ENGLISH POLICY

St Mary's & St Benedict's

RC Primary School

Together in God's family, we grow in faith, knowledge & love to reach our full potential, and to become the people that we are created to be.

Policy Agreed: **November 2025**
Policy Updated: October 2026
Review Date: **November 2027**

Our School Ethos

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's we aim for our curriculum to inspire pupils to be life-long learners with a sense of service to the world that they live in and the people that live in it with them.

Our Curriculum Drivers

Our specifically selected curriculum driver words have been chosen to support the needs of our learners in this school. We have these graphics on display all around the school buildings to make them very visible.

In addition, staff have each of the six coloured circles in their classrooms to support learners to identify how to focus on each driver word in action. Our six words have been chosen to spell 'C.I.R.C.L.E.' to assist pupils to remember these words.

More information is available on the school's website: St Mary's & St Benedict's RC Primary School: Curriculum Drivers



Curious: I want to discover new ideas and will ask suitable questions

Independent: I want to think and learn for myself

Resilient: I want to keep going, even when my learning is tricky

Challenge: I want to stretch myself to find out new things and learn even more

Listener: I want to value other people's thoughts and learn from them

Enthusiastic: I want to approach my learning positively and with enjoyment

Vision for English

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's, our vision is that each child will receive a high-quality education in English, which 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. Our vision is that pupils in our school, through developing in spoken language and reading will develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We have a rich, progressive English curriculum that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. We strive for children to be literate and confident with a love of reading and writing to enable them to be ready for the next step of their learning journey- transitioning into KS3 and flourishing as life-long learners.

English Intent

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Primary School we aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. We strive for children to be literate and confident with a love of reading and writing to enable them to flourish as life-long learners.

We aim for every child to be able to:

- ✓ 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 others and participating in debate.

We follow the Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English which are laid out in specific detail in the National Curriculum for English Document (2014) and the Spelling and Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation appendices of the NC14 document, and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our approach is also informed by the Department for Education Reading Framework (2023) and Writing Framework (2025), which support schools in meeting existing curriculum expectations and provide evidence-informed guidance for the teaching of reading and writing. The policy also has regard to the Curriculum and Assessment Review final report, Building a world-class curriculum for all (2025), particularly its recommendations to strengthen oracy, speaking and listening, drama, inclusion and coherent progression.

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. We follow a clear pathway of progression as children advance through the primary curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of English within a broad and balanced approach across the curriculum. We have a bespoke curriculum with 2 genres per half term from Y1, with some KS1 classes having 3 integrated genres, for the autumn term. This allows time for the reading to writing process to be embedded. Teachers have high expectations for all children and plan against ARE for each year group. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, special learning needs or home background. Tasks are appropriately adapted according to individual needs as required, using flexible teaching and effective use of Teaching Assistants. All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum with adaptations made as necessary. Rigorous assessment and review will ensure that we are able to provide targeted support so that all children experience success in English; we believe that a secure basis in English skills is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as members of society.

The curriculum maintains high expectations and an ambitious entitlement for every pupil. Adaptation removes barriers to participation without narrowing the essential English knowledge and experiences pupils encounter.

English, literacy and oracy are developed coherently within English and applied purposefully across the wider curriculum so that pupils make connections, build secure foundations and are prepared successfully for the next stage of education.

English Implementation

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, our children are given a range of purposeful opportunities to: speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities; use communication, language and Literacy in every part of the curriculum; and become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication. Handwriting is taught explicitly and systematically from Reception using the school's Letter-join scheme. When children are ready in Reception, short daily teaching and practice establish comfortable posture, paper position and pencil hold, gross and fine motor control and accurate printed letter formation. Handwriting is taught in addition to the writing undertaken in phonics lessons, and correct formation is secured before pupils are expected to write at greater length.

Spoken language underpins curriculum provision. Opportunities to promote language include drawing club and modelled writing.

