



# English Policy



## St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

*"Guided by God, St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School is an inspiring and aspirational community where we learn to love, hope, dream and achieve."*



***“St Gerard’s Catholic Primary and Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”.***

### **Writing Overview:**

At St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School we believe that Reading and Writing confidently and accurately is a crucial life-skill. Writing incorporates a wide range of different skills from handwriting and spelling to communicating ideas, information and opinions in different contexts. It requires children to understand and apply spelling and grammar rules accurately and match writing to its audience and purpose. We aim to equip children with the skills they need to read and write confidently in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Introduction:**

Our aim at St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School is for all our pupils to develop and secure the skills needed to read and write confidently and accurately in a range of different contexts. We have identified the need to develop reading/writing accuracy across the curriculum, ensuring that children apply their knowledge and understanding of the different reading/writing skills in each and every subject area.

### **The aims of writing are:**

- To write with confidence, accuracy and imagination in a range of different contexts;
- to understand and apply knowledge of phonics and spelling;
- to write for a purpose in a range of different genres, styles and incorporating different structures and features;
- to give children the independence to plan, draft and edit their own writing;
- to develop a strong language base including appropriately used technical vocabulary, and imaginative and expressive language choices.
- to apply all of the skills they have developed during English lessons across the curriculum in all subject areas.

### **Teaching and learning:**

#### **Implementation of National Curriculum**

At St Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School our curriculum is based upon the children's academic achievements and overarching social and emotional health

priorities. Our curriculum not only meets the National Curriculum objectives for writing but enables our children to develop the skills they need for later life.

As a school, we continue to monitor and amend the priorities on our development plan to ensure that gaps in children's attainment are quickly actioned. Our writing curriculum aims to create interesting and exciting opportunities for children to write creatively, demonstrating their skills in a variety of different contexts and subjects. The teaching of English follows the process of immersion, analysis and presentation, with opportunities to generate language and identify features thoroughly before children begin writing for purpose. During writing lessons, children are given many opportunities to talk and discuss their thoughts and ideas, which are essential to developing speaking and listening skills as well as providing a chance to orally rehearse what they are going to write.

### **Implementation of Spelling, SPAG and Early Reading at St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School**

Spelling and grammar rules are taught daily, in EYFS and Key Stage 1, through a 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics lesson. SPAG skills are threaded/consolidated throughout all areas of the curriculum, encouraging children to apply spelling rules and patterns in any piece of writing no matter the purpose or subject.

We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability in all our classes, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- providing clearly differentiated resources to support children's independent writing in class;
- ensuring the classroom environment and displays address children's needs e.g. displaying word banks on working walls, 'Read Write Inc' speed sounds charts.
- providing 1:1 specific support using 'Read Write Inc' strategies for blending for spelling.
- Using appropriate EAL (English Additional Language) resources as referenced in our EAL policy.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage:**

The development of emergent writing begins as soon as children explore and give meaning to the marks that they make. Here at St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School as soon as pupils enter our Nursery provision children are encouraged to mark make and express themselves using tools for writing. The children have many ways of mark making through continuous provision activities, not just in designated writing areas. Physical Development, pencil control and letter orientation is a strong focus of the EYFS curriculum which is promoted and consolidated within the 'Read, Write Inc' phonics programme. All the writing activities in the EYFS are linked to cross curricular topics and themes and are designed to meet the Early Years Outcomes.

The EYFS environments here at St Gerard's provide rich creative, encouraging opportunities which are linked to a particular focus for that week. Children experience a wide range of activities that they respond to, using the various senses to immerse children in a book/text and provide opportunities for mark making and

writing in response. The activities that they take part in are imaginative and enjoyable.

### **Contribution of writing in other curriculum areas:**

#### **Mathematics:**

Writing contributes to the teaching of mathematics in our school by giving opportunities to express their reasoning and understanding of mathematical concepts in written form for the teacher to read.

#### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship/ Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

Writing contributes to the teaching of some elements of personal, social and health education and citizenship. The children are encouraged to have high standards for themselves, recognising their strengths and also areas that they need to develop.

#### **Science, Geography, History, ICT, DT, Art – 'Topic':**

The teaching of writing offers opportunities to support in every single curriculum area. It gives children the ability to express their opinions and show their understanding of topics they have covered in written form.

