all pupils, regardless of starting point, develop the language and cultural capital needed to achieve well in school and beyond. Through our tiered approach to vocabulary, pupils build secure knowledge of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary, allowing them to access increasingly complex texts, articulate their thinking with confidence and engage critically with new learning.

As pupils move through Trinity St Peter's, they encounter, revisit and apply vocabulary across a range of contexts. This ensures that vocabulary is transferred to long-term memory and becomes part of their everyday spoken and written language. Pupils are increasingly able to:

- communicate clearly and confidently using ambitious vocabulary;
- discuss, explain, justify and evaluate their thinking;
- apply subject-specific vocabulary accurately;
- read with greater fluency and comprehension;
- write with increasing precision and sophistication.

The quality of pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing demonstrates the impact of our vocabulary curriculum. Pupils are able to talk confidently about their learning, explain the meaning of key vocabulary and apply previously taught words across subjects. Learning is cumulative, and each stage of the curriculum prepares pupils for the next.

The impact of our vocabulary curriculum is measured through:

- Ongoing formative assessment within lessons
- Vocabulary retrieval activities and quizzes
- Assessment of vocabulary application in reading, writing and spoken language
- Monitoring of spelling, including high-frequency and common exception words
- Pupil voice
- Book looks and curriculum monitoring
- Knowledge organiser reviews
- Subject leader monitoring and evaluation
- Progress evident in pupils' work across the curriculum
- End of unit and end of year assessment outcomes where appropriate

Ultimately, pupils leave Trinity St Peter's as articulate, confident and effective communicators who possess the vocabulary knowledge required to access secondary education and participate successfully in the wider world.