# English Policy for St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

**Introduction**

At St Nicholas Catholic Primary School, we believe that English is fundamental to every child's education. This English Policy outlines the purpose, aims, statutory requirements and practical approaches for delivering high-quality English education at St Nicholas. It is designed in accordance with the 2014 National Curriculum for English, Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF 2019), and statutory guidance including the Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice 2015, and Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

We aim for every pupil to become a confident, fluent and articulate communicator who can read widely, write accurately and effectively, and express ideas clearly in speech and writing. Through English, children develop academically, socially, morally and spiritually, while building the knowledge, vocabulary and cultural understanding they need for the next stage of their education and beyond. The policy ensures a positive, inclusive learning environment and is adaptable to the needs of all pupils, including those in mixed-age classes, supporting every child to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and creativity needed to communicate effectively.

English is a main priority across the school. We provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that develops spoken language, reading and writing, with high-quality texts, rich vocabulary and purposeful opportunities to read, write, discuss and present ideas.

**Aims**

- Develop high standards of spoken and written language so pupils can communicate their ideas effectively.
- Develop confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and often for pleasure and information.
- Develop pupils' ability to write clearly, accurately and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Develop secure transcription skills in handwriting and spelling.
- Develop pupils' knowledge and application of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.
- Develop pupils' ability to generate, organise, refine and communicate ideas through composition.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss, present, perform and debate ideas confidently.
- Develop a love of literature and appreciation of a rich and varied literary heritage.
- Enable pupils to apply English skills meaningfully across the curriculum.
- Ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and those who need additional support, can access and succeed within the English curriculum.

**Statutory and Regulatory Framework**

This policy is informed by and should be read alongside the following statutory and regulatory documents:

- National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study (2014), including spoken language, reading and writing, with writing covering transcription and composition.

- Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework 2019 (EIF), particularly expectations concerning the quality of education, curriculum, reading, writing, communication and pupils' development. The 2019 EIF is retained here because it is the framework specified in the school policy template; Ofsted introduced a renewed EIF for inspections from November 2025.
- Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to avoid unlawful discrimination and make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), supporting an inclusive approach to identifying and meeting pupils' additional needs.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, alongside the school's wider health and safety procedures.

**Curriculum Coverage**

The English curriculum at St Nicholas provides comprehensive coverage of the statutory programmes of study for spoken language, reading and writing. Within writing, we explicitly teach both transcription and composition, ensuring that pupils develop secure skills in handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation alongside the ability to generate, organise and communicate ideas effectively.

- Spoken language, listening and communication.
- Phonics and early reading through Read Write Inc.
- Reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and reading for pleasure.
- Writing for a range of purposes, audiences and genres.
- Transcription, including spelling and handwriting.
- Composition, including planning, drafting, editing and publishing.
- Grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.
- Discussion, presentation, performance and debate.
- Application of English skills across the wider curriculum.
- Literature, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and high-quality texts.

**Curriculum Implementation**

EYFS Foundations

English begins in Reception through the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Children develop foundational skills in Communication and Language and Literacy, with strong links across the wider curriculum. They develop listening, attention, understanding and speaking skills through purposeful conversation, questions, stories, rhymes and songs. They build early reading skills through phonics and develop the foundations of writing through gross and fine motor development, letter formation, early spelling and composition.

Teachers use assessment and ongoing observations to identify children's starting points and ensure that learning is carefully built towards the expectations of Year 1.

Reading

Reading is taught systematically from Reception. Read Write Inc. provides the foundations of phonics and early word reading, while pupils progressively develop fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and a love of literature. Whole-class reading and carefully selected texts provide opportunities to read, discuss, interpret and respond to a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Reading is also promoted across the curriculum so that pupils develop knowledge, vocabulary and understanding through texts in different subjects.

Writing

Writing is taught daily and is based around high-quality books, texts and meaningful stimuli. From Year 1 onwards, writing promotes creativity and passion towards literature, with links often made across the curriculum. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences.
Teaching explicitly develops transcription and composition. Pupils learn to plan, draft, edit, improve and publish their work. Peer and self-assessment help pupils recognise successful features of their writing and identify ways to improve.

Spelling

Spelling is taught progressively and explicitly. Pupils are taught spelling patterns, rules and strategies and are expected to transfer their spelling knowledge into everyday writing across the curriculum. Assessment includes weekly review activities, dictation, explanation, independent application and termly statutory spelling assessment where appropriate.

Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar is embedded across classroom talk, reading and writing, alongside explicit grammar teaching. Grammatical rules and terminology are taught in line with the English National Curriculum. Pupils apply grammatical knowledge directly within their writing so that they can construct accurate, purposeful and effective sentences.
Explicit grammar sessions are used to introduce, practise and review key knowledge, with teachers using assessment information to identify misconceptions, interventions and next steps.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly. We aim for pupils to leave Year 6 able to write in a fast, fluent, legible and sustainable style. Skills taught and practised in handwriting lessons are expected to be applied consistently across all written work. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in the presentation and quality of their work.

