



St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

An Academy within The Catholic Academy Trust in South Hampshire

'Children in our heart, Christ at the centre'
'We love, we learn and we live'



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English Policy



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The St Anthony's mission statement is 'Children in our heart, Christ at the centre. We love, we learn and we live.' To live out this mission, we are guided and led by our Catholic ethos that places the Catholic Social Teaching principles of Human Dignity and the Common Good at the heart of our school. We recognise that each of us is unique and loved by God and we are called to lead by example, as Christ did, to show respect and love to every person because each of us is made in the image of God.

Introduction

Despite the rapidly changing nature of the world in which our pupils are currently growing up (particularly in the realms of technology and communication), the need for children to be able to communicate and comprehend effectively has never been more important. Our aim is to not only provide pupils with a high quality education in English that covers all of the objectives of the National Curriculum, but to also instil in them a lifelong love of both reading and writing that will aid them both in their professional lives and also as a form of enjoyment.

Curriculum Intent:

At St. Anthony's, we understand the crucial importance of English lessons in providing children with the skills to deal with the demands of spoken and written language, in their time at primary school, and both at secondary school and in future education or employment. As well as this, we believe that English lessons are vital in stimulating pupils' imaginations and creativity, through reading high-level literature, writing creatively and developing their speaking and listening skills. Additionally, English lessons provide children with the skills to access and analyse content across the curriculum, as well as in their own hobbies outside school. English lessons at St. Anthony's aim to develop children who are capable of the following:

- Have a lifetime love of reading and seek out opportunities to read a wide range of genres
- Enjoy writing and are confident in writing accurately in a wide range of styles
- Are capable public speakers who express their opinions clearly and concisely
- Listen well to others' thoughts and opinions
- Are confident in understanding the grammatical features of the English language and in using these in their own writing
- Are secure, constructive and accurate spellers

Curriculum Implementation:

Reading

We expect that our pupils read daily at home and that parents fill in their child's Reading Record Book to confirm that this has happened each day. The Reading Record Book is a chance for parents to enter into a dialogue with the class teacher as comments are also encouraged.

Teaching fluency and comprehension

Pupils practise reading in a variety of ways. From Year R to Year 4 (and Years 5 and 6 where required) pupils will regularly read from their reading book to their teacher or other nominated adults in the classroom. All children participate in shared reading within the classroom and Guided Reading weekly, which is planned using the appropriate format. For Years R and 1, we follow the 'Read, Write, Inc.' scheme, developed by Penny Tassoni.

Guided Reading sessions take place daily and these are taught in two different ways. In Years 1 – 4, each group will work closely with a teacher once per week. During these sessions, teachers ask pupils targeted questions about the book that they are currently reading; these questions target different reading domains, for example information retrieval or inferring information from a text. When not working with a teacher, groups have a number of different activities to complete: follow-up comprehension questions (based upon the guided session with the class teacher the previous day); a 'blind' comprehension activity, which develops children's abilities to use comprehension skills practised with the class teacher; a silent, independent reading session with an appropriate library book of their choosing; and another task based upon a skill that is needing to be developed, for example vocabulary or inference skills.

In Years 5 and 6, a whole-class approach to Guided Reading is used, having attended 'Blended Reading for Mastery' training in 2017. Texts are chosen carefully so that first and foremost, all children enjoy them and are eager to read more and more of the story each week. Differentiated questioning and tasks across the week are used to ensure that lower-ability pupils are supported whilst higher-ability pupils are challenged and their knowledge extended. Each week, there will be a different comprehension skill that children practise. On Mondays, the class will read and discuss a section of the text together. On Tuesdays, the class teacher will model a particular comprehension skill, before the pupils (in mixed-ability pairs) practise answering questions testing those skills. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, pupils are given comprehension tasks testing those skills (on Wednesdays the questions will be based upon the current class text and on Thursdays the questions will be based upon a text that the children have not been working on). On Fridays, questions will be marked and any misconceptions addressed. As a school we recognise the importance of continued fluency practice (EEF, 2018) and so those children in Years 5 and 6 who require extra support with their fluency skills will have the chance to practise these with either the class teacher or an LSA during the week.

