

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

English Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

This policy will be reviewed September 2027 and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Rationale:

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school. At St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we intend to create confident writers who develop stamina for writing throughout school. We aim for all of our children to be independent speakers, readers and writers, building on a range of skills as they work through each journey of literacy. Throughout this journey, we ensure the children are immersed in a range of genres and have a clear understanding of purpose. Our learners will have a secure understanding of the purpose of a text type, the purpose and intended impact of writing skills and the ability to carefully select vocabulary with careful attention to the desired effect on the readers' thoughts and feelings. Our learners are challenged and encouraged to take risks and view mistakes as another part of the learning process. Our learners will always set high expectations for themselves where they take pride in all aspects of learning and in everything they produce.

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School:

Incorporating Catholic Social Teachings (CST) into every facet of our English curriculum is paramount in fostering a holistic education that aligns with our school's deeply rooted values. CST provides a moral compass that transcends academic subjects, guiding our students towards a profound understanding of compassion, justice, and the dignity of every individual. By infusing CST principles into subjects ranging from science to history, we not only impart knowledge but also cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society. Through this integrated approach, pupils learn to view the world through a lens of solidarity, prioritising the well-being of the marginalised and vulnerable. This holistic educational experience empowers our students to become not only knowledgeable scholars but also compassionate advocates for positive social change, ensuring they carry the transformative teachings of CST into their lives beyond the classroom.

- Recognises the effect that a confident, fluent and coherent understanding of English will have on a pupils' progress, both inside and outside of the school environment.
- Understands how a strong grounding in English will impact the future learning and development of a pupil in all aspects of their life
- Provides a balanced and broad curriculum, which encompasses writing practice, including handwriting, spelling, widening vocabulary, and writing for different styles, purposes, and audiences, as well as focussing on spoken English, reading, grammar and pronunciation.
- Ensures that all staff members are aware of planning, assessment, teaching and learning requirements for the English curriculum.
- Ensures that all pupils know how to plan, practise, evaluate their work as well as carry out an effective edit and improve process.
- Ensures that all pupils understand all elements of English, as per the national curriculum.

The Teaching of Literacy

To ensure that there is adequate time for developing Literacy skills, each class has:

- A literacy lesson 4 days a week lasting approximately 60 minutes.
- Daily whole class reading sessions of 30 minutes focusing on a particular skill. Monday sessions take the form of a book club to expose children to high-quality literature and book talk to encourage a passion for reading.

Reading Content domain reference KS1:

- 1a** draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
- 1b** identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information
- 1c** identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
- 1d** make inferences from the text
- 1e** predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

Reading Content domain reference KS2:

- 2a** give / explain the meaning of words in context
- 2b** retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
- 2c** summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
- 2d** make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
- 2e** predict what might happen from details stated and implied
- 2f** identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
- 2g** identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases
- 2h** make comparisons within the text

- Daily grammar starters with two spelling (teach and apply) and one (teach and apply) main grammar sessions linked to the writing genre being taught.
- Daily Phonics sessions taught in FS and KS1 and where necessary in KS2 (Fresh Start Programme)

1. Spoken Language:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10) They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

Our aims and connected provision

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate as well as in-class teaching strategies focusing on specific targets of speech and language.
- Encouraging reading at home through discussing books that they are reading, sharing thoughts and opinions on what they have read
- School Plays
- Class assemblies
- School Council
- Talk partners
- Reading café
- Drama / role play

2. Reading:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13). Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

Schools are expected to have library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

Our aims and connected provision

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics (RWI) in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, reciprocal reading classes and an incentive to read at home (Buster's Book Club)
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using the Power of Reading scheme. We have adapted this to meet the needs of our pupils. In essence, pupils study a book, related to their half termly topic, where possible. They often study books which are more challenging than those which they might be able to read independently. They will use this book as the basis for reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, Accelerated Reader Scheme, library visits and high-quality attractive books in each classroom's reading and the school's book zone.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reciprocal reading classes, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read, Reading Café, Buster's Book Club, Monday book club and the various methods outlined above.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every other term.
- Pupils are exposed to a large variety and range of texts throughout their school life
- Pupils often look at books in guided reading sessions (POR novel focus)
- Key Stage Two pupils who are struggling with reading or making slow progress are given accelerated reading support (RWI/Nessy/Fresh Start)