#### **Teaching writing to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN):**

We teach writing to all children, regardless of their capability. Writing, as mentioned earlier, forms part of our whole school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. All teachers/support assistants provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. The children's abilities/challenges within writing are reflected when writing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or differentiating the classroom provision within school.

#### **Assessment and recording:**

We assess the children's writing skills whilst observing them working during a variety of different curriculum lessons, not just in English. Teachers record the progress made by children against the learning objectives for reading in the National Curriculum against the learning objectives which are stated on the O-Track tracking system. The use of 'Rising Stars' tests in KS1 and the 'NFER' tests in KS2 also contribute to children's assessment as do termly Read, Write Inc assessments. At the end of each term, we make a judgement against the National Curriculum skills identified as 'ARE' (Age-Related Expectations). The class teacher records the child's attainment, and then uses this information to plan future work for each child. This method of recording also enables the teacher to make an annual assessment of progress for each child, as part of the child's annual report to parents. We pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

#### **Resources:**

- Lined writing books – differentiated by Key Stage / Class Teacher
- Multiple copies of specific stories
- Big Books – Large Early Years stories
- Topic/curriculum books specific to each year group – ordered from the Education Resource Library
- SPAG activity books/Revision guides
- School library / Trips to the local library

- iPads / eBooks on the school network
- Interactive Smart Board
- Working walls/classroom displays/ communal displays.
- 'Read Write Inc' phonics packs and online resources – accessible at school and home.

### **Monitoring and review:**

The monitoring of the standards of children's writing and of the quality of teaching in writing is the responsibility of the class teacher in addition to the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of writing and being informed about current developments in the subject. The English subject leader gives the Headteacher/SLT an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the teaching and learning in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The English subject leader has specially-allocated regular management time, which s/he uses to review evidence of the children's work, monitor assessments and when instructed by SLT to undertake lesson observations of writing teaching across the school.

### **Reading Policy:**

#### **The aims of reading are:**

- To create a strong reading culture in which the children develop a love of books and reading;
- to develop a range of different reading strategies and skills to enable children to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding;
- to read and enjoy a range of different text types/genres in different contexts;
- to give children the skills to understand, infer and deduce information from books in order to access the wider curriculum;
- to develop children's reading ability and self-confidence to allow them to read a variety of books and genres with independence.

### **Teaching and learning:**

All staff recognise that they are teachers of reading and as such need to be role models to the pupils. Value is placed upon books in all curriculum areas, incorporating them into topic themes and used in displays. Each classroom has a dedicated reading area which contains a wide variety of different books that the

children are free to access and enjoy.

The teaching of Phonics is crucial within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to provide children with the skills to decode and read with fluency. Children in EYFS and KS1 will use the 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics programme to develop these skills. The programme aims at teaching phonic sounds at a rapid pace, using a multi-sensory approach. The children are continuously assessed throughout the year and their learning is moved on at an appropriate pace. Children who are identified as having gaps in their knowledge are targeted in a one to one intervention programme. The children have focussed, daily sessions that build upon phonic decoding knowledge and the application of this in a structured reading session. Children in years 2, 3 and 4 who are not meeting the expectations for their year group will also access 'Read, Write, Inc' phonic/reading sessions daily, and those children who need further support in years 5 and 6 will use the RWInc 'Fresh Start' programme.

### **Guided Reading:**

Guided reading takes place daily in each class. Children read books that are appropriate to their reading level, in differentiated groups. Guided reading sessions cover a range of different genres and text types. Following their weekly guided reading sessions children complete comprehension based activities, completing these whilst the class teacher/teaching assistant reads with other groups.

### **Reading beyond the classroom:**

Children are encouraged to read regularly at home to practice the reading skills being taught in class. Children are provided with home-school reading records and take home books that are specific to their ability level. As children move up the school they will become 'free readers' and will take home a book of their own choice. The home-school record is to be signed by parents/carers on a minimum of four occasions each week. Children are rewarded with prizes and dojo points for regular home reading to encourage and motivate them. This will be reflected in the rewards given.

We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability in all of our classes, including those who are more able, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- grouping children based upon their reading/phonic ability and using books that meet their needs;
- providing targeted, specific questioning to challenge children at their current level;
- providing 1:1 specific support using 'Read Write Inc' strategies.

