

At St Aloysius we aim to motivate children and teachers as readers and writers, deepening understanding and refining skills so that children make accelerated progress and standards are raised. We believe that being able to read and write are the vital skills that enable us to understand and express ourselves more effectively. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society. These skills set a clear path for future learning.

We passionately believe in helping children to develop not only the technical skills of reading and writing, but also in engendering a love for literature and the different genres of writing. The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories and poetry as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. They develop procedural and semantic knowledge, providing a deeper, more sustainable understanding of the English curriculum content where they are able to make connections to other subjects and develop a wider perspective of their own world around them and the wider world.

Intent



At St Aloysius, we believe that English is the cornerstone to the entire curriculum, and it is therefore embedded throughout our whole curriculum offer and weaves intrinsically through all subjects we teach. We know that children learn best by gaining opportunities to revisit previous learning and making strong links to their own lives and that of the wider world. Our intention is to provide a high quality and rich curriculum that exposes pupils to a wide range of experiences in life through literature and their learning and, in turn, builds on their skills and knowledge to ensure they can explore experiences which will be embedded in their long-term memory and called upon to aid their understanding of the world and society in the future. It is our intention when teaching the English curriculum, that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. We strive to ensure that all our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading, writing, speaking and listening, which will equip them with the fundamental tools to achieve throughout their learning journey at St Aloysius Infant and Junior Schools. We aim to immerse pupils in the wonders of high-quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination and make links across their learning. We teach English, including phonics, reading, writing and grammar every day so that the children can fully immerse themselves and have opportunities to reflect and build on prior learning. Our aim is to ensure that every child becomes a fluent reader, writer and confident speaker by the time they leave our school so that they take a rich body of meaningful knowledge with them towards the next stage in their educational journey, and they can draw upon a wide range of experiences that will help them in their future learning.

Phonics



At St Aloysius, we teach phonics using the Sounds-Write programme. Sounds-Write draws on well-established theories of learning and teaching, and focuses first and foremost on developing teacher knowledge; we know that this is the single greatest factor in improving student outcomes. The programme is based on extensive research and practice; drawing heavily on cognitive science - in particular on what we know about the limits on working memory and the amount of exposure our pupils require to commit the information that we're teaching into their long-term memory.

We have chosen Sounds-Write because it is a programme structured primarily around the sounds of speech. We know that the children in our school acquire language naturally – it doesn't need teaching. Writing systems were designed to represent speech. We understand the importance of following a phonics programme that recognises that our writing system is secondary knowledge and we need to teach it explicitly. Reading and writing are taught in parallel in every phonics lesson. Sounds -Write starts with the language that children acquire naturally – the sounds of their language; it teaches how to read and write them. The programme is sound led rather than code or spelling led. It works from speech to print

Guiding Principles:

- Sounds-Write teaches the essential skills required to become confident readers and spellers: blending, segmenting, phoneme manipulation. These skills are taught explicitly and are practised in the context of reading and spelling real words in every single lesson from the very beginning.
- The conceptual knowledge teaches children how our alphabet code works (all 175 representations/spellings of the 44 sounds of English in the context of real words).
- Teachers are consistent in the language they use from the very beginning, we teach that letters or combinations of letters spell/represents sounds. They do not say or make sounds. The same consistent approach is applied from EYFS to Y6. Whether a Reception child is being taught 'mat' or a Y6 child is being taught 'chlorophyll', the language used will be the same; staff will use the same strategies/ language to explain error corrections when students make mistakes.

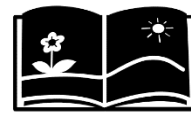
How is the programme implemented?

- Whole class teaching with scaffolds caters for all students within the lesson, rather than grouping by ability. No child is left behind. Diagnostic assessment tools are used so that teachers can identify children who need intervention. Analysing and interpreting assessments enables teachers to plan effective interventions.
- Scripted lessons allow for consistent practice across school. All adults use the same clear language. Scripts cover reading and writing in every lesson and allow for practise. Scripts reduce cognitive load for students, they become so secure with activities, cognitive attention is on what they're learning and not second guessing how new games or activities might work.
- Cumulative (everything builds on what has been taught previously).
- Multi - sensory - the children are constantly revisiting:
 - o Saying the sounds
 - o Seeing the spellings of sounds
 - o Hearing the sounds
 - o Writing the spellings of sounds



All senses are interacting to enhance that connection between speech and print.

