

English Curriculum

At St Thomas', our approach to English is grounded in an absolute belief that every child can and will achieve. We focus on reasons why children can succeed, rather than excuses about why they will fail, with the removal of fixed ideas about innate ability: opportunities rather than genetics. We understand that learning potential is increased through effort. We teach an English curriculum rooted in the use of high quality texts which are used expertly by inspirational, passionate teachers to produce children who can write exciting, technically skilled extended pieces of writing at the end of each unit. Reading comprehension and grammatical knowledge are taught in context to facilitate deep and meaningful learning.

The approach is based around six principles:

1. Belief that every child can and will achieve. **2. Focus** on reasons why children can succeed, rather than excuses about why they will fail. **3. Preparedness** to make a cultural shift. **4. Awareness** that the children's life chances depend on success in English. **5. Ability** – fixed ideas are removed about innate ability. Opportunities rather than genetics. **6. Potential** to learn is increased through effort.

INTENT	IMPLEMENTATION	IMPACT
 <p>Alignment to National Curriculum</p> <p>The school follows the Read Write Inc programme until the children can read fluently, and then they progress to the Mastery English programme. There are three ambitious whole class texts per year for each year group which provide a challenge to take the learning to greater depth. Spelling and handwriting are taught outside of the English lessons through the Get Spelling programme.</p>	 <p>Pedagogical Approaches</p> <p>The school follows a six-part lesson sequence: engage, introduce, consider and practise, going deeper, independent task and reflect. The lessons are carefully designed to ensure pace of learning as well as to regularly check for understanding. Wherever possible, grammar, reading and writing skills and knowledge are taught within the context of the text, in which the children are immersed.</p>	 <p>Approach to Assessment</p> <p>Writing: assessed pieces every two weeks based on the Mastery English or end of key stage writing criteria. The school is also part of the No More Marking programme, using comparative judgement. Reading: Star assessments are used throughout the year to provide standardised scores and identify gaps.</p>
 <p>End Points</p> <p>We are very clear about being ambitious in all year groups and the programme is designed to take the children to greater depth within the statutory assessment frameworks. The aim is for all children to become frequent readers who read for pleasure, and confident writers who can write for a variety of purposes.</p>	 <p>Teachers' Expert Knowledge</p> <p>Teacher development is central to the success of English teaching. All teachers are fully trained in both Read Write Inc and Mastery English and there are regular CPD and coaching opportunities. Teachers have expert knowledge in systematic synthetic phonics, reading, children's authors, grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>	 <p>Performance Data</p> <p>The school uses FFT to set ambitious targets for all children, which are at least in line with the top 20% of pupils nationally. The most recent pupil performance data can be found on the school website.</p>
 <p>Sequencing</p> <p>Our English curriculum follows a spiral structure. Therefore, key concepts are revisited and taken to a greater level of depth. The school's reading strategy clearly outlines the stages in a child's reading journey. The writing teaching sequence follows an explore, plan, write, edit/evaluate process aimed at mastery of a particular set of skills. Grammar and punctuation are taught within the context of the English lesson.</p>	 <p>Promoting Discussion and Understanding</p> <p>Our English programme includes both knowledge and vocabulary that are specific to the text that the pupils are studying. The six-part lesson promotes regular discussion, and this is structured to lead to deep understanding. The immersion in the whole class text naturally facilitates discussion and enables the pupils to use high quality vocabulary.</p>	 <p>Pupils' Work</p> <p>The school has high expectations of all children with regard to the quality and presentation of their work, which we believe leads to a sense of pride. Children begin to use cursive at an early stage, which leads quickly to joined handwriting. In English, the children have a writing skills book and an extended writing book, the latter is used as evidence for their assessment.</p>
 <p>Addressing Social Disadvantage</p> <p>A key principle of our teaching is about the belief that every child can engage with the curriculum for their year group, unless they have a significant developmental delay. Pre-teaching and same day intervention are in place to ensure that all children can engage with the key learning. The structure of the curriculum is designed to ensure that all children can keep up with the pace of learning.</p>	 <p>Knowing More and Remembering More</p> <p>Our curriculum maps have been carefully constructed to present the content in a logical progression. The school's approach builds on current research into metacognition. This is evident in the six-part lesson, which includes carefully crafted check points in between each stage. For example, using recall and retrieval practice.</p>	 <p>Talking to Pupils</p> <p>All members of the senior leadership team and, particularly, the English and reading leaders talk to the pupils as part of the regular monitoring. The purpose is to explore what they have learnt and what they can remember as well as how much they have enjoyed it. Key improvement actions can be identified as a result. For example, it was highlighted that we need to explore authors from more diverse backgrounds.</p>



Local Context

For a proportion of lower attaining pupils, language development is a key focus. Through immersion in high quality texts and by facilitating the optimum conditions for reading for pleasure, children develop a strong vocabulary through becoming frequent readers and text study.



Teacher Assessment

The check points are a powerful form of continual assessment for learning - misconceptions can then be immediately addressed. The practise/deepen method of marking the pupils' work each day also allows the opportunity to address misconceptions immediately.

Links / References

www.masteryenglish.co.uk www.readwriteinc.org