

English

At St Matthew's we are passionate about the teaching and learning of English. We believe that reading, writing, speaking and listening are fundamental skills within the curriculum, which enable pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, to communicate effectively and confidently with others and to participate fully in the communities and society in which they live. Our aim is to provide all pupils with creative, inclusive and exciting opportunities for learning and to motivate and inspire them to achieve to the very best of their abilities.

Intent

We aim for children to be enthusiastic about reading and writing. We expect them to be avid readers, children who read fluently and widely and who are able to express preferences and opinions about the texts that they read. We want them to read for pleasure, having had access to a wide range of text types, genres and authors in order for them to make informed opinions about their favourites.

We want our children to become effective communicators, through providing a vocabulary rich school, where children learn to express themselves creatively and imaginatively.

We want our children to be able to be effective writers; writing clearly, accurately and coherently, whilst adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. We aim to develop grammatical accuracy, a sound knowledge of spelling patterns and the use of a neat handwriting style.

We aim to teach a challenging, inspiring and inclusive curriculum that promotes a love of learning and resilient learners.

We aim to raise awareness of the world, expand children's experiences and develop their cultural capital, through links with other subjects.

Implementation

Reading

Reading is central to all learning. Teaching children to become excellent readers is an essential part of what we do at St Matthew's. 'First we learn to read, then we read to learn.'

We aim to rapidly build **phonic skills** and confidence in order to produce confident blending and decoding skills to assist pupils' basic reading and spelling skills. Strong phonic skills in combination with a range of word recognition, context and grammatical knowledge, build good comprehension skills and confident readers. The teaching of phonics is fundamental to our teaching of early reading. We strive to teach children to read effectively and quickly, using the Letters and Sounds programme, which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling. Phonics is delivered in a whole class format in both EYFS and KS1 because it enables staff to ensure application across subjects; embedding the process in a rich literacy environment. The 'Letters and Sounds' programme outlines six phonic phases, each with new phonemes to be learnt and increasing with difficulty, as children progress from phase one in nursery to phase six in year 2. In practice, children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and are taught how to blend these sounds to decode (read) words. At St Matthew's, we start in Nursery teaching children Phase One, which allows children to become aware of the sounds they hear in their immediate environments, as well as the sounds they can create themselves, using their body or instruments. When children reach Reception, we move on to Phase Two, which introduces the children to 23 new phonemes. During this phase, the children will learn to recognise, form and use these sounds in simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words to begin to read and write simple words and captions. Once they have conquered this skill, they start reading stories and texts that have words made up of the sounds they know. This means that they can embed and apply their phonic knowledge and start to build their reading fluency. Once secure, the children move on to the next phase whereby they learn new sounds, improve their reading fluency and develop a greater writing ability in years 1 and 2. Throughout this process, there is a focus on comprehension, reading with expression and reading for enjoyment. This regular and consistent approach to the teaching and learning of phonics in our school, allows children to decode words more readily and this has a significant impact on reading fluency. Our

assessment for phonics is split into 3 sections to identify the individual pupil's areas for development. These are: reading the CVC words, blending to read and segmenting to spell. This allows staff to ensure children make the relevant progress and provide children all of the skills needed to become a fluent reader. This rigorous assessment for phonics allows specific intervention to be put into practice, when required. Children that require phonics support in year 3 take part in a 'Read, Write Inc.' programme. This is to build on their letters and sounds knowledge from KS1 and give them the skills to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension.

Reading is also taught as an integral part of our curriculum, where it is embedded into our themes, as well as being **explicitly taught** through the week. From Year 1, we follow a whole class guided reading format with each day building on the last. The question domains from KS1 and KS2 are also explicitly taught, so that children can focus on specific strategies to develop their reading comprehension. Banded guided reading books and age appropriate texts are used to ensure the correct level of challenge. EYFS focus on 1:1 reading as children develop phonics skills. Book talk and planned key questions teach the skills of retrieving information from texts.

Each KS2 class has sets of **class novels** to complement each of their termly topics. They provide opportunities for extra learning, listening to an adult read and for children to practise reading aloud to an audience. Audio books are also used to introduce our children to wide range of authors and styles.

