



C. E. PRIMARY ACADEMY
(HANDSWORTH)

English Policy

Subject Champion: B Haughey

Date: November 2023

Date for Review: November 2025

Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy Vision Statement

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy our distinctive Christian values are at the heart of all we do. Through our curriculum and care our children develop independent curiosity, acquire a life-long appetite for learning and become well-rounded individuals, seeking 'hope and a future' for themselves and others.

1. Intent

1.1 Holy Trinity Curriculum

Our curriculum is about **bringing engagement, fun and enthusiasm** to learning so that our children develop independent curiosity, acquire a lifelong appetite for learning and become well-rounded individuals who achieve their full potential, both personally and academically. Our curriculum starts from the children in our academy and works out.

1.2 English at Holy Trinity

At Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy, we have developed a high-quality English curriculum that enables all pupils to develop as confident readers, enthusiastic writers and fluent speakers. We aim to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. Pupils at Holy Trinity are immersed in rich and varied texts that engage, excite and motivate them to read and write. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects. We actively teach language and vocabulary acquisition so that our pupils leave the school with excellent oracy skills. The English curriculum is designed to develop knowledge and skills that are progressive, as well as transferable across all curriculum subjects. We believe that children need to develop key phonics, reading, writing and speaking skills so that they are prepared for the next stage in their educational journey.

1.3 Curriculum aims

The overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, 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 literacy 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, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

2. Implementation

2.1 Curriculum delivery

At Holy Trinity, we offer our pupils a variety of rich learning opportunities to develop and practise their reading, writing and language skills.

Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy input and adult-led activity twice a week. • Daily opportunities to develop literacy skills in all classroom areas e.g. reading corner, writing table, role play area, outdoor provision etc. • Daily 25-30 minute phonics lessons. • 30-minute reading practice sessions 3 times a week. • Story time. • Reading and writing interventions for pupils needing additional support. • New reading books each week to take home.
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 1 hour English lessons. • Daily 25-30 minute phonics lessons. • 30-minute reading practice sessions 3 times a week. • Weekly 30-minute spelling lessons. • Weekly 30-minute handwriting lessons. • Story time. • Reading and writing interventions for pupils needing additional support. • New reading books each week to take home.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 1 hour English lessons. • Daily 25-30 minute phonics lessons (Autumn 1). • Daily 30-minute guided reading sessions. • Daily 25-30 minute spelling lessons (Autumn 2 onwards). • Story time. • Weekly 30-minute handwriting lessons. • Reading and writing interventions for pupils needing additional support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New reading books each week to take home.
Years 3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 1 hour English lessons. • Daily 30-minute guided reading sessions. • Story time. • Weekly 30-minute spelling lessons. • Spellings lists to practise at home and weekly spelling tests. • Weekly 30-minute handwriting lessons. • Reading and writing interventions for pupils needing additional support. • New reading books each week to take home. • Silent reading time.

2.2 Spoken language

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. At Holy Trinity, we believe that the four strands of spoken language: speaking, listening, group discussion and drama, form the foundations of all learning in English. Our children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We achieve this by:

- providing opportunities for all pupils to listen to and participate in stories, poems, rhymes and songs.
- using sentence-stems to scaffold oral responses in class discussions.
- encouraging pupils to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write.
- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value and respect their conversations and opinions.
- being aware that as adults, we provide must model standard English in our daily interactions with pupils and with other adults in our school.
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of situations and in different contexts.
- providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies and productions, where children's efforts and skills are celebrated.
- providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.
- developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.
- differentiating activities for pupils that speak English as an additional language and using a variety of strategies to support them to develop proficiency in English.

2.3 Reading

Phonics

We believe that all our children can become fluent readers. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme.

- We teach phonics for 20 minutes a day and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.
 - We timetable daily phonics lessons and interventions for any child in Year 2 or above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check.
- We teach children in Reception and Year 1 to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - decoding
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

Please read this policy in conjunction with our *Phonics and Early Reading Policy*.

Guided reading

We have daily guided reading sessions from Year 2 onwards to ensure that children confidently read age-related texts and are able to answer a range of questions. We use questions based on the VIPERS domains as our method to explicitly teach the key reading skills. We teach whole class guided reading comprehension sessions to allow all children to make progress in reading. We provide regular and supportive opportunities for children to encounter engaging texts that will resonate with their interests and capture their imagination.