Reading



Reading is an integral part of the curriculum at St Aloysius, and it is our vision to ensure that all children receive the opportunity to read and engage in high quality, inspiring and relevant literature. Once phonics strategies are well embedded, the children learn to develop their accuracy, automaticity and prosody to ensure they are fluent and confident readers. They also continuously develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills in order to become reflective readers, enabling them to foster a long-term love of reading and access a wide range of texts and learning experiences across the whole curriculum. We aim for children to be able to read widely, confidently and to a high standard in a range of subjects. We want children to foster a love of reading and acquire a wide vocabulary of written and spoken language. We have carefully selected texts, including picture books, non-fiction and poetry, to study across each year group and immerse pupils in experiences during their lessons that they will remember and enjoy. The books that we choose to study are often linked to other subjects across the curriculum. By selecting books that pose these important cross curricular links, we are carefully designing a curriculum which enables children to learn more, remember more and make links to experiences from the wider world and across subjects. These texts, which form part of our school reading spine, are studied in class, as part of reading lessons or shared in daily story times.

Enjoyment of Reading

We are proud and passionate about fostering a love of reading at St Aloysius and we strive to ensure that children enjoy their books and experiences of reading. As well as carefully selecting age-appropriate texts for teaching using widely researched programmes, we also encourage pupils to select books which may interest them through a range of exciting strategies. Our school library offers a wide range of classic and more modern books, as well as a range of diverse books which explore themes such as protected characteristics and British values. We are continuously evaluating the books that are available and we are investing in poetry and non-fiction books to supplement the range that is already there. All classes have their own class reading areas which are stocked with books from our recommended reading spine and other age-appropriate books for pupils to enjoy. We emphasise that it is the quality of the books available that is important. Teachers ensure that they keep up to date with relevant children's literature for their age group. They have access to websites such as Books for Topic and Literacy Shed which are all excellent sources for researching exciting and current topics and themes in literature. Teachers also encourage children to choose books by recommending them in class before placing them in the book corner, and each member or staff celebrates children's books they have read by displaying them on the classroom doors. We feel that these strategies emphasise the high importance that reading has at our school. All pupils are also read to daily by an adult in class story time, which include books often chosen through class votes. At St Aloysius we also celebrate reading through other initiatives such as book votes, bedtime story boxes, links with our local library, celebration of World Book Day and inspiring author visits.

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation



Spelling, grammar and punctuation is taught both discretely and as part of English lessons. We use progressive spelling lists across the whole of school which are matched to the expectations for each key stage in the National Curriculum. These are adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils when appropriate. Grammar and punctuation are taught daily in class as part of a unit of work that is being studied or sometimes as discrete lessons. Spelling grammar and punctuation is assessed and results are analysed to address any gaps or whole school areas for development.

Speaking and Listening



Throughout the school, opportunities to develop pupils' spoken language in a range of contexts underpins the development of reading and writing. At St Aloysius, pupils are encouraged to speak clearly, confidently and with expression to communicate their ideas and feelings. Pupils develop the ability to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They are encouraged to discuss their ideas so they can make sense of their learning. Pupils are given many opportunities through drama, role play, performances, reading out loud, presentations and debate in many areas of the curriculum on a regular basis.

Writing



At St Aloysius our vision is that every child will become a creative and imaginative writer and hold the skills to be able to write effectively across a range of genres. We aim to use all areas of the curriculum to be able to develop writing skills and generate purposeful writing experiences for our learners which will give everyone the opportunity to engage in writing that they are interested in and inspired by. We use a cross curricular approach to our writing opportunities which enables children to make links with other areas of the curriculum and apply their skills across a range of subjects. This ensures that writing opportunities are relevant and real to our children and they can see a clear purpose to their work. Our children are taught to 'Write like a historian/artist/geographer' within the wider curriculum. We often seize opportunities to write for real life purposes including competitions, letters to local councillors, local library displays and as part of projects. To ensure pupils are also accessing a range of opportunities for writing methods, we also teach units of work across the curriculum which incorporate multiple opportunities for writing a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and extracts throughout the year. Our plans are carefully devised to ensure relevant links to other curriculum areas as well as transferrable knowledge with our reading curriculum.

