

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School



English Policy

Updated 2026

Mission Statement:

'Achieving Excellence Together with God's Love'

At St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
we strive to live out the Gospel in the way Jesus teaches us to

We celebrate the diversity of our school community and
value each person as unique; made in God's image and likeness

We work together, through God's love,
to enable our pupils to achieve excellence in all aspects of their education

The Intent of our English Curriculum at St. Francis Xavier

At St. Francis Xavier, English is at the core of our curriculum. Strong English skills, spoken language, reading and writing, as the tools through which pupils to unlock the rest of our academic curriculum. Furthermore, we acknowledge that a strong command of English empowers pupils with the tools they need to contribute positively to the life of the school, their local community and the wider environment as a member of society especially for those pupils who speak English as an Additional Language. Every phase of our school, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop and apply their speaking, listening, reading and writing knowledge and skills within a balanced, inspiring and knowledge rich curriculum.

Spoken Language

At St Francis Xavier, we recognise that effective spoken language is the foundation for developing effective reading and writing skills. We strive to enable all of our pupils to become competent speakers, with a strong command of syntax, grammar and a rich vocabulary.

We promote high standards of spoken English by immersing our pupils in high-quality texts through daily, ring-fenced story times, teaching vocabulary explicitly in every subject, displaying key vocabulary in every classroom and by modelling and insisting upon high standards of spoken English. Across the curriculum we provide opportunities for discussion and debate to enable pupils to develop key speaking skills.

Reading

We aspire for all of our pupils to become highly skilled readers and to foster within each child a life-long love of reading. As a result, we prioritise high quality early reading instruction, taught through the Read. Write. Inc. phonics scheme and early intervention and catch up tuition for pupils reading below age-related expectations. We inspire a love of reading through daily story time sessions, weekly class sessions in our school library, send reading for pleasure books home, developing teacher-pupil reading relationships through weekly 1-1 reading with pupils and by encouraging parents to promote reading at home.

Writing

Our writing curriculum is ambitious and based on the understanding that the subject is an inter-connected body of knowledge. In EYFS and early KS1, transcription that is the development of unlaboured handwriting, accurate spelling, and accurate and effective application of basic sentence punctuation is prioritized. As children become proficient in transcription, focus moves to successful composition, that is, articulating ideas and structuring them in writing. As children move through KS2, the writing curriculum ensures they build knowledge of formality and how to control their writing consciously using standard English.

Across carefully planned sequences of learning, children read and share high quality texts, experience modelled and shared writing, learn to love words and their meanings and build their resilience through a

high ration of independent, extended writing. Explicit teaching of grammar related to genre is revisited regularly within teaching sequences. Spelling and handwriting are taught as stand-alone lessons but remain as non-negotiables in English lessons and in writing in other subjects.

Statutory Requirements

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of oracy; speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate and the spoken word

The school uses the 2014 National Curriculum as the basis of its curriculum planning. The long-term plan is bespoke to the children of St. Francis Xavier. The knowledge and skills content is outlined in our detailed long-term plan displayed on our school website for each year group. We make use of local resources such as Doncaster Community Library to enhance our pupils' experience of the English curriculum.

Our planning is organised into three phases: long-term, medium-term and short-term.

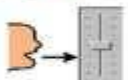
Our long-term planning maps the sequence of National Curriculum statements studied in each year group into the following key areas:

- Speaking and Listening
- Spelling and Phonics
- Reading Key Performance Indicators
- Writing Non-Negotiables
- Writing Genres and Focus Texts (for each half term)

Speaking and Listening:

The development of speaking and listening skills is at the heart of our curriculum. By taking the time to develop speaking and listening skills, we provide our pupils with a strong foundation for reading and writing. Across the curriculum, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. We strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

We encourage our children to be active listeners. By developing active listening skills, we aim for our children to fully concentrate on what is being said rather than passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Our children are taught and expected to listen using all of their senses, giving full attention to the person speaking. We also aim to develop skilled speakers at St Francis Xavier, modelling high standards of spoken English, syntax, grammar and vocabulary, and encouraging children to pay attention to volume, pace and the needs of the listener. All children are reminded to speak in full sentences.

Skilled speaking	
	Think about what you are going to say.
	Wait until listeners are ready.
	Speak audibly and clearly.
	Speak in whole sentences and choose words carefully.
	Sit or stand smartly and look at your audience.
	Think, have your listeners understood. Let them ask questions.

