



St. Paul's Catholic Junior School
English Curriculum and Teaching Policy
October 2025

'Learning from the example of Jesus, our school will be a place where everyone feels loved, valued and encouraged to be and do the best they can.'

Reviewed and agreed by governors	November 2025
Next review	October 2027
Headteacher	J. Luck
Chair of governors	M. Evans

There are several key concepts which drive the English curriculum at St. Paul's:

1) MISSION STATEMENT

At St. Paul's Catholic Junior School, everything that we do centres around our Mission Statement:

'Learning from the example of Jesus, our school will be a place where everyone feels loved, valued and encouraged to be and do the best they can.'

We live out this mission statement through developing an ethos and curriculum that encourages our pupils to **be kind, be respectful and be resilient**. As a Catholic school, we believe that fostering a knowledge of Christ and nurturing the spiritual, personal, moral and cultural development of our pupils is fundamental to all that we do.

2) KNOWLEDGE RICH AND HUMANITY RICH

Our English Curriculum uses the National Curriculum Programme of Study and content as its basis. We maintain an evidence based approach, basing our procedures on EEF guidance ('Improving Literacy in KS2'); more recently, on non-statutory government guidance reports ('The Writing Framework' 2025 and 'The Reading Framework' 2021) and also on the Oracy research carried out by Voice 21.

At St. Paul's, through quality first teaching, we apply a progressive model of English teaching, based on the statutory programmes of study for Years 3–6. Teaching is sequenced carefully to ensure progression of knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and spoken language. We are, however, responsive to pupils' needs, backgrounds, and prior learning, setting high expectations for all and scaffolding learning where appropriate.

We aim for pupils not to be content with merely being engaged in their curriculum. We want each child to be actively invested in his or her learning, encouraging a 'botheredness' mindset. Engagement is not enough, our pupils need to be invested in their learning, moving from a state of being 'inert' to 'alive', applying their knowledge and understanding to make a difference to their own lives, the wider curriculum and the world. Whilst this helps us fulfil our mission statement, research has also shown that this emotional link promotes long term retention of learning.

All lessons promote our key values of kindness, resilience and respect, ensuring that our learning is also humanity rich. We aim for all our children to be independent, active, responsible,

articulate and confident citizens of the future, promoting our core values of kindness, respect and resilience in all we do.

Exposing pupils to the wealth of diversity in the world around us through curriculum learning is also a large part of a 'knowledge and humanity rich' curriculum. We aim for our pupils to experience learning based around people and stories from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds.

3. ORACY

Oracy runs as a thread throughout the entire curriculum, but opportunities to develop these skills further are embedded into English lessons, to encourage our pupils to acquire a strong command of the spoken word. We believe that the better our pupils' speaking and listening skills, the better their written work. We aim to promote a talk and vocabulary rich environment in all lessons.

4. RESILIENCE

We promote a growth mindset attitude which encourages perseverance when challenges arise.

5. MENTAL WELL BEING

We aim to promote positive self-esteem in all lessons, encouraging a love of learning and praising pupils' successes. Both Reading and Creative Writing have been proven to link to higher levels of confidence and happiness (National Literacy Trust research).

6. TRANSITION

We aim to work closely with our feeder Infant school, enabling a smooth transition in skills and knowledge from KS1 to KS2. We also aim to ensure that pupils' English skills in all areas prepare them for the demands of KS3.

We are committed to weaving career related learning through our English curriculum to prepare all of our pupils for the future.

