



# English Policy

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# Our Mission Statement

## Loved

We love one another as Jesus taught us - our friends, our families and those who we may never meet.

## Valued

We value everyone - everyone is important; pupils, staff, parents, governors, and members of the community— no matter their race, religion ability or need. We try to live like Jesus taught us.

## Challenged

We challenge each other - not only with our learning but challenge each other to be more merciful to others, have a little more understanding of others' needs and challenge each other to be better people.

# Our Vision

At Holy Cross, we want enable children to be confident and confident on all areas of English teaching, raising standards in reading and writing for all children. We want to ensure:

- Children have access to a wide and varied selection on fiction and non-fiction books in a range of languages as well as English to support their reading in languages they may use at home. This will encourage a love of reading for pleasure.
- Love of reading is a catalyst for creative writing, seeing this influence make a positive impact on their writing.
- The Holy Cross Reading Spine is matched to children's age range, Holy Cross curriculum themes and topic related where possible, further supporting cross-curricular learning.
- That children are fluent and competent in writing for a range of purposes across all curriculum areas, ensuring basic skills and embedded well, freeing up cognitive capacity to include subject specific writing styles and vocabulary.
- Interesting, exciting, and challenging vocabulary becomes a natural part of their writing style.
- Children become competent writers, using a range of writing techniques which match the purpose of and audience for whom they are writing. Talk for Writing is used to support this as well as Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar.

# Statement of Intent

English is a curriculum area which impacts on all other curriculum areas. Therefore, it is vital that the basic written elements of English are taught to a level where they become automatic, thus freeing up working memory and lessening the impact of cognitive load in other written areas across the curriculum. Oracy skills are an essential life skill. These should be developed and practiced in all areas of school life.

Children will develop handwriting which is neat and legible through regular handwriting sessions across the whole school following the handwriting policy (see separate policy). Vocabulary is an important part of the English language and as such, will play a pivotal role in all subject areas, being taught through each individual subject and through weekly spelling lessons, teaching patterns children can apply to their work.

A love of reading for pleasure and the ability to use a text for research purposes is essential to raise standards and to encourage children to be readers for life.

Reading comprehension is taught so that children are able to understand what they are reading and use this knowledge for research purposes, to inform their creative choices and to make decisions on future reading choices.

To do this, we will:

- Use a structured approach to teaching genres through the use of Talk 4 Writing approach, providing clear approaches to learning techniques and features specific to the type of text being studied and across the range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry genres.
- Ensure 'basics' are revisited at the start of each academic year in years 3-6 and in Lent 1 for years 1 and 2.
- All year groups will follow the *Habits of Discussion* technique found in Teach like a Champion (Lemov. D 2021), implemented incrementally through the school to build excellent oracy skills.
- Handwriting will be an integral part of the learning week, focussing on size and consistency of joins to allow all children to become fluent, neat writers.
- Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary will be explicitly taught at the start of lessons so it is in the working memory for that lesson, slowing the 'forgetting curve' and helping the vocabulary pass into long term memory.
- Spelling is taught to the whole class according to their age through Spelling Shed. All children have access to their age specific spelling patterns and words but those who find spelling a challenge will be grouped by ability and additional support given to help close the gap.
- Reading for pleasure is encouraged through a well-stocked and used school library with a variety of texts in a range of languages across both fiction and non-fiction genres.
- Regular visits to the public library to encourage children to become members and explore a larger range of books with their families.
- reading comprehension is taught consistently and effectively using a range of text types. These include Comprehension Ninja, Ashley Boothe and VIPERS.

# Talk 4 Writing, Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar

## Talk for Writing

To develop confident, confident writers, we follow Talk 4 Writing to develop the necessary skills for children to write across genres. It follows a cycle of:

- Cold write - assesses prior skills and any additional skills, previously taught which need to be revisited are identified.
- Imitation phase - a model text is introduced and learnt by story map in years 1-4 and orally through years 4-6 (year 4 from Christmas onwards). The model text is compared to similar quality texts and features identified to build a 'writer's toolkit'. This is used throughout the writing unit to teach the necessary punctuation, grammar and stylistic features for that particular text. Formal punctuation and grammar teaching is given and short burst writing tasks.
- Innovation phase – model text is boxed up into its component parts and a shared write takes place, allowing children to practice the skills needed in a collaborative and constructive way. The children see the thinking process as discussions take place around elements of the text to change and selecting student-generated ideas to build the shared write through the week. This is then added to the boxing up sheet so a range of ideas are developed.
- Invention phase – children use the models and boxing up sheet to develop their own ideas to invent their own version of the text type. Research and idea generating activities take place to help with this.
- Hot write - children use their boxed-up plan to write their own text before self-editing takes place.

Toolkits, vocabulary lists, annotated model texts and boxing up is displayed on the English working wall along with the every-day toolkit and any other material which supports learning around the text.

## Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar

Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar is a whole school programme taught at the beginning of the school year for children in KS2 and after October half term in KS1. It is designed to build on basic grammar skills taught, reinforcing these for children who are working at expected level and closing the gap for children working towards. It is delivered over 20 lessons and replaces the normal English lessons during this time. During the trial, an increase was seen in all children's written work across all subject areas. The knowledge of sentence structure developed in the Place Value of Grammar becomes part of the everyday toolkit in the Talk 4 Writing lessons.

## Spelling

At Holy Cross, we use Spelling Shed to teach spelling in all year groups three times a week. Spellings are set on a termly basis using our pyramids. These start with six spellings and have six new spellings added to them each week over the half term. These will be made up of two common exception words from the year group statutory spelling list, two from the spelling pattern taught from the Spelling Shed scheme for their year group, one topic word and one RE word.

Most children will be working in their current year group. Some children will have been identified through assessment as needing to access spellings from a lower year group.

These will be agreed with the SENDCo. All children will be taught spelling in class at their current year group with Spelling Shed homework to support the retrieval and learning process. Children who are in the alternative group may also have homework set on the spelling age they have been assigned.

## Key Stage 2 Reading

Children will complete the Hertfordshire Reading Test to assess the fluency of reading and identify the current reading ability for each child. This will be assessed at the end of every term to monitor the progress a child is making through the reading levels. This will work alongside questioning when reading to ascertain the appropriate reading comprehension and fluency level.

Texts are wide ranging covering a vast selection of genres and authors including both modern and classic texts.

Children have access to books in a selection of languages to support their love of books in languages spoken at home.

The school has a subscription to the School's Library Service which allows us to access a wider range of fiction and non-fiction texts to support subject specific learning as well as books in additional languages.

## Reading Comprehension

Whole class reading is used across the school with question based on the VIPERS model. VIPERS questions consist of Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explain, Retrieve and Summarise with a selection of each used daily. Comprehension Ninja is also used to support reading comprehension. Whole class reading lessons are 20 minutes long and happen 3-4 times a week.

Children will have a set of age-appropriate questions added to their reading record each term to help parents with comprehension skills when they hear their child read at home. These questions will also be available to adult volunteers who assist with reading in the school.