Whole class reading - The children's taught reading sessions will be taught as a whole-class session. Each week the class will be taught a skill using the objectives from the National Curriculum, the EYFS curriculum and the reading domains. The teachers will teach using high quality texts allowing all children exposure to these. The teachers will use ongoing assessment to inform and aid their planning. Where possible, the texts taught and explored should be linked to either the literacy text-type being taught in Literacy lessons or the overall topic content.

In EYFS and KS1, links will be made between phonics/spellings and reading to strengthen the children's understanding. In KS2, this will happen when necessary for those children who still need these links to be made explicit and use the RWI/Nessy/Fresh Start schemes.

3. Writing:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and connected provision

- We teach grammar through starters and as a separate lesson once per week, where it is linked to our writing genre,
- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate)
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice (POR/Literacy Shed plus)
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with the pupil (Assessment Framework and Target tracker)
- We use checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively, which children do in their purple 'polishing' pens.
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed
- We use Kagan strategies, 'Chief and Indians', 'Diamond Nine', 'Role on the Wall' and drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view
- Support for pupils with learning difficulties
- Meetings with parents to help them support their child
- Provide workshops for parents to aid their children's learning at home

The writing journey

Each unit of writing will consist of learning done through roughly a 2-3 week learning journey and will be done through 1-hour lessons, 3 days a week. This is in order to ensure that the build-up of knowledge and skills is progressive and clear. Although the pedagogical process is detailed for each lesson, teachers have the professional scope to make adjustments where they think they are needed. It is expected that each stage of the learning process takes place and is evident through books, learning environment and planning. Learning journeys are based around high quality texts using *The Power of Reading* ensuring the children are stimulated and excited about writing.

Every learning must include:

Introduction to text type: Children will be introduced to the genre in a variety of ways:

Hook, WAGOLL, POR Novel and Literacy Shed plus as a stimulus for their writing.

All learning journeys begin with looking at features within the genre including which grammatical features and skills are best suited and why with focus on purpose – this shows the children the expectation of what they themselves are aiming for by the end of their unit of work. This should include:

- Features of the genre you are covering (e.g. if you are writing an autobiography it should have key dates, be written in chronological order, first person pronouns etc.)
- New vocabulary of the learning journey
- Evidence of the skill(s) that you will be covering.

Where possible, the WAGOLL is written/edited by the teacher, this way they can easily show the above expectations.

Familiarisation – Children will be exposed to many samples of a writing genre and involved in problem solving (Exploring text genre features- structure and language)

New skills - Children will be Introduced to the skills suited to the genre and focus of the learning journey.

Problem solving - (Understanding, exploring and developing skills required for that text type/genre)

A range of tasks and activities planned in – identifying and exploring features, role play, hot seating, conscience alley, debating, role on the wall, chief and Indians, diamond nine, presenting, asking questions, gathering vocabulary and freeze frames. Tasks and activities may not always be differentiated every lesson but adequate support must be planned in where necessary.

Planning stage - Children to plan their piece of writing based on the stimulus. Here, SEN children are given a planning frame where they are supported and guided into using the skills taught as part of the learning journey as well as the words of the learning journey.

Before a first draft is complete, the class teacher must lead a shared write with the children so that they will have an idea of where to lead their own writing. During the shared writing session, it is vital that you ‘think out loud’, purposefully referring to the skills/features and spelling rules you are focusing on. When children write their first draft, it is important that they are reminded to refer to their plans and refer to the working wall to help them in their writing.