In all English lessons, we highlight and reference nine key life skills:

- **Listening:** ability to listen critically to others
- **Presenting (speaking):** speaking clearly & ability to present oneself
- **Problem Solving:** finding many solutions to a problem

- **Creativity:** thinking of new / different ways to do things
- **Staying Positive:** being resilient in challenging situations
- **Aiming High:** aspiring to do your best in any task/ career
- **Teamwork:** being able to get along with others
- **Leadership:** ability to make difficult decisions and get support from others
- **Adaptability:** ability to thrive and cope in changing conditions

Implementation

Children receive a minimum of five hours English teaching a week at St. Paul's. English lessons are planned in accordance with our Curriculum Maps and are broken down further into long term planning, to ensure full coverage of year group expectations. New knowledge and skills build on what has been learnt before and learning is revisited across and between year groups, to ensure greater retention. English skills are also, however, developed and applied across our broad and balanced curriculum. Children are frequently provided with opportunities for reading, writing, speaking and listening in other curriculum areas.

Our twice yearly Ignite link projects seek to take skills the children have previously covered and apply them to social justice and conservation themes. They encourage children to use reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and knowledge to support an active engagement in current issues, helping them to see that they can use their voice to make a difference within the world.

Reading

Teaching of Reading

- Teachers model reading strategies during guided reading sessions and promote discussion of texts in detail.
- Emphasis on high quality texts across a range of genres (theme lessons). The wide range of texts covered encourages pupils to broaden reading choices and explore unfamiliar authors. Whole class reading sessions focus on developing pupils' skills relating to the various assessment focuses. VIPERS is used as a resource to help the pupils understand the different aspects of reading comprehension. Questions are selected carefully to match progression in reading skills across the school.
- Novels – aimed at a higher reading level than the pupils may be able to fully access independently. These are often linked to the curriculum, but may also be a stand alone

quality text. Pupils read this for pleasure, but these are also used by teachers to fully embed the required reading skills.

- Year 3 pupils are screened for phonics gaps shortly after entering our school to ensure that word reading is not a barrier to comprehension. Pupils who require it are given daily phonics interventions, using the Read, Write Inc. scheme. Pupils are assessed half termly for their progress.
- For children who require further support with word reading, 1:1 tutoring is provided by well trained LSAs. In lower school, this is completed through Fast Track Tutoring, focusing on sound/phoneme correspondance pupils may be struggling with. Once sounds are learnt, pupils begin Fresh Start, a fluency intervention aiming to improve speed and confidence.
- In our school, pupils are provided with a stage appropriate reading book to take home with them. Pupils completing phonics interventions are encouraged to choose from our 'Life after phonics' scheme, which aims to build fluency and confidence. On reaching the end of the scheme, or where the teacher believes that the child is a competent independent reader, pupils are given a free choice of book from the class or school library. They are encouraged to share this book with an adult at home, as we believe this promotes a life long love of reading.

Reading for pleasure

- We aim for classrooms and the school library to be text rich environments.
- We aim for reading for pleasure sessions take place weekly. At least once a half term, we hold 'drop everything and read' sessions in classes.
- Reading of class novel throughout the week to promote a love of language and storytelling.
- Virtual author visits widen pupils' author awareness.

Creative Writing

Our writing curriculum is built on a text-led approach, using high-quality and diverse texts as the foundation for learning. These rich stimuli inspire pupils' ideas and provide clear models of language, structure, and style. Drama activities are used in lessons to help promote depth of understanding. Vocabulary development is central to our lessons, with pupils encouraged to use word mats and thesauri to build a richer, more precise bank of language. Pupils write for a range of purposes and across a range of genres: fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Writing takes place in both Writing lessons and also in cross-curricular writes in other subjects.

The full writing process — planning, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing — is taught consistently in all year groups to help pupils develop both independence and confidence as writers. Teachers model writing to scaffold understanding, making explicit the strategies, techniques and processes needed for success. Guided writing is used to address specific needs of groups and individuals.