Active Listening	
	Not distracting people by moving or making noise.
	Listening to the teacher AND to other children.
	Thinking about what I am hearing.
	Making comments and asking questions.
	Say if I don't understand something, and say <u>why</u> .

Examples of teaching and learning strategies used to support speaking and listening:

- Modelling high standards of spoken English: Vocabulary, grammar & Syntax
- Setting ground rules for speaking and listening in class
- Use of questioning
- Use of talk partners
- Collaborative work and reporting back following group work
- Structured class discussions and debates
- Expressing opinions and justifying ideas
- Retelling stories
- Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs
- Exploring texts through performance
- Verbally articulate ideas before writing
- Performance poetry
- Role play and drama (conscience alley, hot-seating etc.)
- Presenting in front of an audience
- Taking part in school performances and class assemblies
- Visiting speakers
- School council meetings
- Circle times

Vocabulary Development

We believe that speaking and listening activities are crucial in developing pupil's vocabulary with repeated exposure to new words. Vocabulary teaching is organised, cumulative and rich at St Francis Xavier. We expose our children to a language rich environment with opportunities to hear and confidently experiment with new words. We develop vocabulary in the following ways:

1) We promote and scaffold high quality talk

Adults in school have the responsibility to model and promote high standards of spoken English by modelling this at all times. Strategies we use to scaffold high quality talk include rewording children's speech and responses, asking children to expand and elaborate on their answers, and encouraging children to be skilled speakers and active listeners at all times.

We use 'sentence stems' across the curriculum. We want our children to speak confidently and competently in each subject area using subject specific vocabulary (Tier 3). We achieve this by modelling academic talk and sophisticated language and teaching vocabulary across the curriculum.

2) We provide well-planned reading opportunities

At St Francis Xavier, daily reading is part of the fabric of school life. Children have easy access to high quality texts both in the classroom and in the school library. We have a well-resourced and organised reading environment and we seize every opportunity to cultivate a love of reading.

We consider carefully the 'readability' of our chosen texts and the fiction/non-fiction balance across school. We select rich texts to read and share with pupils to introduce new and challenging vocabulary in context. Teachers read a text before sharing with children and carefully select Tier 2 vocabulary to pre-teach.

See 'Reading' for further details.

3) We teach academic vocabulary explicitly

Although vocabulary can be learned indirectly, we believe that it is essential to teach vocabulary explicitly and directly. We achieve this by following Alex Quigley's principals for teaching a new word set out in the SEEC model. This model is applied across the curriculum to teach new vocabulary.

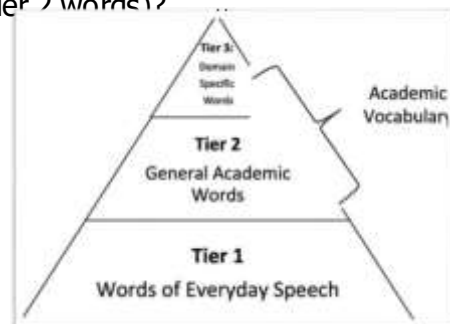


We consider the following questions very carefully before selecting which word to teach:

- Which words are most important to understand the text or topic?
- Which words are unlikely to be part of a child's prior knowledge?
- Which words appear repeatedly in a text or topic?
- Which words are frequently encountered across the curriculum (Tier 2 words)?

We provide a language rich classroom environment

We believe that the classroom environment has the potential to be the biggest resource in vocabulary development and creating a love of words in our children. Our classroom environments are crucial in supporting vocabulary development and independence.



All displays are current, relevant, updated and referred to. Each display includes key vocabulary for the topic (to support the retention of new vocabulary. New vocabulary is gathered and recorded in each classroom in a range of ways:

- Reading records
- Book talk books
- Classroom displays

- Class dictionaries

Reading:

Each day, every class take part in a ring-fenced 'story time' session with their class teacher in order to promote a love of reading and prosody.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 will read individually to an adult a minimum of 2 times a week in addition to Book Talk lessons. This may be reading to the class teacher or classroom assistant. The class teacher will hear each child read individually at least once each fortnight. These 1-1 sessions are an opportunity for adults to teach and support the development of individual pupils' reading skills. Pupils in Key Stage 2 will read individually to an adult twice a week in addition to Book Talk lessons. This may be reading to the class teacher or classroom assistant.