In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, reading comprehension skills (or 'domains/strands') are highlighted to children and taught as individual disciplines. This is so that when faced with comprehension questions of differing abilities as children move up the school, and beyond, they are able to select which skill to use to best answer the question.

Teachers are encouraged to read books aloud to the class as often as possible, in order to enthuse children about reading, and to introduce them to a wide range of literature. Both fiction and non-fiction texts can be used in this context, although to engender a love of reading fiction texts will be used primarily.

All reading resources available in school are carefully selected to ensure equal opportunity for all pupils in consideration of gender, ethnic origin and special educational needs. Pupils with identified special needs will have some provision of support to ensure access.

Reading and Writing in Early Years

Our approach to reading in the early years is also based upon the 'Read, Write, Inc.' approach designed by Penny Tassoni. In Pre-school, we use phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds national strategy to introduce children to the concept of long sounds, short sounds and the order of sounds (first sound, last sound) using instruments and body percussion. Some children will begin to connect this concept to letter sounds when introduced to the initial letters in set 1 of the Read Write Inc. (RWI) scheme. Children are encouraged to make marks in tactile materials such as glitter, paint

and shaving foam alongside rehearsing skills for handwriting and exercises for their hands to strengthen muscles.

In Year R, the children are introduced to Set 1 and 2 of the RWI scheme, learning 5 letter sounds at a time followed by a 'word time', where children learn to build words for writing and segment words for reading. This ensures children are rehearsing word level skills with the sounds they are learning. We teach by need and spend longer on sounds where required, but aim to introduce the final set of sounds (set 3) by the second half of the Spring term. This allows pupils to move into Year 1 and practise the application of all of these sounds through broadening reading and writing experiences.

Children are introduced to sight vocabulary ('Super Six') when we start introducing sounds in Year R. We believe that children need early exposure in order to adsorb and apply their learning in the future. Super Six continues through Year 1 and into Year 2 for some individuals, where 99% of children complete this by the end of KS1. There are a few children with additional learning needs who will continue this scheme into Year 3.

Throughout Year R and Year 1 decodable texts are used. Before children in Year R are introduced to books, simple texts such as ditty books and 'Pocket Rockets' are used. These contain basic decodable phrases which build the children's reading confidence.

Writing

At St. Anthony's, we use 'Talk for Writing', which is a three-stage pedagogical approach to the teaching of writing: 'imitation' (where pupils learn and internalise texts, to identify transferrable ideas and structures), 'innovation' (where pupils use these ideas and structures to co-construct new versions with their teachers), and 'independent application' (where teachers help pupils to create original texts independently). These tasks aim to improve writing ability by giving pupils an understanding of the structure and elements of written language. The approach has been developed after many years of detailed research, with success in improving writing standards in schools well-documented (for example by the EEF in 2016). Across their time at St. Anthony's, children are given opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, adapting their language and style according to these.

Displays on classroom walls support the use of relevant vocabulary and grammatical techniques and the English working wall helps to reduce cognitive overload by providing prompts and visual aids to support the writing process. During 'shared writing' sections of English lessons, teachers model good practice in writing skills, grammar and conventions of writing. Pupils are given opportunities in all areas of the curriculum to write collaboratively and to produce their final drafts on computers when suitable. Teachers are encouraged to 'guided write' with groups, to help them work on particular writing targets, depending on the needs and abilities of the children the teacher is working with.

Emergent writing is encouraged from Early Years onwards, with praise and acknowledgement given to all pupils. We celebrate good work by sharing it with peers during the plenary of English lessons, by displaying it in school and also by showing parents/carers and staff the children's efforts. Pupils are encouraged to enter national competitions which provide an opportunity for high expectations and great motivation to write.

English books are used from Year 1 upwards. End of year writing targets are stapled into the front cover to be used as a reference point for teachers and pupils. Medium-term planning outlines the units that will be studied each term and incorporates the progressive writing targets and relevant grammar and spelling. Short-term planning is developed from the medium-term planning and specifies the input, task and clarifies how tasks will be adapted for the range of learning abilities.