Pupils write at length in independent writing sessions. We have planned for a scaffolded approach towards independent planning and writing. Planning and writing at the start of the year in all year groups are more heavily scaffolded and supported before full independence is introduced. Pupils in lower school are more supported in independent writing further into the year than pupils in Year 5 and 6, with the aim of teacher modelling and support building confidence in independence across the whole writing process. Sometimes the content and purpose of independent writes are directed by the teacher, but at times pupils are given freedom to write about an area of their choice, promoting ownership and creativity, with the aim of encouraging pupils to enjoy writing. Editing and proofreading are taught as explicit skills, with the aim of building resilient and independent writers who take ownership of their work. Peer editing is frequently used to help pupils support each other in their learning.

Grammar and punctuation are taught in context where possible, ensuring that pupils see their purpose and apply them meaningfully within their own writing. These areas are also taught discretely at times, with concepts taught explicitly and revisited regularly.

Spelling is taught discretely as a subject but enforced both in writing lessons and wherever writing takes place across the curriculum. Building on learning from KS1, pupils are encouraged to use their phonics skills to break root words down, making use of Read Write Inc Speed Sounds charts, which are in every room for the children to refer back to. Statutory word lists and objectives from the National Curriculum are taught systematically across year groups and prior learning is revisited every lesson. ‘Guidelines’ (rather than rules) are taught for groups of words. Children are encouraged to investigate spelling patterns. Dictation plays a large role in Spelling lessons, with pupils encouraged to recall both new rules and existing knowledge when writing down a given sentence.

Handwriting

We recognise that writing is one of the most cognitively demanding things a child is asked to do in school. It is therefore important that the child’s handwriting becomes a skill that ultimately requires little effort and thought so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing rather than upon the act.

Cursive handwriting is introduced in Year 3 and refined as the child progresses throughout KS2.

Cursive handwriting is taught through two main joins:

- 1) a ‘diagonal join to half height’ (approximately the mid-point of the gap between reasonably spaced writing lines in an ordinary exercise book)
- 2) a ‘washing line join’.

The letters are taught as follows:

☐ With letter e, the diagonal join has to sweep round to form the _e_ (egg) and the washing line join has to dip down to form the _e_ (are).

☐ When a letter that ends with a washing line join (o, r, v, w, x) is followed by a letter in the c group (c, a, d, s, g, o, q) a hook over is added to the washing line join to reach the starting point of the next letter (oak, rag, van, want, exam).

The importance of legible, cursive handwriting is highlighted by staff in writing tasks across the curriculum. Teachers model the joins taught in their own writing on the board and in the pupils' books.

Pupils identified with motor difficulties are offered the 'Speed Up' handwriting intervention, recommended by the Educational Psychology service.

Speaking and listening

Oracy permeates the whole curriculum and is taught in line with Voice 21 research. Oracy is split into four areas: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social/emotional. Exploratory talk, such as talking pairs, debate and choral speech is used in lessons to help children develop their thinking and their ideas, as well as promoting the social aspects of talk. Presentational talk takes many forms: drama productions, assemblies or speeches linked to our social justice topics.

Assessment

The monitoring cycle is set out by the senior leadership team at the beginning of each academic year. Monitoring includes book looks, lesson visits, learning walks, pupil/staff voice surveys and guidance days (completed in conjunction with SIL where appropriate). All monitoring undertaken serves to improve our practice, with the aim of bettering the outcomes for our pupils.

Formative assessment is an integral part of daily lessons and is first and foremost the essence of helping making our pupils make instant progress in their historical knowledge and in their skills. This is done through a mixture of high level questioning, discussion, Oracy activities and written work. We use live marking and verbal feedback in all lessons to enable teachers to target next steps for pupils effectively. Opportunities for children to review and improve their learning are embedded into each lesson. Children are given the opportunity to evaluate their own work, and that of their peers. During and on completion of a piece of work, the teacher responds, identifying areas for development. Children's work is valued, celebrated and displayed around the class and school.

Formal assessments take place in SPAG and Reading twice yearly, using NFER age appropriate materials. Reading ages are also taken to help build a picture of a child's progression. Pupils on phonics interventions receive half termly assessments.

