

English

Our children are provided with experiences of real value, which develop their language:

- To master important concepts and engage their thinking.
- To engage in dialogue which communicates and deepens understanding.
- To produce work of a highly creative and aesthetic quality.

This involves:

- The acquisition of a wide working vocabulary.
- Clear expression of thought, using correct syntax and spelling.
- Understanding the use of grammar in writing.
- Clear articulation of speech, with awareness of purpose and audience.
- Becoming a fluent, avid and analytical reader.
- Becoming a competent writer for a range of purposes.

Teachers themselves are models of excellence in their own use of language. They use good models of excellence from literature, from other forms of written English, and from audio-visual (film), visual (quality still images), and sound resources.

It is intended that all pupils will achieve a real appreciation and development of the aesthetic use of language and actively engage in creative work themselves.

With this approach, which includes experiential learning, we aim to ensure that our children explore a curriculum which captures their imagination, stimulates natural curiosity and creates a love for learning.

Speaking and Listening

We recognise the value of high-quality oracy both within and outside the classroom from a very young age. Children are given ample opportunities to express themselves and are exposed to high-quality, modelled spoken English. Teachers ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills by giving opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama, debate, prepare and present ideas. Children are regularly encouraged to improve their fluency by reading aloud to peers as well as whole-class opportunities.

Reading

Learning to read and developing a love of reading is embedded in all we do at St. Francis. Word reading and comprehension are fundamental for children to access other areas of learning as well as understanding the wider world around them. Reading comprehension is an essential component of other subjects too such as RE, History, Geography and Science.

Early Reading and phonics (Reception and Year 1): We use the reading programme Read, Write Inc developed by Ruth Miskin. At the heart of this programme is an emphasis on understanding phonics. This builds towards fluency in the first instance and then comprehension. Phonic knowledge is explicitly taught through the use of a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Reading is taught in this programme using repetition to reinforce and consolidation of phonic sounds and fluency of decoding them. The three main principles are outlined below and follow a

concept that repeated reading of a book reinforces the following (taken from Read, Write Inc literature):

Accuracy

- Read new sounds and review previously taught sounds
- Sound out the names of characters and unfamiliar words
- Understand the meaning of new words
- Read the story **(first read)**

Fluency

- Read the words in the story speedily
- Track the story
- Read the story with increased speed **(second read)**

Comprehension

- Predict the outcome after listening to a story introduction
- Discuss and compare key moments in the story
- Read the story with a storyteller's voice **(third read)**
- Answer questions about the story
- Read the same story at home
- Build background knowledge ready to read the next RWInc storybook.

During the daily phonics session, the children are taught aural discrimination, phonemic awareness, rhyme awareness, segmentation and blending as well as to read and write all 44 graphemes in the English language.

Read, Write Inc is a rigorous and systematic synthetic phonics programme. Pupils in our Reception and Year 1 classes have daily phonics lessons which follow this structured approach.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to practice their reading through fully-decodable texts that are matched to their phonic knowledge and are linked to the programme.

The key features of systematic (or synthetic) approach to teaching phonics are:

- The explicit and systematic teaching of the alphabetic code.
- A focus on teaching the three core skills of blending for reading, segmenting for spelling, and handwriting.
- Putting the alphabetic code knowledge taught to date and the three core skills to immediate use with cumulative, decodable words, sentences and texts.

Reading is consolidated by books and activities used in the rest of the curriculum.

Consolidation of reading is undertaken by using books and activities found across the rest of the curriculum. Boxes of banded reading resources are available and children are encouraged to choose books from both class and school library.

Year 2 upwards: Once fluency and decoding are secured, comprehension skills are developed through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with their teachers and exposure to a wide range of high-quality stories, poems and non-fiction texts.

The choice of texts in our Guided Reading sessions have been carefully chosen to extend and increase pupils' vocabulary as well as gaining knowledge across the curriculum. Guided Reading and explicit class teaching cover a range of skills needed for comprehension namely:

Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, Sequencing & Summarising.

These skills are taught explicitly through challenging class texts and extracts. Visual literacy can also be used in these lessons and reading is built into other subjects within our curriculum.

Reading at home: Levelled reading books are sent home weekly in Key Stage 1. For classes Reception and Year 1 these are Read, Write Inc books which are linked to a pupils' phonic and reading levels. In Year 2 children move onto the Oxford Reading Tree books which are again levelled according to a pupil's reading and phonics level. Parents are expected to listen to their child daily and this is monitored through the use of reading records which are returned weekly or on their reading day.

Appreciation and love of reading: From their first experiences in school, pupils are actively involved in story times, library visits and book celebrations such as World Book Day, theatre visits/visitors or a visiting author. DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time is built into each class every day. Teachers also share their favourite books from their childhood with their class, listening to intonation, expression and the children have opportunities to ask questions. This is a further opportunity for children to come across words they would otherwise not hear or use as well as feeding their imaginations.

Spelling

Spelling is taught in a systematic way building upon phonic knowledge (where appropriate) and continuing to apply the knowledge learned in Key Stage 1. Spelling tests are an integral part of the development of correct spelling.

Method used (from Year 2 onwards):

- i. Spellings start with an unseen test each week. The following week there is a retest and the next unseen test. This ensures that continued application of phonic knowledge from previous year groups happens and is embedded.
- ii. Weekly spellings are given out in sets which either:
 - a) revise previously visited spelling rules from lower year groups;
 - b) practise a spelling rule linked to the year group statutory spelling list;
 - c) relate to a word, sentence or punctuation objective from the National Curriculum.

Where necessary, children are given personalised spelling lists.

Note: Year 1 move to this method in the summer term to prepare them for Year 2.

Writing

Writing is an integral part of every pupil's learning. From the earliest experiences, pupils have regular opportunities to write for a range of genres; they will also have a

number of cross-curricular opportunities for demonstrating their writing skills. Pupils are actively encouraged to articulate ideas and structure them before writing.

Writing in Key Stage 1 – Read, Write Inc programme.

Early Writing in EYFS and Year 1: From their first experiences at school, pupils are taught to write recognisable letters, spell words phonetically as part of our Read, Write Inc programme and, when ready, write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Year 2 and upwards: These year groups often focus on writing that is connected to a topic or theme. This is built upon with other writing genres per term. With modelling at the heart of them, the work is often built from sentence level to paragraphs with a heavy emphasis on vocabulary development. Teachers prepare children for writing by modelling the ideas, grammar or techniques in line with the purpose of the writing being taught.

Handwriting: Handwriting skills are developed through the Read, Write Inc programme focusing on correct letter formation and building in the joins in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 as well as higher year groups where necessary. Skills are practised daily with Read, Write Inc and these are modelled from Reception onwards. Handwriting is monitored for correct joins and presentation and children develop their style as they move up the school.

