



Curriculum Statement

Share and love one another.

We teach the children to respect each other and to behave with consideration. We aim for an atmosphere in which the children feel safe and valued. Discussions and team games start by establishing the ground rules for respecting each other's contributions.

English lessons in St Monica's are shaped to encompass the interests of all pupils and consistently approach texts, animation and films from a broad range of cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities and standpoints. Pupils are taught to listen to authorial voice and form measured and reflective opinions which do not discriminate the views or experiences of others. This begins at a young age, when Reception children explore the fruits Handa loses in *Handa's Surprise* and form new understandings of other children's experiences in the world around them. This idea of acceptance develops as children age and grow in their learning journey. Subject matter and contexts change but themes of respect and tolerance are perpetuated in the way teachers model and frame discussion, drama and written pieces of work. In Year 6, a CGI animated short film *Umbrella* produced work which evoked deep emotions and mature reflections on the respect people should have for others' precious memories and how we must put ourselves in other's shoes before jumping to conclusions.

Together work to be like Jesus.

The Catholic social teaching agenda, with its emphasis on justice and peace, guides our curriculum choices. Wherever relevant we relate what we teach to the influence of Gospel values. We encourage the children to imitate the resilience of Jesus in their learning behaviour.

From the early steps taken in learning to read, through to revising and redrafting an extended piece of writing, our pupils are encouraged to build and show resilience in their work. Our curriculum promotes depth of learning and perpetuates the expectation that something taught is to be retained and recalled; an objective can be used as a building block from which to base understanding for the next piece of learning. Pupils are assessed against taught objectives and grow to understand and often identify what their next steps are. Models for writing are built into teaching children how to write for a specific purpose. Clear expectations are set and they are consistently encouraged and guided to work to build and subsequently model acquired skills. Phillipians 4:13 states "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." and it is our intent that children link their understanding of God's unending love and support to the moments when they have to 'dig deep' to challenge themselves to reach a goal, show stamina in an extended piece of writing or when reading a challenging text and to incorporate all they have learnt into a piece of work.

Make people smile.

We aim to encourage children to love learning so that they become self-motivated and derive joy from their work. Teachers endeavour to convey enthusiasm about the subjects they teach. There is an emphasis on effort for the satisfaction of self-improvement. Moments of awe and wonder are sought and celebrated.

The reading, comprehension and use of vocabulary is at the heart of our English curriculum. Early readers 'play' with phonemes and build words and sentences which are both real and nonsense in meaning. They explore a wide range of stories, poems and sources to build, rehearse and develop language. Much of this

journey of discovery is littered with word play, amusing rhymes, memorable mnemonics and a submersion in language which flows abundantly from the pens of a range of authors. Teachers model how writing shocks and surprises, entertains and delights, confuses and questions and then carefully scaffold learning experiences which guide pupils to begin to write in this way themselves. Younger pupils in St Monica's have gleefully reimagined Rod Campbell's *Dear Zoo* to describe impossible pets and give outlandish reasons to return them to the zoo while older pupils have developed their shared love of a certain broomstick-loving wizard to write entertaining descriptions of their own magical settings. Pupils' enjoyment and pleasure in reading and writing about their own interests is promoted. Alongside this, we help pupils identify how their work can bring something to others: reading for an audience can give pleasure to those listening, our dramatic performances can evoke emotions and our writing can stir feelings.

Only teamwork can make dreams happen.

Our curriculum focuses on skills of collaborative living and provides opportunities to practice those skills in context. In sport, group work and play, we promote respect, patience and empathy. (There are even children with a practical expression of these values on their Behaviour Plans.)

In addition to reading and writing, oracy is a highly valued part of St Monica's English curriculum. The power of communication is paramount in expressing yourself to others and is the foundation of a good writer. On entry, we build children's literacy skills alongside communication and language. Speaking to peers and listening to others in work and in play is highly valued. Children spend their school day in a team, within their classes, and we value, share and listen to the ideas of others within our groups. We model collating shared ideas in lesson inputs and show how these contributions enhance our own work by modelling writing. We promote collaborative learning as a pedagogical approach to drive progress. Pupils spend time within English lessons each week, sharing ideas verbally, generating vocabulary or producing pieces of drama which develop thinking and further understanding, all while working in partnership with their peers.

Never stop trying.

In the way we work, we develop resilience, determination, self confidence and an understanding of the need for hard work and practice. We do this by placing an emphasis on enquiring, questioning and solving problems.

As an educator, teaching the English language in reading, spoken and written forms, proves to be a complex and expansive challenge. For a young child, there are times when the pace and challenge of their learning can feel daunting and overwhelming. We have designed and curated the English curriculum at St Monica's to develop at a steady and manageable pace and tirelessly work spirals of learning into our curriculum to ensure pupils revisit concepts and skills repeatedly. This builds their self-confidence and develops their understanding of practice and rehearsal being a key element of effective learning and ultimately mastering a skill.

Include everyone in all we do.

In our teaching we ask the children to look at others through a lens of fairness, equality, justice and the sort of tolerance that is born of knowledge and fellow feeling. We work to combat stereotypes: in the way we speak to children and in the way we teach them to look at others.

For pupils who struggle to communicate verbally or struggle to meet age-related expectations in reading or writing in any way, class teachers work closely with parents, our SENCo, the SLT and outside professionals (where relevant) to ensure that all pupils can access the English National Curriculum at the ability level that is right for them. Adaptations and differentiations are made to support pupils in English lessons and in

addition, class teachers work with support staff and independently to structure and devise appropriate 'catch-up' tasks and activities to ensure all pupils are included in learning tasks in some manner at the level they are currently working at. A younger pupil with significant educational and health care needs was able to access a whole class non-fiction text focus on rainforests when a room within the school was transformed into a hot and humid 'jungle' complete with trailing vines, a watery 'lagoon' and a cacophony of sounds from the creatures that lived there! Rich vocabulary was developed and her learning experience was happily shared with her classmates too, to enhance their language learning.

Care for others around the world.

We want our children to develop knowledge and respect for other cultures, religions and peoples and for a sense of their responsibilities to flow from that knowledge and respect.

Each and every book, passage, poem or production is approached with the school ethos of care and respect for others. We teach children in our Religious Education and PSHCE lessons to be responsible, global citizens and look for them to model this advocacy in their spoken and written word. Our choice of texts which we share with children is devised to enable our pupils to interact with cultures and groups of people with whom they may never have had any contact or awareness. We seek to eradicate misconceptions and prejudice which are based on race, culture, ethnicity or gender. We encourage care for others in all we do.

Aim to be the best we can be.

We define achieving their best as helping children to build a body of knowledge and learning how to think critically and creatively about it. To that end we use: self-assessment sheets, knowledge organisers, repeated low stakes testing and finding ways of applying the knowledge they are acquiring. A book per child per subject area is our way of ensuring we focus on what value each child is getting from every subject they study.

The competitive spirit of our pupils is visible in all curriculum areas and in all areas of our school life. We encourage this healthy spirit but also promote a level of challenge to be set for ourselves. Pupils are explicitly shown what they are expected to learn and embed in their long-term memory. Weekly spelling tests, reading comprehension paper and punctuation and grammar questions are how we gauge the body of knowledge each child has acquired and, following assessment analysis, devise next steps for pupils to aim to achieve.