Independent writing is assessed by class teachers and moderated internally each term. In Years 3, 4 and 5, teachers attend external standardisation at SIL, to quality assure our judgements. Our Year 6 teachers regularly work with a SIL English adviser, again providing quality assurance of our judgements.

Termly data drops take place for English. These provide a 'snapshot in time' of pupils' understanding related to age related expectations and help us to analyse current trends and also hone in on vulnerable groups that might require further support or intervention.

Implementation regarding SEND and inclusion

Teachers at St. Paul's Junior School consistently plan from the outset, set high expectations, suitable challenges and remove any barriers for learning, for all pupils. We firmly believe that 'good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all' (EEF 2020). Quality First Teaching is paramount to this and teachers will also encourage and support independence wherever possible so that the children are able to learn more, complete more independently, remember more and prepare for the tomorrow. Many of our strategies are based on Rosenshine's Principles for Learning and are also in line with EEF guidance on high quality teaching and special educational needs in mainstream settings (2021). Retrieval practice is central to our approach, as we recognise that new learning is fragile and that knowledge must be revisited to embed it and help children commit learning to long term memory. Our classroom environments support the children's long term learning as much as possible. Display boards within all classrooms are added to progressively from lesson to lesson in topics with key vocabulary. These can then be referred back to in the next lesson to promote sticky learning and to scaffold all children in retaining key language and information. Retrieval quizzes at the start of lessons ensure that prior learning is revisited. Our curriculum is designed in such a way as to ensure that prior learning is revisited and can be progressively built upon.

Teachers use appropriate assessments to help inform their planning, this way a person-centered approach ensures progress is made and makes their learning a personalised experience. This approach is used for all pupils in the class, focusing particularly on the following groups of children:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupil premium children
- Pupils with summer birthdays

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEND are able to successfully access the English curriculum and ensure that there is no ceiling placed on their learning or what they can achieve. This includes promoting independence and allowing the children to feel a sense of equality and belonging in their classroom environment. We aim for all children, as far as possible, to be able to access learning in lessons. The children are supported in many different ways and this support is adjusted according to the children's needs and their way of learning, processing information and recording their work. These strategies include:

- Oral rehearsal of sentences before committing ideas to paper.
- Vocabulary written on board for all children to access (or on a whiteboard for a specific child/group).
- Screen shots taken of board work and placed in front of the children on an ipad.
- Extra/focused explanation.
- Video recording of work if writing is an issue/use of speech notes on Book Creator.
- Modelling of work before asking children to complete it.
- Sentence stems written on board to help children to frame their answers.
- Step by step instructions for a task. These can be voice recorded if needed.
- Tasks chunked with breaks as required.
- Use of a task organiser to increase independence levels.
- Use of concrete resources where needed.
- Overlearning and precision teaching of facts and information needed for the topic.
- Additional time to complete tasks and process information if needed.
- Use of concept cartoons to promote critical thinking.
- Peer/group work (particularly structured talk).
- Visual formats to help them to manage their time more effectively.
- Speaking slowly and getting children to confirm his understanding by asking questions regularly.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, our whole school focus on Oracy is an important level of support for these children. This enables teachers to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Impact

- to enable all of our pupils to make good progress across all areas of the English curriculum, from whatever the individual's starting point may have been. We define progress as knowing more and remembering more. It is the widening and deepening of knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours.
- to provide pupils with a language rich experience, enabling them to communicate confidently in a range of contexts in both the spoken and written form.
- for pupils to have a love of reading and creative writing. We aim for pupils to see the positive impact that these areas can have on their mental health.
- for pupils leaving us to be well prepared for the next stage in their lives, particularly for the further study across the curriculum in KS3, but also with skills that they can take forward into their future careers.
- for all pupils to feel inspired that they can use their English knowledge and skills to help them understand the choices that they and others make today and to help them to see ways in which they can make a positive difference in their own lives, within society and to the world around them.