Dictation

Dictation is a planned and progressive part of the English curriculum. It bridges taught knowledge and independent writing by enabling pupils to apply phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation in meaningful contexts. Dictation develops transcription fluency, listening skills, working memory and automaticity, allowing pupils to focus increasingly on composition.

Spoken Language

Spoken language underpins reading and writing throughout the English curriculum. Pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss texts and ideas, explain their thinking, present information, perform poetry and scripts, participate in structured discussions and develop confidence in formal and informal contexts.

**Assessment**

Assessment is ongoing and is used to identify pupils' strengths, gaps and next steps so that teaching can be adapted and appropriate support or challenge provided.

- Independent writes at the end of writing outcomes, assessed against the relevant success criteria.
- Writing success criteria and monitoring of National Curriculum writing objectives.
- Peer assessment and self-assessment.
- Marking and feedback in line with the school's marking expectations.
- Termly moderation conversations to support consistency and professional judgement.
- Weekly spelling review and application activities.
- Grammar assessment and review to identify misconceptions and inform intervention.

- Ongoing formative assessment within reading, writing and spoken language lessons.
- Statutory assessment processes and national expectations where applicable.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

| Role | Responsibilities |
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| Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team | Provide strategic leadership, ensure appropriate resources and staffing, and monitor the quality and impact of English provision. |
| English Subject Leaders | Lead curriculum development; support staff; monitor planning, teaching, books and assessment; identify priorities; coordinate enrichment and contribute to whole-school improvement. |
| Class Teachers | Plan and teach high-quality English lessons; assess pupils regularly; adapt teaching; promote reading and writing for pleasure; and maintain strong home-school links. |
| Teaching Assistants | Support pupils through targeted intervention, guided practice and scaffolding while promoting independence. |
| Pupils | Engage positively with English, read regularly, write purposefully, discuss and present ideas, and take increasing responsibility for their progress. |
| Parents and Carers | Support reading and writing at home, encourage discussion and vocabulary development, and promote positive attitudes towards English. |

**Inclusion**

At St Nicholas, we are committed to being a fully inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed, valued and supported to succeed. We provide a broad and balanced English curriculum underpinned by high expectations and a belief that every child can achieve.

Our first approach is always high-quality teaching. The learning objective remains the same for all pupils wherever appropriate, and we focus on identifying and removing barriers rather than routinely lowering expectations.

- Sentence stems and writing frames.
- Chunked instructions and carefully sequenced tasks.
- Worked examples, visualisers and explicit modelling.
- Diagrams, visual prompts and vocabulary support.
- Pre-teaching and revisiting key vocabulary.
- Flexible grouping, structured talk and targeted questioning.
- Additional phonics, reading, spelling, writing or grammar support where required.
- Adapted resources and appropriate technology.
- Opportunities for greater depth and increased independence.
- Assess–plan–do–review approaches for pupils requiring additional support.

We work closely with the SENCO, support staff and families to ensure that pupils with SEND, EAL or other identified needs can access the full ambition of the English curriculum.

**Professional Development**
Staff development is informed by monitoring, assessment and identified curriculum priorities. Professional development supports staff in phonics, reading, writing, grammar, spelling, handwriting, vocabulary, questioning, adaptive teaching and spoken language. Staff are expected to apply agreed whole-school approaches consistently.
Subject leadership supports colleagues through professional dialogue, coaching, modelling, shared resources and monitoring of curriculum implementation.

**Enrichment and Cultural Capital**
English is enriched through opportunities that develop pupils' confidence, creativity and cultural understanding. These include author and poet visits, Reading Cafés, Book Club and Journalism Club, theatre visits, World Book Day, National Poetry Week, National Storytelling Week, Leeds Book Awards, British Library learning opportunities, Scholastic Book Fair, Tiny Tales and Konflux.
Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as readers, writers, speakers and performers, with opportunities to share and celebrate their work within the school and wider community.

**Ofsted and Quality of Education Expectations**
The English curriculum reflects the principles and statutory expectations of the National Curriculum, which identifies high-quality English education as essential to developing pupils' spoken and written language, reading, writing and love of literature. The National Curriculum requires pupils to develop a strong command of spoken and written language and to read widely and often for pleasure and information.
The school recognises that Ofsted's current inspection framework changed from November 2025. This policy retains the 2019 EIF reference because it is part of the requested policy framework, while the school will continue to respond to current Ofsted requirements and guidance as these develop.

**Monitoring and Review**
English is monitored through learning walks, book scrutiny, planning checks, assessment reviews, pupil voice and professional dialogue. Monitoring evaluates curriculum coverage, consistency, progress, teaching quality and the impact of intervention.
The English Subject Leaders coordinate the monitoring cycle and report findings to senior leaders. Priorities identified through monitoring inform professional development, curriculum development and school improvement.
This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance, national expectations or school priorities change.

**Policy Review**

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| Policy | English Policy |
| Academic Year | 2026–2027 |
| Subject Leaders | Francesca Hayden and Siobhan Doherty |

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| Review Date | July 2027 |