Our teaching sequence in English includes three clear stages:

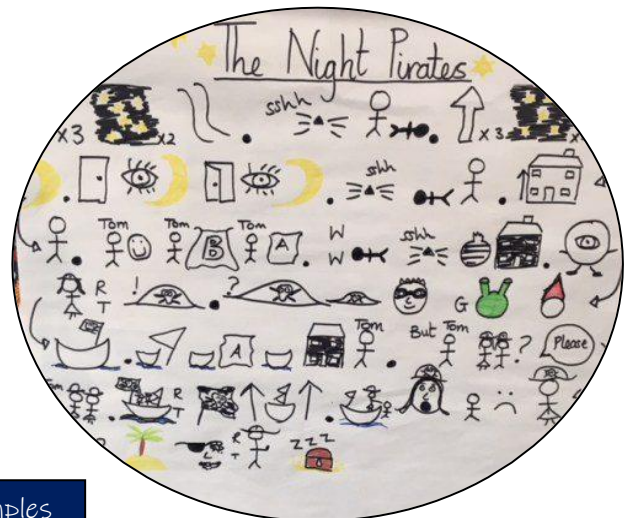


Stage One: Imitation

A typical Talk-for-Writing unit begins with an exciting hook into learning and some engaging activities to help children internalise the pattern of the language required. It is essential that during this initial stage the children become orally competent and can re-tell a chosen story/extract by the end of the Imitation section. The oral retelling is supported visually by a story map that the teacher has created which is accompanied by physical movements to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece. In this way the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down. Once they have internalised the language of the text, they are in a position to read the text and start to think about the key ingredients that help to make it work. This stage includes a range of reading as-a-reader and as-a-writer activities which help the children to pull the text apart and explore the content and structure. We then use a boxing-up technique (splitting the text into sections) and then help the children to analyse the features that have helped to make the text work. Once the boxing up is complete, the class starts to co-construct a toolkit for this type of text so that they can talk about the ingredients themselves – a key stage in internalising the toolkit in their heads.



Story map examples



Stage Two: Innovation

The second stage is an exciting one for the children as they begin to explore their own ideas while sharing with the teacher. Once the children have internalised the text, they are then ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. Younger children and less confident writers alter their text maps and orally rehearse what they want to say, creating their own version. The key focus in this stage is shared writing with the teacher that then helps the children to move away slightly from the teacher and write their own. It's during this time that the teacher will identify specific areas for learning and give the children the opportunity to explore different skills before they are expected to do it independently. The teacher will also explore and demonstrate how to accurately use ambitious vocabulary and sentence structures that, again, the children can then apply to their own writing. Demonstrating how to regularly read their work aloud to see if it works is important here. This process enables the children to write their own versions through developing their ability to generate good words and phrases and also develops the inner judge when they start to decide why one word or phrase is best. Good ideas and examples will be hung on the washing line alongside the shared writing so when the children come to write they have models and words and phrases to support them. Throughout the shared writing, the children will be strengthening the toolkit so they start to understand the type of ingredients that may help. Once they have finished their own paragraph/s children should be encouraged to swap their work with a response partner. Then either with the aid of a visualizer or from peer/teacher feedback, the whole class can also discuss some of the more successful work and identify what made it successful. Time will be given at the end of each writing session for the teacher to provide feedback for the children to read and improve on the following day.

Stage Three: Independent Application

This is the final stage of the unit and will provide the children with the most freedom with regard to their writing. The teacher will assess what the children can do and adapt their planning in light of this. This unit will begin with some discrete teaching of an area that the teacher has identified as needing further work prior to the children writing their own piece. More examples of the text are introduced, analysed and compared before the children can have a go themselves on a related topic of their own choosing. The teachers will work with the children to set targets which focus on aspects that they need to focus on. Again, this section will end with response partner and whole class discussion about what features really worked, followed by an opportunity to edit and improve their work. This process also helps the children internalise the toolkit for such writing so that it becomes a practical flexible toolkit in the head rather than a list to be looked at and blindly followed. At the end of the unit, the children's work will be published or displayed, either in the classrooms, wider school or on the school website.

Writing is assessed at least termly against our age - related expectations, and teachers work together to regularly moderate writing across the school/Trust for quality assurance.

Impact of English @ St Aloysius

We have a rigorous approach to assessing and monitoring English at St Aloysius. We regularly assess pupils informally to address any gaps and then we work swiftly to secure progress by ensuring that pupils are supported through a range of strategies including high quality-first teaching or keep up interventions. Impact is measured in a variety of ways and teachers use the information to plan future learning and target any specific needs. We also use information to address whole school needs and adapt our curriculum accordingly. We also ensure that English is embedded through every subject in our broad and balanced curriculum and children are constantly using transferrable skills to develop detailed knowledge and skills in all other areas. Our high standards of reading and writing are evident in all subjects as well as performances and opportunities for speaking, listening and drama. Our commitment to high standards in English for all pupils allows our children to access the whole curriculum in an engaging and inspiring way.

Examples of writing at St Aloysius...