All planning is monitored on a termly basis by the English Leader to ensure coverage and detail. The English Leader is also happy to work with any teachers who need help or guidance on any aspect of the English curriculum.

Grammar

Grammar is taught in two main ways: either as a stand-alone grammar session, or as part of the daily English lesson, where appropriate. Grammar objectives are taken from the 2014 National Curriculum and have been broken down by year group by the subject leader. Teachers are encouraged to teach grammar when it links to a unit eg formal language is taught for non-fiction report writing units, whereas punctuated speech is taught during a narrative fiction unit.

'Hold a sentence' takes place at least 3 times per week at the start of an English lesson. This is a retrieval practice task that encourages pupils to apply a recently taught grammar or punctuation concept to a sentence that is repeated orally. Teachers often incorporate key spellings to the sentence task.

Speaking and Listening

Pupils are offered a language-rich environment where their opinions are sought and valued and opportunities are given to participate in talk within formal and informal situations. Regular shared reading takes place where pupils are encouraged to listen, discuss, re-enact and develop their own ideas in co-operation with others. Audio and video clips are used regularly to stimulate discussion within the classroom. Class debate, interviewing and role-play situations are provided in order to develop confidence and self-esteem and additionally the ability to listen and respect the views of others. Staff emphasise the importance of listening and reinforce this throughout the school day.

'Talk for Writing' prioritises oral rehearsal of stories, plots and other writing layouts. This reduces the cognitive load of what to write, enabling pupils to focus on the writing process itself. Younger pupils and those with additional needs are encouraged to orally rehearse sentences before writing them.

Whole school productions and termly Masses provide the opportunity to perform to a larger audience, when children's effort and skill are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers and friends.

Phonics

To support the pupils in the complex skill of learning to read and spell we use the 'Read, Write Inc.' programme. Staff are trained on how to pronounce all of the sounds and blends, creating consistency across the school. Children in Year R and Year 1 have daily phonics lessons with Year 2 using the Read Write Inc spelling patterns to enhance their phonological awareness. Children in Year 2 and Key Stage 2 who may need extra phonics work (for example those who have not passed the KS1 Phonics test), receive enhanced support using the school's Read Write Inc spelling programme for their year group, along with focused work on closing their phonological gaps.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Spelling is addressed rigorously and regularly throughout the school. Weekly spelling lists are practised at the start of each school day. Commencing in Term 3 of Year 1 to the end of Year 6, these weekly spelling lists are also sent home for additional retrieval practise. In Year 1, the spellings reflect the sounds and exception words that are taught through the *Read Write Inc* phonics programme.

From Year 2, St Anthony's uses the *Get Spelling!* Scheme that is closely linked to *Read Write Inc*. The scheme uses a proven approach underpinned by phonics to teaching spelling to children who are fluent readers. Throughout the programme, children are taught strategies to enable them to spell accurately, including understanding morphology and etymology, plus building and consolidating their knowledge of frequently misspelt words, exception words, tricky homophones and other

words that are easily confused. The approach is structured and cumulative, building children’s accuracy and confidence year by year.

Handwriting

St Anthony’s has adopted the ‘Pen Pals’ handwriting scheme. Handwriting begins in Early Years with mark-making and all pupils are given access to a wide range of pencils, pens, felt tips and crayons with which to hone their fine motor skills.

Plain paper and a range of wide and narrow lined paper are used across the school to help pupils develop style and good presentation. Pupils in Early Years write in sand, flour and in the air and further practice of gross and fine motor skills is provided through PE and dance. All pupils are given opportunities to trace, overwrite and follow writing patterns until they are confident of writing independently.

Handwriting practice should be completed 4 times a week in KS1, dropping to three times a week in Year 3 and 4. In Year 5 and 6, children should complete handwriting lessons twice a week.