Phonics

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, we use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, integrating both decoding and comprehension skills.

Phonics is taught on a daily basis from Foundation Stage through to Year 2 following the revisit, teach, practice, and apply systematic approach using '**Read, Write, Inc.**' as the scheme of work. Children are provided with multiple opportunities to practice applying their phonic knowledge through the use of phonically decodable texts for school and home, carefully matched to the needs of the children. Additionally, Foundation Stage also ensure phonics activities are constantly available for children to use within areas of provision promoting opportunities for independent revisiting and challenge.

Phonics groupings are flexible and dynamic based on regular and frequent assessment. Children remain on the phonics programme until they have 'cracked the code', that is they have embedded knowledge of all phonemes and blend efficiently to read with fluency. **Fluency is judged to be able to read a Grey RWInc book at a speed of 80wpm with an accuracy rate of 95%.**

When a child has reached this stage in their reading they join Book Talk with their year group.

Book Talk

Book Talk is whole class teaching of explicit comprehension strategies. Each year group follows a programme of carefully chosen texts, with the emphasis on handling a book rather than only meeting extracts from texts. Reading comprehensions strategies involve the teaching of explicit approaches and techniques a pupil can use to improve their comprehension of written text. Many learners will develop these approaches without teacher guidance, adopting the strategies through trial and error as they look to better understand texts that challenge them. However, we know that disadvantaged children are less likely to acquire the necessary skills for reading and understanding challenging texts. Lower attaining pupils appear to benefit in particular from the explicit teaching of strategies to comprehend text. Reading comprehension strategies are high impact on average (+6 months). Alongside phonics it is a crucial component of early reading instruction.

Strategies explicitly taught are based on EEF research and evidence and are as follows:

- Activating prior knowledge
- Clarifying vocabulary
- *Skimming and scanning*
- Summarising
- Inference

Book Talk Session Structure

Book Talk sessions are 35 minutes every day, with the explicit teaching and practising of strategies Monday to Thursday an independent task using a related text and requiring the children to use the strategies taught independently on Friday. All tasks are recorded in an individual Book Talk book with the date and learning objective taken from the statutory reading requirements for the relevant year group.

Session structure for Monday to Thursday is:

- Share learning objective
- Activating prior knowledge
- Clarify vocabulary – small number of words which children will need to access the independent reading, range of word classes, should be added to word wall
- Independent reading – miles on the page, accountability, paired reading
- Model – I, scripted
- Talk task – You, no recorded outcome, scaffolded
- Independent task – recorded outcome, could begin with model/talk task examples
Should all be the same strategy
- Going deeper – challenge which should be accessed by capable pupils

Outcomes for each independent task should be varied and reflect those tasks children will be expected to access in statutory and non-statutory assessment, for example retrieving, completing tables, true or false, sequencing, using antonyms and synonyms, reflecting on character traits, feelings and atmosphere, predicting and summarising.

skill	
Activating prior knowledge	Linking new texts with previously read texts, revisiting knowledge in other subjects in preparation for reading, updating place in a story or novel, summarising
Clarifying vocabulary	Identifying and defining new vocabulary that is key to understanding the text, identifying reasons why author has chosen words or phrases and their effect on the reader
<i>Skimming and scanning</i>	Explicit instruction on how to skim and how to scan – children may then use these skills to retrieve information, to sequence events, to find evidence
Summarising	Giving a short precis of a longer extract from text, picking out salient points from a text, putting evidence from the text into your own words
Inferring	Using clues to give you a deeper understanding of reading. When you infer, you go beyond the surface details to see other meanings that the details suggest or imply

Library

St. Francis Xavier has **an inviting and engaging Library**, promoting a love of reading. All children access this room on a weekly basis with their class. During this library session, children have the opportunity to choose a 'reading for pleasure book', to read independently and to enjoy story time as a class with their class teacher. The library promotes a wide range of poets, authors, genres and text types.

Reading across the Curriculum

Pupils 'learn to read' and 'read to learn' across the curriculum. High quality texts are used as a tool to develop pupils' subject knowledge across the curriculum. Pupils are taught vocabulary explicitly across the curriculum and key vocabulary is displayed in every classroom in order to support correct application and assimilation into long-term memory.