In EYFS, Communication and Language underpins all areas of learning. Practitioners develop children's language through high-quality back-and-forth interactions, sensitive questioning, storytelling, role play, rhymes, poetry and the frequent sharing of high-quality fiction and non-fiction. New vocabulary is explicitly modelled, and children are given repeated opportunities to understand and use this vocabulary in different contexts.

In Key Stage One and Two, teachers follow our school curriculum map which incorporate the National Curriculum genres and objectives. The English units develop understanding and skills in all strands of English having reading and analysing, reading and responding and writing phases, with opportunities for discussion throughout. Our school covers a range of genres which are built upon, allowing progression across year groups and key stages, whilst being interesting and challenging for the age of the child.

Developing a love of reading is of paramount importance for us at St. Mary's and St. Benedict's, and this starts from the moment the children start in Early Years. We appreciate the vitality of pupils reading fluently when entering secondary school, and encourage reading for pleasure, in addition to guided reading across school. We hold high expectations towards reading at home which is reflected in our homework policy.

Reading milestones are celebrated across school with reading achievement displays, and children receive a free book when they have achieved 150 reads (YR-3) and 200 reads (Y4-Y6). There is also a weekly reader celebrated from each class in celebration assembly and a YR6 end of year award for reading progress. Our classroom environments encourage a love for language, displaying a working wall that encourages the children to reflect on what has been taught alongside reading displays. Whole-school reading events such as World Book Day are celebrated every year, to further raise the profile of reading in our school and develop a love of reading.

Teachers read aloud to pupils regularly from carefully selected, high-quality texts. This exposes pupils to vocabulary and language structures beyond those they may be able to read independently, broadens their knowledge and develops enjoyment of reading.

Children are taught phonics in carefully organised, phase-focused groups following the agreed progression of the school's SSP programme. Assessment is used to identify pupils requiring immediate additional practice so that they keep up with the programme. We recognise the importance of phonics to support children to decode and become fluent readers. These are reviewed and assessed regularly, and staff are given training and development to ensure they are equipped with the expertise needed to teach high quality, daily phonics sessions. In pre-school children take part in daily Red Rose Phonics Phase 1 sessions. Red Rose Phase 1 support early literacy development by focusing on developing children's speaking, listening and sound discrimination skills before they begin learning letter sounds and graphemes in Phase 2. Phase 1 is broken down into 7 aspects including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and oral blending and segmenting. Phase 1 supports children to become successful communicators, paving the way for them to make a good start on their reading and writing journey

Daily phonics teaching is prioritised throughout Reception and KS1 and underpins both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words (tricky words). Decoding skills are taught daily from EYFS with children beginning their Phonics journey in school at Phase 2. Phonics sessions are planned from the Red Rose Phonics Lancashire Phonic Scheme and include fun and enjoyable activities which lead to rapid acquisition of skills. Phonics teachers use a consistent approach to the teaching of Phonics, with segmenting and blending actions being used from EYFS to KS1. Opportunities are given for encoding - writing dictated texts containing known letter-sound correspondences. Regular application of phonics skills daily further strengthens our children's reading ability. Our home reading books are in line with the phonics taught in school to allow children to apply the skills taught in school to reading at home. Phonics intervention groups are run in KS1 and KS2 to close gaps for targeted pupils and ensure a continuation of phonics development.

When children are secure at phase 5, they begin the Y2 Red Rose Spelling Programme. Textual features, spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught within reading and writing. It is also covered in KS2, through No-Nonsense Spelling to build upon the phonics skills obtained in EYFS and Key Stage 1. IDL intervention is used across KS2 are established for children who need further support with spelling. In addition, a grammar focus for each class for each genre is taught through the I Model and is from Key Learning within that unit. This is progressive across the year groups. Spelling, punctuation and grammar learning is made meaningful and current for children, every week.

Children across school complete guided reading sessions. The focus of guided reading at St. Mary's and St. Benedict's is about developing fluency and accuracy when reading, but also about developing questioning and an understanding of what the children have read. The approach to guided reading is therefore progressive, starting with reading and verbal questioning in small groups to an adult in EYFS and early KS1, to more formal questioning and written comprehension work being completed in KS2. Comprehension skills are also developed in the unit Reading phase. Children are given plenty of opportunities to respond to and reflect on the meaning of texts independently, in groups and in discussion with peers and adults. Children are questioned on a range of texts and asked a range of question types which focus on different domains including language and inference. Children are given opportunities for written responses depending on the age and ability of the children.