Independent reading books are taken home daily, carefully chosen to support and challenge children. We have a wide-ranging home reading collection all carefully matched to our reading assessment tracker. We understand that children have different interests and we encourage children to read a wide variety of text types. Early readers take home books that are sound matched until they are fluent decoders. Once independent, there is a wide variety of books such as stories, non-fiction, play scripts and poetry. Longer novels are also available, plus classical texts for the most able. Upper KS2 have a separate 'famous authors and bestsellers' scheme to choose their home reading books

We expect all children to read at least 4 times a week. Parents are asked to comment in **home -reading journals**. Leaflets and guidance are sent to parents to support with this alongside workshops to provide guidance and advice on early reading. One to one reading is vitally important for emergent readers, so we ensure that all children read to an adult regularly in EYFS, KS1 and where necessary in KS2.

Children are rewarded for regular reading through a **badge scheme**. Embroidered badges are awarded in achievement assembly so that children can sew them onto their uniform and wear with pride.

Our **extensive library** also provides a further wide breadth of reading material and is attended by all the children regularly. Books have been purchased specifically to match many of our topic areas to provide further research and interest.

An **outdoor reading area** is also provided for children to read during playtime.

Events such as World Book Day, author visits, competitions and Book fairs contribute to our development of a love of reading.

Developing a 'Reading Culture' at St Matthew's

- We read across the curriculum: class novels, topic books, newspapers, audio books etc.;
- We arrange visits from authors, poets and actors.
- All class teachers read a class novel to model expression when reading aloud.
- Adults read individually with early readers.
- Children are expected to read at least 4 times a week at home.
- Our reading reward scheme allows children to collect cloth badges to sew on their jumpers.
- Upper KS2 have a separate 'famous authors and bestsellers' scheme to choose their home reading books
- An outside reading book collection and seating is available at playtimes.
- We have a Book Fair every year.
- We have a well-stocked library and classes visit weekly.

- We celebrate World Book day with competitions, dressing up and a special themed lunch.
- Phonics parent workshops once a year to give parents a full understanding about what phonics entails. The workshop also gives parents information about the phonics screening check and gives them strategies about how to help their children with this at home.

Spoken Language

Speaking and listening skills are vital to good communication, therefore all our teaching promotes high quality discussion.

Speaking and listening is developed from EYFS throughout our school, across the whole curriculum. We teach our pupils to speak clearly, to convey their ideas fluently and confidently and to ask questions. We know the value of excellent vocabulary and this is developed and practised through a wide variety of approaches, collaborative learning and as part of our guided reading approach. A vocabulary display board provides a visual record of vocabulary taught in class, to aid long-term memory.

Talk for Writing activities are included in English lessons to encourage pupils to express their ideas, discuss their ideas and to develop more sophisticated vocabulary. We expect our pupils to speak politely, clearly and correctly; they are encouraged to convey their ideas fluently and confidently and to ask questions. Our children are encouraged to speak in class assemblies, school productions and gain confidence in speaking to visitors to our school.

Writing

The skill of effective writing allows children to express themselves creatively, imaginatively and communicate with others successfully.

We teach writing in a progressive manner from EYFS to Year 6 using a wide variety of writing styles and genres, so pupils can communicate effectively using a range of techniques, whilst also practising handwriting and other presentational skills.