### **Reading curriculum planning: (INTENT)**

Reading is an essential part of the National Curriculum. Reading opportunities are planned for across all of the different curriculum areas, linking to the reading objectives for each year group. The topic themes for the year have been planned with direct links to texts that will support children's knowledge and understanding and motivate and engage them in each specific topic area. These texts have been purchased and class teachers provided with copies at the beginning of the year.

Teachers have copies of the National Curriculum objectives for their own year group and all other year groups, in order to plan for any children who are not on track to meet age related expectations. Daily guided reading planning will clearly identify the areas of learning targeted in each session and questions will be tailored to meet the different objectives. Throughout the year the planned questions will demonstrate a broad coverage of all of the objectives. Guided reading folders are used to collect reading evidence. The folders follow an agreed format which includes: a list of groupings, weekly timetables and planning, assessment sheets and individual reader information.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):**

A love of reading begins from an early age, as soon as children enter St Gerard's we aim to encourage and promote reading for pleasure. The reading areas in Nursery and Reception are bright, cosy and inviting and children can access these regularly in continuous provision. Reading is planned for using the Early Years Outcomes objectives. The reading focus in the foundation stage is on the teaching of phonics, using the 'Read, Write, Inc' programme and a love of books and stories through shared-reading opportunities.

Within EYFS we encourage and value creativity and closely link topics and themes to a chosen text. Children experience a wide range of activities that they respond to, using the various senses to immerse children in a book/text. The activities that they take part in are imaginative and enjoyable.

### **Contribution of reading to teaching in other curriculum areas:**

#### **English:**

Reading contributes to the teaching of English in our school by allowing children to read words accurately which improves their spelling. Reading gives children a broad language base which they can then draw from when writing in class.

#### **Mathematics:**

Reading contributes to the teaching of mathematics in our school by giving opportunities to develop the children's ability to infer and deduce specific information in problem solving activities.

#### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship/ Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

Reading contributes to the teaching of some elements of personal, social and health education and citizenship. The children are encouraged to read together in a group, discussing texts and listening to other people's view points as well as sharing their own with respect.

#### **Science, Geography, History, ICT, DT, Art – 'Topic':**

The teaching of reading offers opportunities to support in every single curriculum area. It gives children the independent power and ability to find out new information, answer questions, research, read instructions and opens the door to a world of brand new information. Reading confidently and fluently allows children to take control of their own learning.

#### **Teaching writing to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN):**

We teach reading to all children, whatever their ability. Reading forms part of our school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. Our teachers provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in reading considers the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Specialised equipment, e.g. 'Read, Write, Inc' 1:1 support programmes.

### **Assessment and recording:**

We assess the children's reading skills whilst observing them working during a variety of different curriculum lessons, not just in guided reading but in English, RE and any subject in which a text is used to inspire learning. The use of 'Rising Stars' tests in KS1 and the 'NFER' tests in KS2 also contribute to children's assessment. Teachers record the progress made by children against the learning objectives for reading in the national curriculum. At the end of each term, we make a judgement against the National Curriculum skills identified as ARE. The teacher records the child's attainment, and then uses this information to plan future work for each child. This method of recording also enables the teacher to make an annual assessment of progress for each child, as part of the child's annual report to parents. We pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

### **Resources:**

- Guided reading folders
- Multiple copies of specific stories
- Big Books – Shared Reading Resources
- Book banded home-reading books
- Book banded guided reading packs
- Comprehension activity books
- School library
- iPads / eBooks
- SmartBoard
- Working walls/displays
- 'Read Write Inc' phonics packs and online resources.

### **Monitoring and review:**

The monitoring of the standards of children's reading and of the quality of teaching in reading is the responsibility of the Class Teacher and English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of reading and being informed about current developments in the subject. The English subject leader gives the Headteacher/SLT an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the teaching and learning in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The English subject leader has specially-allocated regular management time, which s/he uses to review evidence of the children's work, monitor assessments and when instructed by SLT to undertake lesson observations of reading teaching across the school.