Talk is deliberately used to develop language comprehension. Across the curriculum, pupils discuss stories, poems, non-fiction and subject content, learn and use increasingly rich vocabulary, explain their understanding and build a coherent mental model of what they read and hear. In Reception and Key Stage 1, particular attention is given to high-quality back-and-forth talk, stories, poems, rhymes and songs.

Reading fluency is explicitly developed through high-quality modelling, repeated reading and opportunities for pupils to practise reading accurately and automatically. Teachers identify pupils whose reading is not sufficiently fluent and provide additional practice and support.

Teachers will follow the teaching sequence from reading to writing when teaching English. Writing includes modelled teacher writing, the teacher as the expert writer, actively speaking their thoughts and composing a piece of writing in front of the children, and explicitly demonstrating the thought processes involved in planning, drafting and editing. Incidental writes are also planned for within the reading phase, to build up stamina for writing. These skills are transferred across subject areas.

Transcription, comprising handwriting and spelling, is taught explicitly from Reception onwards. The aim is for these processes to become increasingly automatic so that pupils can devote greater attention to composition.

The school uses Letter-join as its consistent whole-school handwriting scheme. Teaching follows a clearly sequenced progression in which accurate print formation is established first. Joined handwriting is introduced only when pupils can form unjoined lower-case letters correctly and consistently. Pupils are explicitly taught which letters and letter combinations are joined and which are best left unjoined. Letter-join resources, modelling and agreed letter formations are used consistently by staff.

Handwriting instruction focuses on correct starting points and direction of movement, letter shape, size and orientation, relative proportions of upper- and lower-case letters, spacing between letters and words, and the accurate formation of numerals. Pupils practise regularly so that legibility, consistency, fluency and writing speed develop without compromising accurate formation.

A consistent "ready to write" routine is used throughout school. Staff explicitly teach and reinforce comfortable posture, stable seating, appropriate paper position, use of the helping hand and a comfortable, efficient pencil hold, with appropriate guidance for left-handed pupils. Adults model the school's agreed handwriting style across the curriculum and intervene promptly when inaccurate formation or inefficient physical habits are observed.

In Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate accurate print formation before learning the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed for joining in line with National Curriculum expectations and the Letter-join progression. In Key Stage 2, teaching develops increasingly legible, consistent, fluent and speedy handwriting, while pupils learn to choose an appropriate style for different purposes, including when print rather than joined writing is required.

Handwriting is monitored as part of ongoing assessment. Pupils who are not developing accurate, fluent and comfortable handwriting receive prompt, targeted teaching and additional supervised practice. Adaptations and appropriate equipment are provided where needed, including for pupils with SEND, while maintaining ambitious expectations and continuing explicit handwriting instruction wherever appropriate.

Explicit sentence instruction forms a fundamental part of our writing curriculum. Pupils are taught how to construct, orally rehearse, write and manipulate sentences to communicate meaning effectively. Grammar and punctuation are taught in meaningful contexts and pupils are given frequent opportunities to apply this knowledge within their own writing.

Grammar is taught so that pupils understand and apply it to communicate meaning effectively in speech, reading and writing. Knowledge of grammatical terminology supports this work, but grammar teaching is connected to sentence construction and purposeful composition rather than taught only as isolated identification exercises.

Spoken language and oral composition support the development of writing. Pupils are given opportunities to compose and rehearse sentences orally while transcription skills are developing and whenever oral rehearsal supports effective composition.

Expectations for the quantity of writing are carefully matched to pupils' transcriptional fluency and sentence-level knowledge. Quality, accuracy and control are prioritised as pupils develop the foundations needed to sustain increasingly lengthy pieces of writing.

