



## St Edmund's and St Thomas' Catholic Primary School

### **English subject statement:**

At St Edmund's and St Thomas' Catholic Primary School we believe that literacy is at the heart of education. Literacy pervades all aspects of school life and the skills of: speaking, listening, reading and writing are evident in all areas of the curriculum. Through speaking, listening, reading and writing, children develop their powers of communication, inventiveness and critical awareness.

Language and literature is an essential part of everyday life and being literate is crucial for future success; both educationally and in the wider world as active citizens. For children to achieve well in English lessons and to develop a comprehensive set of literacy skills it is vital they experience a relevant and engaging English curriculum.

Our curriculum follows the guidelines detailed in the National Curriculum. 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 a love of literature through reading for pleasure.

### **Reading**

***"A child who reads will be an adult who thinks." (Unknown)***

Imagination, communication and the acquisition of knowledge of all kinds are broadened by exposure to literature. Culture, history and identity are eternal themes within fiction and non-fiction texts. To explore them challenges the reader to form, articulate and adapt a point of view as awareness increases. We believe that nurturing a love of reading in our pupils will provide them with an invaluable lifelong skill.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1 children are taught to read through a programme of synthetic phonics (Read, Write, Inc). The children are grouped according to ability and receive a daily lesson which focuses on the development of good phonic knowledge, the learning of key words and the opportunity to apply their decoding skills in fiction and non-fiction books. An important component of each lesson is the time dedicated to discussing the books to ensure the children develop a good understanding of what is read.

Once the children have become confident, fluent readers they are taught, daily, in ability based guided reading groups. A wide range of quality texts are used to help the children

become 'deep' readers. Reciprocal Reading techniques are used to develop the children's comprehension skills. Texts are studied in detail and discussion actively encouraged. Children make predictions; clarify the meaning of the language used by the author; question the text and then summarise the main points of the discussion. Throughout this process, children are encouraged to use dictionaries and reference materials to enhance their understanding.

***"The books transported her into new worlds and introduced her to amazing people who lived exciting lives. She went on olden-day sailing ships with Joseph Conrad. She went to Africa with Ernest Hemingway and to India with Rudyard Kipling. She travelled all over the world while sitting in her little room in an English village."*** (Roald Dahl, *Matilda*)

Reading for pleasure is promoted through the study of quality literature in English lessons; regular opportunities for silent reading and the provision of well-stocked reading areas in each classroom. Reading good quality books to the children is a priority in all year groups. Themed weeks are used to explore the work of significant authors or to enhance the learning in other curriculum areas. Extra-curricular clubs are provided to promote reading. This includes the *Reading is Fun Club* aimed at our younger pupils. Children and families are invited to work together to share picture books and undertake creative activities in response to the themes contained within them. Our KS 2 pupils are given the opportunity to discuss, learn and perform poems through the provision of a poetry club.

### **Home/School Partnership**

We believe if a child is encouraged to read at home, share books with parents, carers and siblings, they are more likely to be successful learners at school. We encourage parents and children to read daily, at home, either with a book from school or a book from home. Each child is given a read log detailing the books they have read and containing comments about their reading skills. School staff and parents are encouraged to write in this book.

### **Speaking and Listening**

***"The spoken word belongs half to him who speaks, and half to him who listens."*** (French proverb)

Effective speaking and listening skills are the building blocks of successful learning. Articulate, thoughtful people are able to connect with, inspire and empower others. With this in mind our curriculum is designed to help our children become good communicators.

Opportunities are provided to help our children develop a love of words and language. Pupils are taught to use talk to clarify their ideas, develop their thinking and express their ideas to others, in a range of different situations. They are encouraged to listen to others, evaluate and question what has been said and offer contributions that build on what has

been discussed. Group discussion activities are employed to encourage children to work together so they can develop the language and social skills needed for co-operation and collaboration. Drama techniques are used so our children can work in role to explore a variety of social, cultural and historical issues; as well as developing an understanding of themes and ideas contained in literature.

### **Writing**

***'You can make anything by writing.'*** (C S Lewis)

The ability to write allows the individual to express ideas, thoughts and information to a range of readers using an agreed system of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Writing is a process including: planning, drafting, proof reading and editing. Planning involves the collecting, shaping and organising of ideas. Drafting comprises the careful consideration of language and sentence structures to express the ideas. Proof reading and editing encompasses the altering, deleting or correcting of the text to ensure the accuracy of the message for its intended readership.

We believe quality literature, inspiring cross-curricular links and first hand experiences are the best means for inspiring children to want to write. Reading along with speaking and listening activities are vital components in ensuring the writing process is taught in an engaging and effective way. Classroom displays are used to reflect the process and support learning.

The *'Talk for Writing'* model is used in the Early Years and KS 1. Children learn texts by heart and through a process of imitation and finally invention produce pieces based on an original script. The process enables the children to develop an understanding of structure, vocabulary and style which they can add to their writing toolkit.

In KS 2 children use texts studied to write a response in character; draft further episodes or innovate and invent a new version adopting the language and text structures contained in the original version.

Grammar and punctuation is taught in short, discrete sessions and then embedded in subsequent reading and writing activities.

### **Spelling**

Children are organised into ability based groups and taught the spelling rules (detailed in the National Curriculum) using the Read, Write, Inc Spelling programme.

### **Handwriting**

In Reception the children are taught to form letters correctly, with a clear focus on ensuring they have adopted an appropriate grip and that letters are correctly orientated. In KS 1 the children are taught to join letters using horizontal and vertical strokes. In KS 2 opportunities to practise

handwriting continue and when the class teacher feels a child is able to join letters fluently and legibly they are encouraged to write using a pen.