Reading at Home

All children are encouraged to read at home every single day and have a home/school Reading Record which is returned to school daily. This encourages a dialogue between staff and parents to comment on each child's progress (praise and prompts). Reading Records are monitored by class teachers and provision is put into place for those children not being listened to at home.

Children on the phonics programme will be provided with a book which is carefully matched to their phonic knowledge and will also have the opportunity to choose a 'reading for pleasure' book each week from the library during their class weekly visit. All children have access to our school library, which is well stocked with a range of high-quality poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts. Time is allocated to each class weekly to spend browsing the books and selecting a book to take home.

We regularly send information to parents and host parent workshops in order to promote reading at home.

Writing:

Writing Learning Journey

The **Writing Long Term Plan** sets out the overview of genres and related Grammar and Punctuation to be taught in each half term for each year group (Y1-6). This is decided and reviewed by school leaders and literacy lead. The writing and texts chosen reflect the wider subject topics therefore enabling the activation of prior knowledge within the writing curriculum.

The **Writing Medium Term Plan** sets out the expected writing outcomes for the half term for each class. In most half terms, there are three two-week writing sequences leading to three extended pieces of independent writing in the same, or related genre. For example, in a half term where the genre is narrative, children may be expected to write a diary or letter as a character as well as narrative writing. Again, in a half term where the genre is narrative, one of the expected outcomes will be a complete story. Related Grammar and Punctuation to be explicitly taught is also set out in the MTP with the expectation that these aspects of G & P will be used by children effectively in their independent writing outcomes. This is decided by school leaders and literacy lead and is reviewed with the class teacher.

The **Writing Short Term Plan** sets out each writing project, that is the two-week sequence of learning leading to an independent written outcome. This is planned in detail, using powerpoint or smartboard, by the class teacher supported by the Literacy Lead. The sequence expects a literacy session each day for two weeks and is organised as follows:

- **Session 1: Immerse**
- **Sessions 2: Analyse**
- **Sessions 3, 4 & 5: Skills**
- **Sessions 6, Plan**
- **Session 7-9: Draft, Revise, Edit**
- **Session 10: Independent Write**

Immerse:

This is the starting point for each writing project. Children are engaged in a range of pre-writing activities which may include: shared story, film, drama, visit/visitor, sensory experiences, related crafting and talk! We use this stage to fully immerse and excite children in preparation for their writing project. Immerse sessions might not be recorded in exercise books but can be in the form of photographs, shared outcomes, films etc.

Analyse:

In non-narrative writing projects, this involves identifying key features of the genre children will be writing in using phase-appropriate checklists (see Appendix), comparing and contrasting texts of the same genre and developing success criteria for their own writing outcome. In narrative writing projects, analysing will include identifying the success of an author's choice of vocabulary and sentence structure and its impact on the reader, as well as 'mapping' a shared or known story using the story mountain headings (see Appendix).

Skills:

These sessions are the explicit teaching and practicing of grammar and punctuation. The long term plan sets out the specific knowledge to be taught in each half term and repetition of skills teaching is expected. The grammar and punctuation taught would then be expected in the children's independent writing.

Plan

In this part of the sequence, children will first of all identify the planning format for their writing (see appendix) and begin to compose ideas for their writing.

Draft, Revise & Edit

Children will then work through a range of modelled, shared, guided and independent tasks, practicing and drafting sections of their planned writing. For example, where children are planning a story, they may draft the problem with the aim of building tension. If children are planning an explanation, they may draft the introduction using formal language and a summary of the subject to be explained. Children have the opportunity to return to their writing to edit. Green pen is used by children to make edits to their work. Editing may include checking and correcting spellings, punctuation and formatting. Teachers may notice a general area for improvement and give an input to support editing involving redrafting a section of text or a particular aspect of the writing.

