

St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School



***“Learning together as we follow in the
footsteps of Christ”***

English Policy

Reviewed: September 2026
Update: September 2028

Intent

At St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School, we place our children at the heart of everything we do and offer them an engaging English curriculum where every child has the right to high quality teaching and learning opportunities that help them develop essential language, communication, reading and writing skills, giving them the opportunity to reach their full potential by the time they leave our school. Through a well-structured English curriculum, we enable our children to be fluent, enthusiastic and critical readers by providing them with a range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts. We also enable our children to be thoughtful and imaginative writers, encouraging them to apply a range of language features at word, sentence and text level to a range of genres and subjects they study throughout their time at our school.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Bailiwick of Guernsey Curriculum, the English Entitlement Document (as of September 2024) and in the Development Matters document for Early Years.

English Bailiwick Curriculum Aims

- To ensure learners build a secure knowledge of how language is used to express, explore and share information, ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- To develop children's understanding of the power of language and communication to engage people and influence their ideas and actions.
- To provide pupils with the knowledge of how language works: its structures and conventions, variations in use and changes over time.

Implementation

English is a core subject of the Bailiwick of Guernsey curriculum. Pupils take part in daily English lessons that could include phonics, spellings, handwriting, guided reading and writing. These cover the programmes of study for English set out in the Bailiwick of Guernsey Curriculum and Development Matters document for Early Years. Further opportunities are given for pupils to practise and apply their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum wherever possible. The following gives information on how each of these areas are implemented across our school:

Phonics and Early Reading in Early Years and Year 1

In Early Years and Year 1, daily, discrete phonics lessons are delivered which follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme. This is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. Children make a strong start in Early Years: teaching begins on day one of the Autumn term. Phonics is taught for up to 30 minutes a day. Each Friday, the week's teaching is reviewed to help children become fluent readers.

We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children

because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Children are taught through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of up to six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'.
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Years 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

In Year 2, children who are ready move onto reading the Little Wandle Fluency books.

More detailed information on our delivery of Phonics at St Mary and St Michael can be found in our school's Phonics and Early Reading policy.

Spelling from Years 2 – 6

In Year 2, spelling is taught through the Little Wandle Bridge to Spelling programme. In Years 3- 6, spelling sessions are delivered three times a week, following the Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership (CUSP) spelling programme. The CUSP Spelling programme is organised into 2-week blocks, with each block covering a particular set of key concepts, including spelling patterns, etymology and morphology and reasoning about spelling.

Our Reading Spine

From Early Years through to Year 6, a high-quality range of texts and poems have been chosen in each year group for children to experience through either their guided reading lessons, writing lessons or Book Hooks. Each of these areas are explained in more detail below. These books have been carefully chosen to:

- Cover a range of genres that are age appropriate to each year group
- Satisfy the Five Plagues of Reading identified by Doug Lemov (Reading Reconsidered) which are essential in helping children successfully navigate reading with confidence
- Enhance children's knowledge and understanding of topics they study in foundation subjects in each year group where possible.
- Expose children to a range of different authors.

- Challenge children in their reading ability.

This reading spine is central to our school's curriculum design and where possible, informs units that are studied in writing, as well as units taught in some foundation subjects such as history and geography.

Reading in Years 3 – 6

From Years 3 – 6, children continue to develop their reading through a whole class text-based approach, which primarily focuses on further developing fluency, intonation, expression, comprehension and inference. As explained above, whole class texts have been chosen that are age appropriate and cover a range of genres. They have also been chosen to cover the Five Plagues of Reading identified by Doug Lemov which are essential in helping children successfully navigate reading with confidence. Reading lessons occur daily and last up to 30 minutes. Staff teach lessons with a heavy focus on reading fluency practise, as well as including activities relevant to the text that address the literary traditions and genres and inference, interpretation and analysis elements of the Guernsey reading ladders.

Reading at home and Reading for Pleasure

In Early Years and Year 1 a decodable reading practice book is taken home by each pupil to ensure success is shared with the family. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Every class has access to 50 Recommended Reads in their classroom. These are available in their reading for pleasure book shelf at the back of each class or on our eBook library, Sora. Each class has access to a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry titles which are age appropriate to each year group. These cover various genres and a diverse range of subject matters that we feel the children will enjoy and will empower them as readers and help them to understand the world.