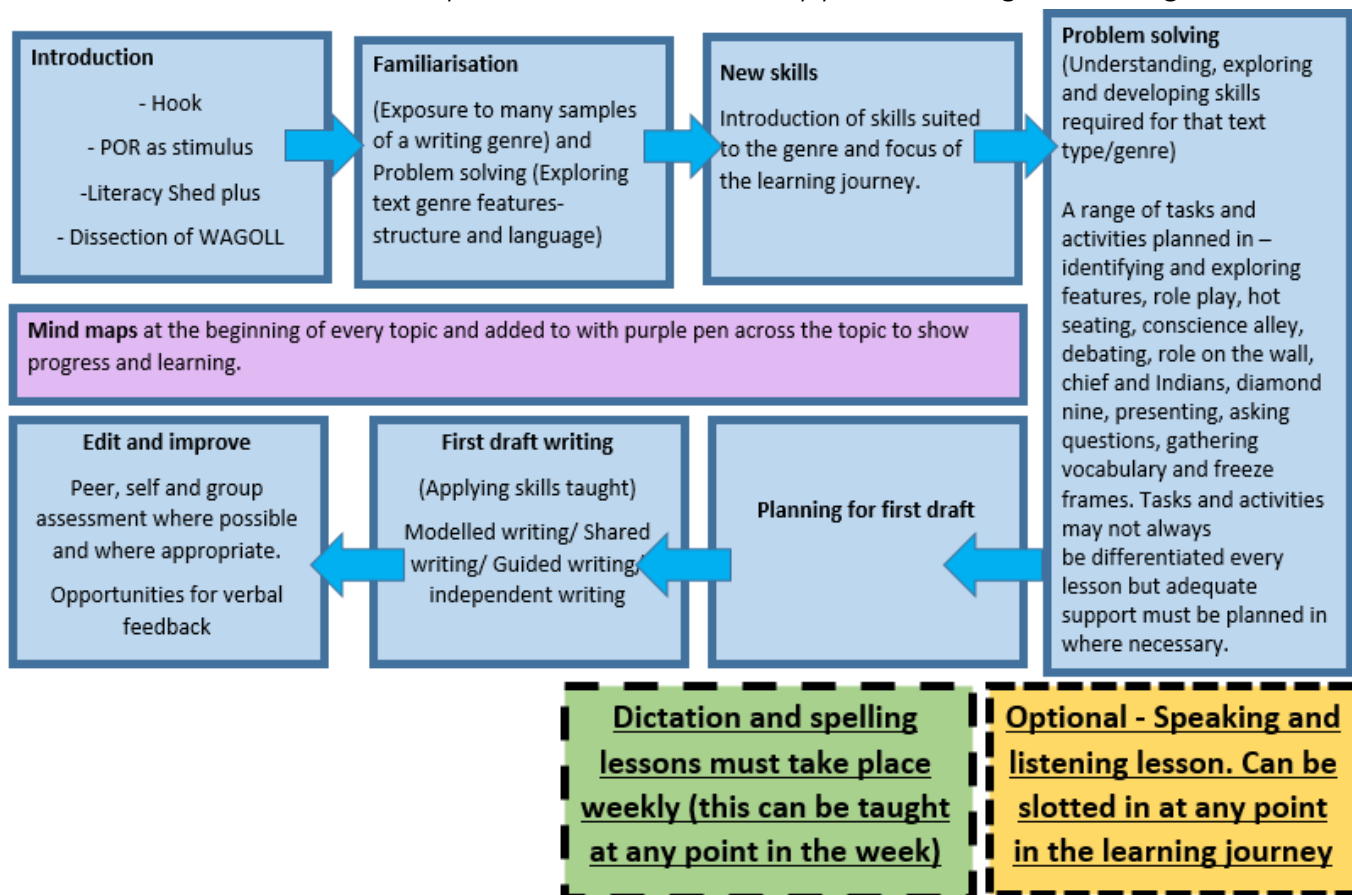
Edit and Improve using the annotation and footnote system –

collaboratively read back through their own writing. Whilst doing this, they will look for errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar and text mark this in purple pen. Once they have done this, they will then use a footnote system in order to improve/add sentences or sections to their work for their final draft.