Suggested session organisation for 'write' part of learning sequence:

Session	I/We	We	You
Plan and write	Modelled (I) write using a chosen model text	Some children use same model text to write	Some children use a different model to write
Plan and write	Modelled (I) write using a chosen model text	Guided write with small group and same model text	Most children use same model text to write independently
Plan and write	Shared write (We) with children's suggestions	Some children write the shared write outcome	Some children are challenged to use their own suggestions not recorded
Plan and write	Shared writing (We) with children's suggestions	Guided write with small group as second 'shared write'	Most children write to produce similar outcome using scaffolds/prompts
Plan and write	Model text (I) with reasons for 'good model' but no modelling	Guided write with small group and same model text	Most children use same model text to write independently
Plan and write	Model text (I) with reasons for 'good model' but no modelling		Children use model text to write independently – live marking
Independent write			Children produce independent writing outcome using success criteria and scaffolds

Share

Understanding that their writing is going to be read or heard develops pupils' understanding that writing is purposeful. It gives them the opportunity for feedback and can also build motivation. Pupils will be encouraged to share their writing in a variety of ways with a range of audiences such as with: peers, teachers, parents/carers and the wider school community.

Clarification of terms used:

Modelled	Shared	Guided	Independent
Adult writes while 'thinking aloud' their writing process. Should include 'live' editing. Children watch and listen	Adult writes and takes suggestions from children. Should include 'live' uplevelling of writing suggestions.	Adult works with small group on building and writing sentences. This should involve taking suggestions from children, uplevelling, hold a sentence and transcription checking.	Children write without adult support but may use models and scaffolding. This may be marked 'live' and/or <u>summatively</u> with next step suggestions.
I	We	We	You

Independent Write:

Children use their plan and their drafts to write their whole piece of extended writing planned. Children may have success criteria for features they should include in their writing but this should not be overly directive. Children may also use the Working Wall to support their independent writing and spelling banks or dictionaries as age appropriate. Non-negotiables for each class should also be referred to when children write independently, as should handwriting expectations.

Grammar and Punctuation:

Grammar and punctuation rules are taught explicitly within skills lessons in the English sequence. Grammar lessons feed directly into the writing process, for example, the teaching of reported and direct speech when writing a newspaper report. Grammatical rules and terminology are taught according to the grammar and punctuation set out in Appendix 2 of the English National Curriculum.

Spelling

In the EYFS and Y1 Spelling is taught explicitly through phonics using the Read Write Inc. scheme of work. Key Stage 1 focus on common exception words or phonetically grouped words.

From year 2-6, spelling is taught explicitly at the start of every English lesson. We use the Spelling Shed scheme of work to ensure that spellings are taught sequentially and systematically in all year groups. Spellings are taught according to the rules and words contained in Appendix 1 of the English National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as a guideline as to which spellings should be taught in which year group. In addition to this, Children learn set spellings for a weekly spelling test. All pupils also use the online Spelling Shed 'My Mastery' program for homework and targeted support for those children who need it. This program carries out individual assessments of pupils' current level of spelling attainment and

will optimise practice tasks to support the progress of each individual pupil.

Assessment

Writing assessment is an ongoing process at St Francis Xavier. We use a range of methods to support our assessment of children's writing:

Attainment is recorded on O-track termly. For statutory testing, see **Assessment Policy**.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught explicitly in standalone sessions and is expected as non-negotiable in writing outcomes. See **Handwriting Policy**.

Marking and Feedback

All marking in English books is in line with the whole school **Marking and Feedback Policy**. Where an objective has been met, it is highlighted in green. If the child needs further reinforcement then the learning objective is highlighted in pink.

Where a child has made mistakes, they will use green pen to correct their work during the next lesson. The teacher will then re-mark this. If a child needs further reinforcement before completing corrections, teachers will ensure that the child's needs are met through a swift intervention. Teachers inform of 'next steps' where appropriate and provide children with opportunities to consolidate/extend their learning.

Marking Independent Writing

The children will produce 2-3 pieces of independent writing per half-term. Each piece will be marked by the class teacher. The teacher will highlight a strength (green dot) and an area for improvement (pink dot) for each piece. These will be recorded at the foot of the piece in single words or a short phrase. At the end of each term teachers will complete a writing framework assessment sheet for each child to provide a summative assessment of their writing over the term drawing on evidence from all pieces. This is stuck in the independent writing book.

Inclusion

We have high ambitions for all pupils in English and expect them to participate and achieve in every aspect of the subject. The teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every learner in English matters. We provide an inclusive English curriculum which meets the needs of all our pupils, including those with disabilities, special educational needs, and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This includes those with English as an additional language. Learning diversity is recognised and planned for. Any barriers to learning and participation are challenged and removed. All pupils are provided with equality of opportunity.

Monitoring and Review

The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English Leadership Team and SLT.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