Speaking and listening are vital skills for children to acquire and are fundamental to their language development. Children are taught to speak confidently and to adapt their speech to different situations. They are given the opportunity for their language to develop alongside their progress in reading and writing. They will also be given the opportunity to develop into careful and responsive listeners through the activities planned and through discussion during each phase.

Spoken language is explicitly taught and progressively developed across Years 1 to 6 and across the wider curriculum. Teaching provides planned opportunities for pupils to listen and respond appropriately; ask relevant questions; build vocabulary; articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions; give structured descriptions, explanations and narratives; sustain collaborative conversations; speculate, hypothesise, imagine and explore ideas; speak audibly and fluently with increasing command of Standard English; and select language and register appropriate to purpose and audience.

Pupils are taught to gain, maintain and monitor the interest of listeners, consider and evaluate different viewpoints and build on the contributions of others. They participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisation and debate. Teachers model high-quality spoken language, establish routines for productive paired and group talk, and give constructive feedback so that pupils build confidence, precision and independence as speakers and listeners.

The school recognises oracy as encompassing speaking, listening and communication. Spoken-language provision is inclusive and ambitious for all pupils, with adaptations that enable pupils with SEND and pupils with speech, language and communication needs to participate in the same rich curriculum.

The curriculum taught also allows children to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate. Opportunities are planned for children to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. Some English Units also have a spoken language outcome, performing to an audience. Children learn what a good oral performance looks like in readiness to performing themselves. We further promote English and providing opportunities that children may not receive outside of school, through changing in the region of 200 books each year from our school library from the LCC Book Bus, holding Book Fairs, arranging author visits, library workshops, and school trips such as Pantomime visits or performers visiting school.

Assessment for Learning is embedded in English lessons and children are active in reviewing the successes in their work and identifying, with support from their teacher, target areas for development to ensure a continuous and individualised approach to improving their work.

English Impact

At St. Mary's and St. Benedict's we recognise that quality first teaching should minimise the need for intervention strategies. Assessment is used to identify pupils at risk of falling behind at the earliest point. In early reading, the school's priority is for pupils to keep up from the start through timely additional practice that closely matches the content and progression of the school's phonics programme. Where pupils have fallen behind, targeted catch-up teaching is provided promptly and reviewed regularly. More-able children are identified, and suitable learning challenges provided. Teachers make thoughtful and effective provision for the varying levels of reading ability in their classes.

In phonics, we identify and provide specific intervention for children falling behind age related expectations; Reception children to be secure as Phase 4 by the end of the year; Year 1 children to be secure at Phase 5 by the end of the year. Individual gaps are targeted and regularly assessed. A transition period is planned for children entering Year 3 who need phonic reinforcement and GPS is a focus across the school. Children are regularly assessed in phonics and receive weekly spelling tests in KS1 and KS2 which include high frequency words, spelling patterns taught and statutory words.

Reading and writing are assessed using the objectives in the Key Learning documents which are in line with NC. Writing is moderated as a whole school at least twice a year internally and in collaboration with other schools. Further moderation includes discussions with the children.

Reading assessments are carried out termly in Years 1-6. In addition, previous SATS papers may be used to support teacher judgements and assessment. In writing, hot writes form the basis for assessment in addition to incidental writes. The hot writes are independently completed after the shared write. Marking is in line with the school's Feedback and Marking Policy.

Teacher assessment of whether a child is entering, developing or secure for ARE, are reported termly in Pupil Progress Meetings, to the Headteacher and Key Stage Leads. These form the basis for intervention and next steps for the subject Lead. Each term, progress and updates for English are given to the English Governor, Mrs Emma Ashe, which is reported to the Governing Body. Reports are sent three times a year to parents, keeping them updated of progress and attainment in Reading and Writing and discussed at Parents' Evenings.

The organisation and delivery of our English curriculum has produced a community of enthusiastic, confident readers and writers, who enjoy showcasing their developing literary knowledge and skills. Children are confident to take risks in their reading and writing, and love to discuss and share their ideas as well as performing. Outcomes of work evidence high quality of work, with children writing across a range of forms and adapting their writing successfully, considering the purpose.