- Every 2 weeks, there is a new high-quality focus text. The text type varies every 2 weeks to ensure that children access a wide range of texts. These are appropriate to the age and key stage of the children.
- Before we read a new text, we ensure that we teach the geographical/historical context of the text and explain how it relates to the wider world. We believe that background knowledge is the main driver of language comprehension, whether written or spoken. Familiarity with the subject matter increases fluency, broadens vocabulary, and enables deeper reading and listening comprehension.
- Once pupils are familiar with the background of the text, each guided reading lesson will focus on teaching one or more of the VIPERS questioning skills.
- VIPERS is an acronym to aid the recall of the 6 reading domains as part of the reading curriculum. They are the key areas which we feel children need to know and understand in order to improve their comprehension of texts. VIPERS stands for:

- **V**ocabulary
- **I**nference
- **P**rediction
- **E**xplanation
- **R**etrieval
- **S**equence (KS1) / **S**ummarise (KS2)

Reading for pleasure

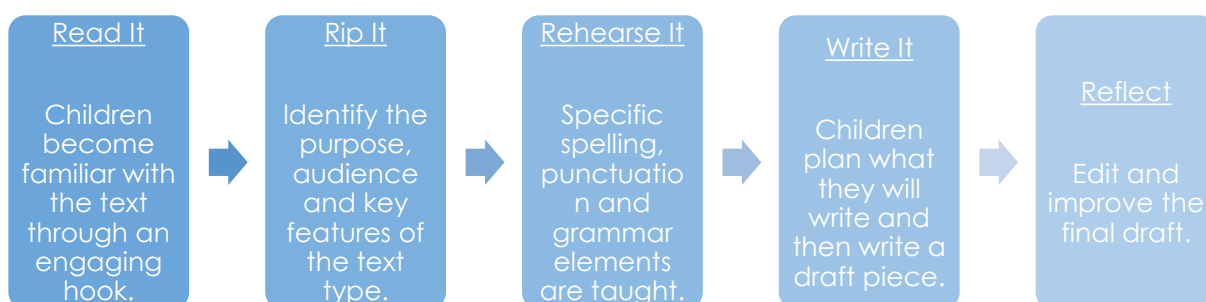
- We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.
- Each class has set story times where pupils enjoy listening to a high-quality text read by an adult. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Holy Trinity and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Each class has a 'Reading Spine' which lists our non-negotiable texts that will be read by the end of the year. These texts are a mixture of classic texts, diverse texts, fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books. They enjoy engaging in sustained independent reading.
- In Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards take a reading book home each week which is matched to their ability. KS1 also have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Children across the school have regular opportunities to celebrate the joy of reading through World Book Day and other events.
- The children are given opportunities to develop their reading skills across all curriculum subjects. Therefore, they understand that reading is a skill that can be applied to all that we do.

2.4 Writing

At Holy Trinity, we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers, we encourage children to write creatively whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically.

Planning

- Each year group has a high-quality focus text for the half term. All learning for the half term will be based around this text. We aim for all pupils to write at least 2 longer pieces of writing each half term.
- All our English texts are carefully chosen. We ensure that our children are exposed to a variety of different text types including fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- In Reception, we ensure that our pupils develop strong fine and gross motor skills so that they are ready to write. We support them to develop their pencil grip and letter formation before they begin writing words, phrases and sentences later in the year. Children are immersed in writing through our high-quality continuous provision.
- In KS1 and KS2, each writing unit takes approximately 3 weeks to complete. A clear sequence of lessons is planned over this 3-week period so that learning builds gradually towards writing a longer piece in the third week.
- Each unit focuses on teaching a different writing outcome. Each text type has a different purpose and genre. This ensures that all pupils have opportunities to apply and transfer their skills across a range of different writing outcomes and for different purposes.
- Writing builds up in small sections over the unit. Short writing opportunities allow the children to build stamina and enjoyment for writing.
- All writing units follow our 5-phase writing structure:



Teaching approaches

Modelled writing:

- We ensure that teachers demonstrate writing, including the thought processes and decisions that are required. The children witness the teacher live modelling and key aspects are taught and identified. The children are provided with model texts which help them to understand what the final writing outcome should look like.

Shared writing:

- For shared writing, we use a similar approach to modelled writing, however the children begin to take control. They share their ideas and the teacher scribes these on the board. There is a shift from the teacher as model towards the children doing more of the thinking, composing, explaining and working as writers. The teacher writes down what is said, taking over the transcription, but also reminding, prompting and challenging so that the writing remains focused.

Guided writing:

- Guided writing is taught in small groups during English lessons. The group is 'guided' through a particular part of the writing process. The teacher scaffolds learning and helps

the children to improve. The children still however do most of the thinking and writing but the teacher is available to support along the way.

Independent writing:

- Towards the end of the writing unit, we encourage the children to write more independently. Through the writing process, they will have developed the necessary skills to independently apply what they have been taught in previous lessons. We use a success criteria each lesson to remind the children exactly what they need to do to achieve the lesson objective.