Children are encouraged by their class teacher to read as many of these titles as they can throughout the year. Each child has their year group's 50 Recommended Reads stuck in the back of their reading diaries so they can tick off and track their coverage of these titles. Children are encouraged to read in their own time every day and record this in their reading diaries each day. Parents are encouraged to listen to their children read daily and record a short comment in their child's reading diary. As children reach upper key stage 2, they may record their own comments more frequently.

Children who are working below their age expected levels still have access to the 50 Recommended Reads, but their parents may have to read these to them instead. This way, children are still getting exposure to titles that are age appropriate for them and they are not being denied access to books they will still enjoy.

Below are the reading expectations (times) for children in each year group:

<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Expectations</u>
Early Years	Children begin to choose books with adult support and develop a range of books they want to read independently or have read to them.

Year 1	Children begin to choose books with encouragement and/or support and are shared with an adult or read independently.
Year 2	Children read a minimum of 10 minutes daily or the equivalent spread over a week.
Year 3 and 4	Children read a minimum of 20 minutes daily or the equivalent spread over a week.
Year 5 and 6	Children read a minimum of 30 minutes daily or the equivalent spread over a week.

Children are encouraged to read to an adult where possible, but may read independently too.

Children are also encouraged to take books home from our school's library which also provides a range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. These are stocked and regularly rotated by our local library, Guille-Alles Library, and our trained Year 5 librarians. The library is open to pupils at lunchtimes on a timetabled basis.

Book Hook

As part of our approach to Reading for Pleasure, children are also read to by their class teacher for up to 15 minutes each day as often as possible. The book that is read to them is different to the one the class study as part of their reading lessons and is read to them purely for enjoyment. Book Hook is actively encouraged so that children are hearing good reading practise being modelled to them and also to instil a love of reading within each child. Through Book Hook, children are also being exposed to different titles and a range of genres that they may not actively seek out themselves.

Writing

Each writing unit in our school follows a 5/6 week sequence.

Sentence Level Focus (Weeks 1 and 2)

In weeks 1 and 2 of each writing unit, pupils will focus purely on sentence structure, taught in isolation from the genre of writing they will be producing in weeks 3 and 4. The teacher will teach up to three sentence level objectives in these first two weeks, taken from the Fundamentals of Writing 3 Crafting Sentences strand of the Writing Ladders. The sentences being taught each unit are taken from the medium-term planning, with teachers also identifying sentences from previous teaching to revisit based on the needs of the class. Each sentence level lesson in these first two weeks take on a similar structure, with 2 to 3 sentence level activities being delivered to the children in an 'I do, we do, you do' structure. Teachers will use diagnostic assessment in the lesson to determine how pupils are getting on and will adapt their teaching as necessary to ensure that all pupils are achieving the sentence level objective set for the lesson.

Scaffolded Writing (Weeks 3 and 4)

In these two weeks, pupils will learn how to construct a coherent piece of writing using the sentence knowledge they have acquired previously. Pupils will be told the genre of writing they will be producing and through a carefully scaffolded lesson structure, will produce their own text. Teachers will have their own modelled text pre-written which they will use to help scaffold the children's writing. The teacher will carefully model the planning of this text, with input from the pupils and the plan will be displayed throughout the writing process. Pupils will not see the teacher's modelled text beforehand but will be informed by the teacher, sentence by

sentence, what types of sentences they expect from the class and the purpose of using these different types of sentence structures. This scaffolded approach to writing frees up children's working memory so that they do not become overwhelmed by producing too much writing in one go.

By the end of week 4, all pupils will have produced their own piece of writing that satisfies the genre they are focussing on.

Independent Writing (Week 5)

In this week, pupils are expected to produce another piece of writing in the same genre they have been working on in weeks 3 and 4. This week allows pupils to demonstrate more independently what they have learnt throughout the unit in the previous weeks. Pupils will plan their text using the same format as was modelled for the scaffolded text. Teachers will still give pupils feedback on their writing throughout the week and pupils will be given time to act upon this feedback.

Disciplinary Writing/Literary Essay (Week 6) (From September 2027 onwards)

At the end of each term, children will be set a disciplinary piece of writing to produce or a literary essay. Disciplinary essays are non-fiction texts where children are expected to apply their literacy skills to another subject. For example, they may write in the style of a historian when explaining the causes of World War 2. Literary essays are pieces of writing analysing, examining or evaluating a text or work of literature. Literary essays that pupils produce will always be based around literature that is part of our school's reading spine. This disciplinary writing or literary essay will be carried out in a similar way to week 5 when children produce their independent writing.