### **Phonics Policy:**

#### **Introduction:**

Our aim at St Gerard's is for all our children to develop and secure the skills needed to become lifelong readers. Reading is a complex life skill which consists of many different components. It not only gives children the power and independence to

access knowledge, but it is also a rewarding and enjoyable experience in itself. In order for children to read for meaning, phonic skills of decoding, segmenting and blending must be taught and built upon from the Early Years Foundation Stage, all the way through a child's school journey to year 6. Although direct reference to British Values is not continuously made, the policy has been written with full awareness of our responsibility and commitment to this purpose.

### **The aims of phonics are:**

- To decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using phonic knowledge and skills;
- to read common exception words on sight;
- to understand what they are reading;
- to read aloud with fluency and expression;
- to write confidently, with a strong focus upon vocabulary and grammar;
- to spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words;
- to acquire good handwriting.

### **Teaching and learning:**

Phonics teaching takes place daily in differentiated groups. Pupils are grouped homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Reception we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these texts for themselves.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day.

Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge. The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean. Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The

sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

If a child arrives in Key Stage 2 reading below their chronological age or with English as an additional language they are taught Read Write Inc. Phonics until they too catch up with their peers. This is either within daily intervention groups in the afternoon, or with a KS1 group. Within upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6), this is taught through the Read Write Inc. 'Fresh Start' modules, which are phonically matched to children's reading levels but are more age appropriate for children in years five or six.

### **Phonics curriculum planning:**

Having monitored our Phonics data closely over the last five years, we have noticed that our data has plateaued. Often we see that children use their phonics skills in isolation and do not apply these when reading and writing in other areas of the curriculum. In order to address this issue, in September 2016 we have begun to use the 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics teaching programme. The programme directly meets all of the objectives in the National Curriculum. All staff have access to a 'RWInc Handbook' which has detailed planning for each stage of the programme. They also have teacher packs that contain the necessary resources needed.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage:**

Securing a strong understanding of the alphabetic code from an early age is an essential part of the reading process. Phonics begins as soon as children enter our school in Nursery. The simple mnemonics help children to learn new sounds speedily, and make strong links with writing and handwriting. Phonics is delivered daily in differentiated groupings, children are then encouraged to apply the skills they have learnt in other areas of the curriculum within continuous provision activities.

A love of reading begins from an early age, as soon as children enter St Gerard's we aim to encourage and promote reading for pleasure. The reading areas in Nursery and Reception are bright, cosy and inviting and children can access these regularly in continuous provision. Read Write Inc speed sounds charts and picture cards are clearly displayed in these areas to encourage children to use the skills they are developing when reading independently. Reading is planned for using the Development Matters Objectives.

### **Contribution of phonics to teaching in other curriculum areas:**

#### **English:**

Phonics is an essential part of the reading process. Through the Read Write Inc programme strong links are made between phonics, reading and writing in order to encourage children to use the skills acquired to read speedily and spell accurately. Handwriting is also a key aspect of the programme, children are taught to write and orientate letters accurately through the use of simple mnemonics.

#### **Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship:**

The Read Write Inc programme teaches pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to teach team work, cooperation and respect for others.

#### **Science, Geography, History, ICT, DT, Art – 'Topic':**

The skills developed in phonics can be applied in all curriculum areas when children are required to read or write. They build speedy reading skills that allow them to

access texts and gain information with ease. They also learn how to spell words accurately for writing. The focus on handwriting allows children to present their work neatly in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Teaching phonics to children with special needs:**

We teach phonics to all children, regardless of their ability. Phonics forms part of our school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. Our teachers provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in phonics considers the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Specialised equipment, e.g. 'Read, Write, Inc' 1:1 support programmes are used to target those children who are having real difficulties with phonics.

### **Assessment and recording:**

We assess all pupils following Read Write Inc. Phonics using the Sound and Word Entry Assessment. We use this data to assign them to homogenous Phonics groups. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium. We record their starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate at which they are making progress. We can also easily identify those who joined the programme later. In addition, we use a standardised reading test (Rising Stars) so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate. We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2. We have high expectations of our pupils' progress.

### **Resources:**

- Teacher hand books
- Fresh start Leader handbook
- Phonics Leader handbook
- Teacher packs including 'speedy green words' and flash cards
- Colour banded reading books
- Magnetic letters and boards
- Oxford Owl website
- Ruth Miskin website
- Cal Tobin – Read Write Inc. consultant