Developing a writing culture

- Developing a writing culture at Holy Trinity is fundamental to the progression of the children not only in writing but across all other subjects. The importance of writing is promoted by all adults and quality writing is routinely celebrated.
- Displays throughout the school emphasise our commitment to improve and celebrate writing.
- Each class has an English working wall to support and remind children of the key skills needed to write effectively.
- Quality pieces of writing are celebrated in assemblies and with other classes.
- We have a weekly 'Writer of the Week' for each class to celebrate excellent work.
- Writing units enable the children to write for a real purpose and audience within the school and local community.
- Half termly training and coaching for staff to develop their skills in teaching writing.
- Teachers have a commitment to ensuring all pupils see themselves as writers and demonstrate enthusiasm for writing.

2.5 Grammar and Punctuation

- Grammar and punctuation are introduced to the children through the texts studied. Teachers select the grammar and punctuation elements from the National Curriculum that are best suited to each unit.
- Lessons are then devoted to teaching and consolidating understanding of different types of grammar and punctuation.
- Certain grammar and punctuation features will then appear in the success criteria for writing composition lessons. After practising these skills through short writing opportunities, the children are expected to use them independently in their final writing piece.

2.6 Spelling

We recognise that spelling and word knowledge are key components in the process of learning to read and write. We use *Spelling Shed* as our spelling scheme to make learning these key skills fun and engaging for our children.

- *Spelling Shed* provides an organised progression through the spelling and grammar objectives outlined in the National Curriculum for English.

- Each class has a spelling lesson once a week. Each lesson focuses on learning a different spelling rule and includes both a main teaching activity and an independent application activity.
- Every few weeks there are also challenge word sessions or revision sessions. These are intended to assess knowledge and apply previously taught spelling rules.
- Pupils take home a different spelling list each week based on the spelling rule that has been taught in class. They are expected to practise these spellings further at home before completing a spelling test the following week.
- Spelling tests are completed weekly and are used to assess pupils' understanding of the spelling rule taught. Gaps are then identified, and an extra spelling session planned in that week for any child that requires further practise.

2.7 Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their written work, and handwriting is a key part of this. Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

In early years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills, and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper-case and lower-case letters.

- In Reception, pupils have a letter formation lesson once a week. These skills are also practised and applied in phonics and literacy lessons. Letter formation is taught using the letter formation phrases from our phonics programme, *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. Each letter has a catchy phrase to help the children remember the formation.
- Each class has one handwriting lesson a week. Handwriting lessons are based on the handwriting scheme 'Letter-join.'
- The focus for handwriting lessons progresses each year:
 - Reception – focusses on letter formation.
 - Year 1 – teaches how to correctly write capital letters, uses of printed letters, numbers, punctuation, maths symbols and other symbols.
 - Year 2 – introduces letter formation and enables children improve their orientation of letters.
 - Year 3 and 4 – should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency, and quality of the children's handwriting.
 - Year 5 and 6 – reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum.
- The teaching of handwriting is also weaved not only through English and phonics lessons, but throughout of the whole curriculum. We also provide extra handwriting practise for pupils who may require additional support.

2.8 Additional support

- Any child who needs additional phonics practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class phonics teaching, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons/interventions for any child in Year 2 and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.
- If any child in Year 2 or above has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan Rapid Catch-Up lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps.
- For any children struggling with specific reading or writing skills, we plan individual interventions that target their specific needs.

2.9 Parent partnership

- All children take a reading book home each week to share with the family.
- All children also receive a piece of English homework each week that is differentiated appropriately for their ability and focuses on applying learning.
- Spelling lists are sent home weekly for children to further practise the spellings that have been taught in school.
- We regularly engage our families and share information about phonics, reading and writing.

3. Impact

3.1 Assessment

- Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.
- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing support and adapt teaching.
 - weekly in planning meetings to assess gaps and address these immediately.
 - during marking to highlight misconceptions and identify next steps.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - at the end of each half term to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through assessment trackers, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

- o termly through assessment week, to assess pupils against national standards and identify gaps and next steps for teaching.

Please read this policy in conjunction with our *Assessment Policy*.

3.2 Statutory assessment

- Children in Reception complete the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first 6 weeks of starting. Part of this focuses on assessing early vocabulary, phonics and comprehension.
- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check in June. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.
- Children in Year 2 will complete the KS1 SATs assessments. This will involve completing 2 statutory reading papers and 2 non-statutory grammar, punctuation and spelling papers.
- Children in Year 6 will complete the KS2 SATs assessments. This will involve completing a reading paper and 2 grammar, punctuation and spelling papers.