

ENGLISH

We follow and adhere to the government guidance set out in the Primary Framework for the teaching of English. We plan units of teaching for English through an integrated curriculum structure so that there is a real context for the work undertaken.

READING

Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty; it should be offered to as a precious gift.

K Dicamillo

At St Thomas of Canterbury CE Primary School, we believe that reading is the gateway for academic success. We make it a priority to provide pupils with the appropriate skills and attitudes to create a love of reading and inspire pupils to read for enjoyment.

Learning to read:

From their very first day at school, in either nursery or Reception, children are systematically taught the skills that they need to be able to read independently through phonics. We follow the 'Twinkl' phonics scheme which progresses from Levels 1 to 6. The formal teaching of this begins in nursery and concludes in Year 2. From Reception, the children take 2 decodeable books home each week, which match the phonics level that they are learning. We recommend writing recording your child's reading in their Reading Journal so that staff can see when books have been completed and count these towards receiving reading certificates.

Once a child has moved through all Twinkl phonics books, they move onto Accelerated Reader; an online platform which monitors children's progress against word reading and comprehension objectives. Each term, the child completes a STAR reader test. This is formed of 30 adaptive questions and their answers are analysed to generate a unique reading range. The child is then free to choose any text of their choice within this range from the classroom reading corner or our school library. Once a book is complete, they can log onto the platform and do quick, 3 question quiz to demonstrate their understanding of the text. We continue to recommend the use of our Reading Journals to show reading done inside and outside of school. These logs are counted and go towards receiving their reading certificates. Accelerated Reader continues through to Year 6 and is the reading platform used at Chulmleigh College, which aids the children's transition into secondary school and keeps their reading journey consistent.

In KS2, the children move away from discrete phonics teaching and instead, undertake regular guided reading sessions with the staff in their class. This often focuses on an extract of text and teaching is centred around key reading comprehension objectives that the children need to develop.

Reading for pleasure:

We want to ensure that all children have access to a range of high quality literature throughout their time with us, regardless of their ability. Each class has a book corner which holds a range of picture books, chapter books and non-fiction texts which can enhance a child's personal interests. Children are free to use this area during at certain points during the school day. We also have a beautiful school library, which we add to regularly. With the help of dedicated librarians, children can borrow school books during opening hours, twice a week.

In all classes we enjoy daily story time, where children listen to their teachers enthral them with hand-picked stories, poems or information texts. These are shown through our class Bookspines. Texts have been chosen and researched by our English Lead to ensure that children are exposed to a plethora of genres, themes and tiered vocabulary. Each class also has the opportunity to visit Chulmleigh Library each term. They can choose a book from there to keep in their class book corner or, if they have an account, can take it to enjoy at home. We also share a poem during Celebration Assembly every week and join in with local and national reading events.

Parental Involvement:

We value and recognise the support of parents and carers and positively encourage parental involvement in children's reading journeys. We provide guidance on how to help children to read through parent workshops, information evenings and open mornings.

WRITING

"If there's a book that you want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it!"

Toni Morrison

Writing is an integral part of our curriculum.

Our writing, grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum programmes of study and the writing framework. We use 'Ready, Steady, Write' and 'Grammarsaurus' to support content coverage. Lessons take place every day.

Lessons are carefully planned in sequences and build towards an independent piece of writing, which showcases pupils' acquired knowledge, skills and understanding. Each unit is focused around a book as we believe that the sharing of stories in class develops essential skills for learning, such as: developing a higher aptitude for learning; developing speech skills; improving communication skills; generating logical thinking; and enhancing concentration. Each lesson follows a similar structure and includes: Talk Time, Handwriting, Sentence Accuracy (with a grammar focus), Book Time (focusing on comprehension & vocabulary) and structured writing activities.

Pupils are taught how to understand the relationships between words, word meaning, implied meaning and figurative language within writing lessons, whilst ensuring that children are supported in their spelling strategies. Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use correct Standard English, knowing when and how to experiment with authorial tone and structure.

At St Thomas of Canterbury CE Primary School, we recognise the importance of writing quality across the curriculum. We strive to grow our children's writing stamina as they move through the school and embed 'non-negotiables' and high expectations year on year to create confident, fluent writers.

VOCABULARY

Teachers at St Thomas of Canterbury CE Primary School proactively develop vocabulary, building systematically on children's current knowledge. We feel this increases pupils' store of words in general; simultaneously, they should also make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words. It is particularly important to introduce children into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language.

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-writing-framework>