Specific Nature of English

The National Curriculum in England and English Programmes of Study, identify that 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. The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy 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 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 others and participating in debate.

As such, English is a core subject.

Sequencing with English

The English curriculum at St. Mary's and St. Benedict's allows for progression of genres and coverage of Key Learning. The Key Learning is identified for each genre for the Year Group. Within each genre, individual components of knowledge are directly taught, and planning allows for each component to be practiced sufficiently for it to be secure. Each unit of planning moves from a reading to writing phase, with spoken language immersed throughout. Children are immersed in the language from the text, and the components of word recognition and comprehension addressed. In the writing phase, composition starts orally leading into written form. It is recognised that reading and writing are complex processes and that more complex reading and writing tasks will be managed with important component knowledge. The component knowledge of reading – word recognition and language comprehension are taught through phonics, guided reading, English teaching and through a broad curriculum. Writing – composition and transcription – need different teaching recognising the component knowledge that the teacher wants the children to gain. Composition in the writing phase begins with oral composition focusing on sentence structure, rich vocab, story language and story structure.

Assessment within English

Assessment for Learning is embedded in English lessons and children are active in reviewing the successes in their work and identifying, with support from their teacher, target areas for development to ensure a continuous and individualised approach to improving their work.

Reading assessments are carried out termly in Years 1-6. In addition, previous SATS papers may be used to support teacher judgements and assessment. In writing, hot writes form the basis for assessment in addition to incidental writes and GPS assessments are carried out termly. The hot writes are independently completed after the shared write. Marking is in line with the school's Feedback and Marking Policy.

Teacher assessment of whether a child is entering, developing or secure for ARE, are reported termly in Pupil Progress Meetings, to the Headteacher and Key Stage Leads. These form the basis for intervention and next steps for the subject Lead. Each term, progress and updates for English are given to the English Governor, Mrs Emma Ashe, which is reported to the Governing Body. Reports are sent three times a year to parents, keeping them updated of progress and attainment in Reading and Writing and discussed at Parents' Evenings.

Work is assessed in line with the Assessment Policies, reading and writing are assessed using the objectives in the Key Learning documents which are in line with NC14. Teachers highlight each term KLIPS sheets (LCC) for both Reading and Writing, based upon Guided Reading and unit teaching. Writing is moderated as a whole school twice a year, alongside book looks and discussions with the children.

Inclusion within English

Provision is made for children with a range of SEND that can be grouped into four broad categories of need, as detailed below:

1. Communication and Interaction

Children and young people in this category have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) which make it difficult to communicate with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use social rules of communication.

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, who are likely to have difficulties with social interaction may belong to this category.

2. Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.

Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

4. Sensory and/or physical needs

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time.

As a school, St Mary's & St Benedict's RC Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children get access to the full curriculum and we will provide suitable amendments to provision to allow this to happen.

At the bottom of this webpage: https://www.smsb.lancs.sch.uk/send/ there is a comprehensive list of subjects and the SEND adaptations that are suggested for each area. Class staff are required to consider these documents to best meet the needs of pupils with identified needs.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

At St Mary's & St Benedict's, we believe that:

- EAL children learn to speak, read and write in English through immersion in a broad, rich curriculum

- EAL learners make the best progress within a whole school context, where children are educated with their peers.

- Bilingualism is viewed as a positive and life-enriching asset.

We work with the EAL team at Lancashire County Council, when deemed appropriate, to access specialist teacher support for pupils. This additional input is co-ordinated between pupil's class teacher and the SLT lead for EAL provision.

Able, Gifted and Talented (AGT) pupils

At St Mary's & St Benedict's, we understand that all children require support and challenge in their learning to make progress and reach their potential. Subject leaders work with teachers to identify and support these children through our teaching and learning activities, our more able (MA) pupils are given a wide variety of challenges and experiences which develops their resilience, inspires them and deepens their understanding of the tasks.

They are encouraged to develop their abilities to ask questions, explain and reason, persevere, communicate their thoughts and take risks in their learning. We strive to provide creative means to increase their independence and curiosity, leading to an ever-increasing love of learning.