In early years we provide a literacy rich environment where a wide variety of meaningful contexts for writing are provided. We engage our children's enthusiasm by immersing them in stories, providing them with opportunities to join in with repeated refrains and retell stories through small world and role play activities. This leads to an understanding of how authors work and lets them see that they too can become writers. We focus on the skills needed to write start by modelling how to turn our own thoughts and ideas into speech and then by modelling the to turn verbal speech into written words and simple sentences. This then leads to the teaching of basic grammatical rules such as use of capital letters, word spaces and full stops. writing and writing stories together. Ongoing Funky Fingers activities and daily Dough Gym sessions provide opportunities to develop the hand, wrist and finger dexterity needed to hold a pencil correctly for writing. We teach correct letter formation within our daily phonics lessons, giving opportunities to practise correct letter starting points, orientation and formation in many different ways ('carpet' writing, tracing letters in sand, copying over letter shapes) before moving on to using pencils. As the pupils begin to use letter-sound relationships for writing, they learn how to segment words to spell them with phonetic accuracy, including high-frequency words. They are initially provided with visual props such as word mats to support them in writing the 'tricky' words taught in each phonics phase. This develops children's writing fluency and naturally leads to their spelling the words from memory. Explicit teaching and discussion of new vocabulary is included in our weekly 'Talk for Writing' sessions. These lessons enable pupils to expand their vocabulary whilst also developing their own use of story language. "Talk for Writing' also underpins the children's growing understanding of character, setting and story structure and gives them the necessary vocabulary to talk about these accurately. In KS1 and KS2 there is a daily English lesson. A wide range of units are taught based on a meaningful text that is linked to the context of the overall class theme for the term. Trips, class novels, film clips and, visitors are all used as a means of generating and supporting creativity in writing by providing meaningful writing outcomes for children. Examples of this would be our London Trip, Viking and Greek visitors and museum visits. We start a unit of work by immersing the children in the text type, by giving them high quality examples which they then study to understand the key features. Time is then spent looking at the grammar and techniques used in the text type. Grammar sessions are taught both on a daily basis (in ten-minute slots) and through a longer grammar session once per week. We believe that good grammar aids both speaking and writing, so it is central to our teaching of English. In addition, teachers model examples of effective writing, so children can be successful in their own writing. Final pieces are planned, drafted and up-levelled by the children. As children become more proficient, the unit culminates with critique from peers and adults (to help the children to up-level and improve their work) resulting in a final published piece of writing. We encourage children to see themselves as authors and poets, by displaying these pieces in class

books that are displayed outside each classroom, so they can be shared between classes, providing aspirational examples of work. There is clear progression through units of work - as children gain the skills they need to write effectively. Within class, work is differentiated to ensure challenge and support at all levels. Throughout each unit, children are supported to develop their stamina for purposeful writing in a variety of exciting contexts.

Spelling

Weekly spellings are progressive throughout KS1 and KS2, focusing on the spelling strategies that are required for each year group. All KS1 receive spelling lists are linked to their phonics phase and high frequency words. Children are given a weekly set of spellings to learn at home. Some are common exception words (tricky words where usual spelling rules or applying phonics does not apply) and others follow a spelling pattern or an element of grammar taught throughout that week. They are then tested in a dictation style where the teacher puts the word into a sentence, to help the children understand of their meanings.

As a school, we believe that segmenting words to spell is crucial in phonics lessons throughout EYFS and KS1 to ensure that the children are applying their phonetic knowledge. This is an element that is evident in all phonics lessons. As part of our phonics assessment for each phase, teachers must determine that children are able to segment words to spell in order to move onto the next phase of phonics. This ensures that children are able to transfer the knowledge from their reading into their writing.

Handwriting

Children have an explicit handwriting lesson each week where they are taught correct letter formation and joins through a scheme called 'Letter Join.' In Reception the children print, but from Year 1 children are taught cursive handwriting with joins from Year 2 and beyond. We consider good presentation to be an important element of writing, allowing for the building of writing speed and stamina.

Impact

English skills are developed through school leading to life-long learning and transferrable skills. As children progress through school they become confident writers. When reaching upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar so the teaching can focus on creativity, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills – writing as a reader. Children read for pleasure – they know the importance of the subject and can talk about books and authors they have enjoyed. Children have the phonic skills to decode words, moving on to be able to read a range of texts with fluency and comprehension. Children are confident speakers who can communicate with children and adults alike on a range of subjects. Children achieve Age Related Expectations (ARE) for their year group. Some children will have progressed further and achieved greater depth (GD). Children who have gaps in their knowledge will receive appropriate support and intervention.

Children say:

"I just love Julia Donaldson! She's my favourite author. Can I read 'Tiddler' to you?" Sakina (Reception)

"Books help you learn new words. They are fun to read. You can learn from them." Aisha (Year1)

"Reading is very important. I read at home everyday after mosque. The reading badges show that I am a good reader!" Mohammed, (Year3)

"Learning about Macbeth was great! I loved performing the witches' scene, it brought the story alive." Laiba (Year 6)

"Reading has really helped increase my vocabulary and now I love reading and writing!" Dylaan Year5