Drawing Club

In Early Years and for the first half term of Year 1, children are encouraged to develop their writing skills using the Drawing Club approach. This approach allows children to immerse themselves in a book or fairy tale each week. Children in Early Years complete Drawing Club three times a week and in Year 1 this increases to four times a week. In each session children will receive a short whole class input from their class teacher who will:

- Share some vocabulary from the focus book and give children actions to complete for this vocabulary. The vocabulary must be words that are related to the text but don't feature in the story itself.
- Share the story
- Model drawing an image related to the text e.g. a character or setting or how to solve a problem from the story.
- Model writing a passcode for the image. This passcode is designed to make the image do something e.g. "My passcode makes the dinosaur stomp its feet."

In Early Years, the passcode can be any aspect of writing, building from single letters or words earlier in the year to full sentences/groups of sentences later in the year. It does not have to relate to the image or narrate the story of the image. The teacher may choose their passcode based on adaptive teaching e.g. Seeing many children

cannot spell 'sure' in phonics, the teacher may use this as their passcode or part of their passcode the next day.

In Year 1, the passcode must be based on the Sentence Knowledge Curriculum (see Medium-term planning).

In Early Years, the children are encouraged to attend Drawing Club in continuous provision after the whole class input. They will draw their own images related to the story based on instructions from the adult leading the group and will also write their own passcode. In the Autumn Term, all children must attend at least once a week, moving on to at least twice in Spring Term and 3 times a week in Summer Term.

In Year 1, all children must attend Drawing Club four times a week. This will be done in small groups after the teacher input to the whole class.

Teachers and LSAs should use adaptive teaching principles to ensure children are producing what they are capable of in Drawing Club. E.g. with children who are capable of writing more, say to them, "Your passcode will only work if it is 2/3/4 sentences." Etc.

Assessment

Assessment of Phonics and Early Reading in Early Years and Year 1

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it. Assessment for learning is used:

- daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
- weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

Summative assessment for Reception and Year 1 is used:

- every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:

- in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- to assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.

A placement assessment is used:

- with any child new to the school in Reception and Year 1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

Assessment of Reading from Years 2 – 6

Teachers use formative assessment in all reading lessons to respond to the needs of learners and ensure that all pupils are making the best progress possible.

Ongoing summative assessment is carried out by teachers using the Guernsey Reading Ladders. These are referred to by class teachers throughout the year to see what stage children are currently working at and their next targets they need to achieve to help them progress. At the end of each term, these Reading Ladders are used by teachers to gauge what step each pupil in their class is working at. Children are assessed in three areas of Reading referred to as the 'Fundamentals of Literacy' which include:

- Reading for meaning, interest and enjoyment
- Accurate encoding and decoding of text
- Fluency – expression, speed and accuracy

Children's next steps in Reading are reported to parents at Parents' Evening and in pupils' end of year reports.

NGRT Standardised Reading Assessments are also carried out once a year in the summer term for pupils in Year 2 to Year 6. The results from these can be used to support teachers' judgements given from the Reading Ladders. Results from these will also help teachers identify which pupils are working in-line, above and below their reading expectations and appropriate targets can be drawn up for each pupil to work on in the next term. These will also form the basis for pupil progress discussions at the end of the summer term before pupils move into their new classes for the next academic year.

Assessment of Writing

Teachers use formative assessment in all writing lessons to respond to the needs of learners and ensure that all pupils are making the best progress possible.

Summative assessment is carried out at the end of each writing unit studied when children have produced their own independent piece of writing. Teachers assess the independent writing against the Guernsey Writing Ladders, recording the sentence types taught that unit that the children have been able to use independently in their work. Teachers use this assessment as a guide for which sentences to teach during their revisits in subsequent units and also to identify children who may require targeted support during writing lessons.

We also use the No More Marking Comparative Judgement approach to assessing writing as well. As part of this, children in Years 1 – 6 will be set a cold unaided writing task once or twice a year and will have their writing assessed anonymously by other teachers nationally. Teachers are informed of their pupils' writing ages following a judging session of children's writing.

Following on from this task, teachers ask children to redraft their NMM writing in their English books. Children receive feedback from the teacher and use this to edit and improve their original writing.

Assessment of Speaking and Listening

Pupil's progress in speaking and listening is assessed informally using a variety of methods in differing situations through:

- Word and sentence level work
- Collaborative work
- Group and whole class discussion and interaction
- Debate and presentation
- Drama activities
- Independent play activities