NOTE: Corrections or edits, where one word is being changed or if there is a punctuation mark being added, should be done in the body of the text. Anything beyond this where children are changing or adding a whole sentence or a paragraph, this should be done as a footnote.

Ensure that pupils understand that during this process they should think about all aspects of writing they can improve, not just skills within that learning journey. This is so that children focus on what can be improved holistically.

Final draft with continuous improvements – This is to be completed once a term into their extended writing books and must include all the edits and improvements that have been made during these sessions. It is **vital** that children understand that this is **not** just an exercise in writing up the first draft with improvements in our best handwriting. **Model** to the children how we should **continue to improve our work as we write mentally**. This is so that self-improving and on-going editing becomes second nature to children. When modelling how to make continuous improvements, it is important to think out loud so children can ‘see’ you are and understand why you are making these changes.



Learning Environment

Washing Lines and Working Walls - These are an extremely important part of the learning process as they provide children with a form of continuous provision they can keep referring to throughout the journey. These should detail the skills being taught, give explanations and model examples. These should be written clearly and placed where all children can see them. During the process, the washing lines and working walls should be referred to regularly and often as a way of modelling their use. The children should see that you are using these as a form of continuous provision. These should remain on the walls for as long as the children need and can remain after a learning journey so children are reminded and encouraged to use these skills in other writing.

4. 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.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

Our aims and connected provision:

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 linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word-based lessons looking at patterns (Part of SPaG lessons)
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Using the Power of Reading and other texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate
- Sir Linkalot app to support the children in learning how to spell 'trickier words'

5. Planning and Assessment:

Planning:

The new National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. All children receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily English lesson. Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working groups. Teachers employ a range of generic teaching strategies.

- Teachers use the National Curriculum (2014) as a starting point for creating their medium-term literacy plans. These medium-term plans follow the five key aspects of Literacy teaching: familiarisation with the genre and text type; capturing ideas; teacher demonstration; teacher scribing through supported and guided writing and finally, independent writing to create a teaching sequence. This is used as a basis for short term planning and adapted according to the needs of the children.
- The length of a unit may vary. Teachers plan closely with year group colleagues to ensure consistency of opportunity for all children.
- Clear objectives are set for each session and are shared with pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support.

- Literacy is encouraged and developed across our curriculum and links are made where appropriate.
- Medium term (half –termly) planning is stored centrally.
- Schemes of work for phonics and grammar and spelling are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge (RWI, purple Mash and use of the Sir Linkalot App)
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions
- Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium funding will be given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly (Provision maps)
- Pupils that fall into one or more vulnerable group (EAL/SEN/WB/PP) are entitled to support which is tracked and monitored termly (Provision maps)

Assessment:

- Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly
- Final pieces of writing, each term, are assessed using the Assessment Framework (Devised by the school) for Years 1, 3, 4 & 5 and the Assessment Framework (Devised by the LA/Government) for Years 2 and 6.
- Formal assessments of Reading Comprehension ability are carried out, tracked and monitored at the end of Term2, 4 and 6 (NFER assessments/Test base and past SATs papers)
- Staff attend moderating sessions in school and with other schools to assess writing
- A writing moderation file is held on the school drive for consultation

TEACHING OF HANDWRITING: (See handwriting Policy)

Teachers should be using the school handwriting scaffold – Bubble Handwriting and program of Join-it. Handwriting should be taught regularly 3 times a week, modelled by the class teacher. Handwriting should be taught discreetly through all other subject areas, with pupils being exposed constantly to modelled examples of correct formation and presentation of acceptable handwriting. Spelling interventions for targeted children will be clearly identified on each teacher's provision map, which may result in some children receiving more handwriting sessions per week.

. AIMS:

As a school, we aim to teach the pupils the following:

- A recognition and appreciation of patterns and lines
- Learn the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and upper-case letters
- An understanding of the importance of clear presentation, in order to communicate clearly and with meaning
- To take pride in their written presentation, and write with enjoyment
- To be able write quickly across the curriculum
- For pupils to develop a fluent, comfortable, and legible joined up handwriting style