

How We Teach English

English skills are central to all learning whether through speaking and listening, reading or writing and this is reflected in our teaching across the school.

Reading

Every child has the right to learn to read and we hope that our children go beyond this and develop a love and pleasure for reading. Reading is taught through phonics sessions, reading comprehension tasks, one-to-one with the teacher, teaching assistant or helper, guided group and by teachers reading high quality, stimulating texts aloud to the children.

Every member of staff is a reading role model who demonstrates and encourages a love for reading. Children have access to a wide variety of age and ability appropriate reading materials:

- Each year has selected reading books in the classroom
- There is an extensive, well organised school library
- The school reading scheme provides structured progression at school and home
- Teachers choose challenging guided reading texts to be studied in small groups
- Teachers carefully select core texts to be used in lessons

Our staff track the progress of children throughout the year ensuring that each child is supported and challenged at their appropriate level.

Within school we have an extensive reading scheme which is based upon Oxford Reading Tree, aimed at Key Stage One and Oxford Treetops scheme for Key Stage Two.

Writing

At St Mary's we believe that the development in writing follows naturally from the enjoyment and inspiration provided by high quality texts as well as the systematic teaching of handwriting, spelling and grammar. In addition, children are given a purpose for writing with opportunities for creating poetry, story-writing, reports and explanations.

Children are encouraged to develop a joy in communicating through writing from the emergent writing in Reception to the confident writers who leave our school. We understand that better writers are when children are given opportunities for speaking and listening in all writing units that are taught. Storytelling plays an important role throughout the school allowing children to visualise and understand writing patterns in order for them to invent their own. Children are given regular opportunities for extended creative writing.

Phonics, spelling and grammar are taught systematically throughout school and reinforced and applied during writing sessions. Teachers use marking to inform pupils of their next steps on how to improve. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers, and to draft, edit and improve their writing.

Phonics

What is Phonics? Phonics is the method of teaching we use in school to help children learn how to read and write.

It is all about sounds. There are 44 sounds in the English language, which we put together to form words. Some are represented by one letter, like 't', and some by two or more, like 'ck' in duck and 'air' in chair.

Children are taught the sounds first, then how to match them to letters, and finally how to use the letter sounds for reading and spelling.

Synthetic phonics refers to 'synthesising', or blending, the sounds to read words. It is based on the idea that children should sound out unknown words and not rely on their context.

At St Mary's we use the Letters and Sounds document and the children progress within the phases.

Activity links:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/article/the-alphablocks-guide-to-phonics>

<http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/freeIndex.htm>

Phonics Screening Check

In 2012, a new phonics screening check was introduced and is now administered to each child in Year 1.

Spelling

Children in Reception and Year 1 focus on phonics and spellings from the Letters and Sounds document and children from Year 2 to Year 6 use a scheme called Read, Write Inc. This focuses on specific spelling objectives from the new National Curriculum 2014.

Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 have word lists to accompany the new National Curriculum that need to be learnt as stand-alone spellings.

[English National Curriculum Appendix 1: Spelling](#)

What are High Frequency Words?

High frequency words are quite simply those words which occur most frequently in written material, for example, "and", "the", "as" and "it". They are often words that have little meaning on their own, but they do contribute a great deal to the meaning of a sentence. Some of the high frequency words can be sounded out using basic phonic rules, e.g. "it" is an easy word to read using phonics. However, many of the high frequency words are not phonetically regular and are therefore hard to read in the early stages. These words are sometimes called tricky words, sight words or camera words.

[First 100 High Frequency Words](#)

[Next 200 High Frequency Words](#)

Oxford Owl has very good resources and please create an account for your child to access resources and books at home.