Handwriting Pens are introduced during Year 3 through a ‘pen licence’, which the children have to earn, through showing a consistently high standard of handwriting. All children are expected to be writing in blue pen by the time that they reach Year 5. Children in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to obtain their black pen licence for showing consistently excellent handwriting with a blue pen. From Year 1, to incentivise a high standard of handwriting, pupils can earn their special pencil licence.

High attaining pupils

Tasks and success criteria are designed to stretch able pupils. Both class teachers and LSAs will spend time each week working with able groups, giving them different tasks based upon audience and purpose.

The High Attainers Policy should be referred to.

Classroom Environment

Teachers should surround pupils with a ‘word rich’ environment. Words which pupils need to use regularly should be displayed around the classroom. Theme/enquiry words should also be displayed. These should be updated regularly. Each classroom should have a grammar display, which can be referred to regularly to reduce the cognitive load when children are remembering linked grammar that has been taught. This could be a sentence that details different aspects of that year group’s grammar objectives, for example a sentence starting with a fronted adverbial and using a semi-colon correctly.

Every classroom has access to dictionaries and thesauri, and the children should know where these are kept and have unlimited access to them.

Subject Area	Implementation	Research	Why
Reading EYFS/KS1	Phonics Super Six words Group reading with carousel activity	Read Write Inc scheme used – this is a well-researched scheme. Penny Tassoni	Overlearning of sounds to embed them in long term memory. Sounds match books the children read so they can quickly apply their learning.
Reading Lower KS2	Group reading with carousel activity	James Durran Consultant – carousel approach has 2 dimensions – word reading and comprehension	We feel that our Year 3 and 4 readers still require this approach to keep track of their fluency levels, to

			differentiate questioning and to target questioning. The carousel activities are all comprehension-based and develop children's comprehension skills.
Reading Upper KS2	Whole class	'Blended reading' approach – 'Blended Reading for Mastery' training. Research shows this approach helps more middle-attainers reach greater depth.	We are lifting the glass ceiling, ensuring all our children have access to the top. This encourages children's aspirations to be lifted to meet the high expectations of their teachers.
Writing	KS1 and KS2	Book Trust Report 'The Write Report 2015' – research shows the best writing outcomes for children are text drivers. 2017 EEF report – improving standards of literacy	We have theme-related literacy with mostly text drivers. Sometimes, a film clip (or similar) is the main driver – where we do this, it is to ensure the engagement of children is maintained.

Curriculum Impact:

By the time that our pupils leave St Anthony's, we hope to have imbued in them a lifelong love of reading, as well as the skills to adapt their writing to a range of different audiences and purposes. Whilst it not being our sole focus, we also understand the importance of children's abilities to perform in statutory testing; our results for the end of Key Stage 2 SATs tests are strong and are consistently above the national average.

Monitoring and Assessment

Writing is assessed throughout the academic year. There are no 'set pieces' that teachers assess; children have the ability to meet targets at the front of their books with any piece of independent writing. This is a practice that has been encouraged by the STA. Teachers will formally judge each child's writing ability termly, based upon how many of the front-of-book targets have been met, however constant assessment (which can help plan gap-filling and next steps for pupils) is advised.

Reading summative assessments take place each term. Years 1 – 5 complete Rising Stars PIRA assessments in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms to assess their reading comprehension capabilities. Year 6 pupils will sit past SATs papers at 3 intervals across the Autumn and Spring term, before their SATs tests in May.

Similarly, pupils' Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) ability is also tested termly. Years 1-5 complete Rising Stars GaPS assessments in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Year 6 pupils will sit past SATs papers at 3 intervals across the Autumn and Spring term, before their SATs tests in May.

These results inform teacher assessment and facilitate careful tracking of pupil progress. The assessments help teachers write Action Plans for each subject, identify and close gaps for individuals or groups of children, as well as how to further extend higher-achieving pupils.

The monitoring and implementation of this policy will be scrutinised by the English subject leader, as well as by the Senior Leadership Team. The governor with responsibility for English will communicate (face-to-face and via email) termly with the subject leader, before feeding back to the rest of the governing body.