

Our English Curriculum

Our vision

We want our children to be accomplished readers and writers who have developed a love of reading and writing throughout their time at St. John's. We want children to leave school with a lifelong love of literacy which will support them throughout their lives.

Curriculum intent

English is held in high regard at St. John's and it is at the heart of everything we do; our English lessons support the teaching of Mantle of the Expert and the rest of the curriculum. Lessons are taught using high-quality texts which help immerse the children in a vocabulary-rich learning environment and support children by being examples of excellent literature. We have developed an English curriculum which looks to inspire our children and aims to make *every child a reader* by developing a love of reading through exposure to inspiring and engaging texts. We believe that a quality English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, both to learn and for enjoyment, and writing and we aim to inspire children to read widely and often.

We recognise the importance of a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts both in English and across the curriculum. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening, oracy is held in high regard at school and from September 2022, school will be working closely with Voice 21 to develop oracy skills further. We aspire to have children who can use discussion to communicate, debate and further their learning in a confident and controlled manner.

Curriculum implementation

Right from the beginning of nursery, we teach children to read. At age three, the focus is on listening to stories, poems, songs and nursery rhymes; gaining an understanding of print by sharing books with adults; playing with sounds and rhyming words and beginning to understand the link between spoken and written words. Phonics sessions take place daily by summer term, children will be beginning to recognise some of their Set 1 sounds.

Once in Reception, the building blocks that have been put in place in nursery mean that children can hear the different sounds in words and have a wealth of story and rhyme experience to draw upon. Children move through Set 1 sounds quickly, as a new sound is introduced daily.

As they move through KS1, children continue to have a daily phonics sessions for as long as they need them. The focus shifts to developing reading fluency and comprehension and children are taught to read longer, more challenging texts. This continues as they move up through the school and they develop a love of reading and knowledge of authors.

Any child who is not making the progress expected is identified through regular assessment and targeted 1-1 support is put in place.

Throughout KS2, children take part in Whole Class Reading sessions. Every morning each child takes part in a 40 minute reading session led by their teacher. The sessions focus on a short piece of text or an extract, the text is read aloud by the children before vocabulary is clarified and discussed. A range of questions are then completed by children.

Regarding writing, children develop a range of skills through mark making activities in Nursery, the children are given the opportunity to write using a range of different resources and encouraged to explain their meaning. From an early age, children are immersed in storytelling and listen to high-quality texts regularly – these texts support the children in their writing. In Reception, children begin to write more formally – children take part in handwriting lessons and are encouraged to write about their life and school experiences in dedicated areas. Talk for Writing is an approach which is often used throughout EYFS and into KS1.

As children transition from EYFS to KS1 and KS1 to KS2, lessons become more formal and last up to one hour. Handwriting lessons continue and high-quality texts remain a focus, children take part in grammar, punctuation and spelling sessions based on a whole school writing progression map.