

English Curriculum Summary

In English, we aim to foster a love of language in children, to stimulate the mind and encourage individuality, creativity and excellence of expression in all areas of written and oral work. With this as our aim, we provide a challenging and varied curriculum, ensuring that children benefit from a wide range of learning experiences that challenge and encourage and are at the same time stimulating and fun. Some of the experiences that we offer children include:

- Weekly library lessons for T2 - Form 4, in which children learn about specific authors, their breadth of reading is widened and they are taught specific library skills.
- Competitions and Awards: from story writing through to poetry, we enter several competitions throughout the year; these offer children a real purpose for writing and in which they enjoy notable success. Our participation in the National Arts Award programme allows pupils to use English as a vehicle to harness, express and encourage their ability in speaking and writing in a cross-curricular setting.
- Book week: children listen to talks from a variety of celebrated authors, participate in a creative writing competition, return to school in pyjamas for 'book at bedtime' (with hot-chocolate and cookies) amongst a wealth of other events.
- IT: children use digital technology as a tool for learning in a variety of contexts, from creating comic books using photographs of themselves, to the use of peer comments on Google docs to extend learning and share ideas. This is an area that is continuously evolving as more and more English language and literature resources become available. We do, however, aim to maintain a mindful balance between the book and the screen and the pen and the keyboard.
- Debating: children learn the art of debating in Forms 3 – 6, and participate in a House Debating competitions.
- Pupils in Forms 5 and 6 have annual day reserved for Shakespeare: The Young Shakespeare Company perform interactive workshops throughout the day. These help to make Shakespeare both accessible and fun.

Key Skills

Pre-prep

The English curriculum in the pre-prep changes each year as it reflects the interests and enthusiasms of the children.

Kindergarten (KG)

In KG the curriculum is aimed at building confidence and enthusiasm in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Children write for real purposes such as labelling the vegetables in the garden or writing a price list for the snacks that they sell to the teachers. Phonics is taught through the use of 'Jolly Phonics' and by the end of Kindergarten the children are able to read and write simple sentences, lists, stories and instructions. But most importantly, they gain a love of words and expression and are confident in their ability to communicate.

Transition 1 (T1)

- Reading simple texts with accuracy and fluency, using a range of strategies to make sense of their reading.
- Recognizing the organizational features of non-fiction texts and understanding that books on similar topics may contain different information or present similar information in different ways.
- Using and understanding terms such as fiction, non-fiction and identifying and discussing characters, events and settings in stories.

- Using their phonic knowledge to decode more complex words and to write independently, using a broadening range of vocabulary.
- Writing using a clear structure and using other texts as models for their own work. They plan and review their writing and write extended texts with support.
- Understanding how punctuation helps a reader to understand what is written and using capital letters, full stops and question marks more confidently in their writing.

Transition 2 (T2)

- To use a range of spelling strategies including knowledge of word families, common prefixes and suffixes and the ability to recognize smaller words within words to aid their spelling.
- To form letters of regular size and shape, using a neat, cursive script and to know some of the grammatical features of written Standard English.
- To read more complex texts, learning the connection between punctuation and sentence structure, intonation and emphasis and using inference and deduction skills to make comparisons and draw conclusions from reading a range of texts.
- To perform play scripts and undertake book studies.
- To use a thesaurus and dictionary confidently to check spellings and make wider word choices
- To use exclamation marks, speech marks and commas appropriately in their work.
- To develop proof-reading and editing skills to make them more independent writers.

Form 1 and 2

In Forms 1 and 2, a range of texts are used depending on the cross-curricular topic being covered and the children's interests. Comprehension skills are developed through the reading of these texts, along with a range of other well-chosen materials and grammar is taught in context, giving it relevance.

Form 3

Set texts are chosen each year from titles such as:

Journey to the River Sea by Eva Ibbotson

The Borrowers by Mary Norton

The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf

The Firework Maker's Daughter by Philip Pullman

The Mystery of the Secret Room by Helen Moss

Key Skills covered in Form 3:

- Poetry: focussing on personification, alliteration, rhyme, simile, metaphor, assonance; performance poetry through the study of classical and contemporary poets.
- Non-fiction writing: instructions, biographical accounts, newspaper reports, magazine articles and book reviews.
- Prose writing: Story writing with the focus on character development, strong openings and endings and stories 'with a twist'.
- Grammar covered includes: developing complex sentences, subject and predicate, homophones, revision of parts of speech, speech marks.
- Spelling – revisit basic rules and learn a variety of prefixes and suffixes.
- Reading fluently and with understanding, including higher level inference. In Form 3, we begin to learn how to approach formal comprehension papers.

Form 4

Set texts are chosen each year from titles such as:

Tuck Everlasting by Nathalie Babbitt

Machine Gunners by Robert Westall

Holes by Louis Sachar

Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo

The Fire Eaters by David Almond

Montmorency by Eleanor Updale

After Tomorrow by Gillian Cross

King of Shadows by Susan Cooper

The Boy in the Tower by Polly Yo-Hen

Key skills covered:

- To develop a higher level of understanding of inference, being able to answer formal comprehension papers independently including answering in their own words and incorporating quotations in their answers.
- An introduction to the Point, Evidence and Explanation Structure when answering longer formal comprehension questions.
- Creative writing will focus on developing powerful settings that grab the reader's attention, beginnings and endings, how to convey the feelings of the narrator, use of senses in creating atmosphere, how to develop plot and theme, (how to use memories in story writing), creating tension, diary writing, stories with time shifts.
- Revision of parts of speech and use of a variety of punctuation, including hyphens. Spelling follows a structured programme begun in F3. All rules are revisited and tested through regular dictations.
- Non-fiction writing: persuasive writing, non-chronological reports, letters, reviews, recounts.

Form 5

Set texts are chosen each year from titles such as:

- *Wonder* by R J Palacio
- *Goodnight Mr Tom* by Michelle Magorian
- *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo
- *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness
- *Frankenstein (Playscript)*
- *Skellig* by David Almond

Key skills covered in Form 5:

- Creative writing: using 'conflict' in story writing; stories with a twist; descriptive writing; diary writing and poetry writing.
- Poetry: irony, sonnets, introducing iambic pentameter, developing poetry comprehension through the understanding of a variety of poetic techniques.
- Non-fiction: persuasive writing, newspaper writing, biographical writing, reviews, speech writing, adverts, letters and articles.
- Grammar: pronouns, prepositions, direct speech, apostrophes, parts of speech, complex sentences, clauses. Higher level punctuation such as colons, semi colons, ellipsis and multiple commas. Spelling – continue to follow a structured programme of revision and adding in new words along with regular dictations.
- Form 5 sees the beginning of formal examination preparation, honing technique and performance through the use of a variety of Future School English examination papers

Form 6

Set texts are chosen each year from titles such as:

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

The Life of Pi by Yann Martel

The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillon

The Dairy of Anne Frank by Anne Frank

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

The Ruby in the Smoke by Philip Pullman

Noughts and Crosses Playscript by Malorie Blackman

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Key skills covered in Form 6:

- Creative writing: Descriptive writing using evocative language, writing in the 2nd person, writing in the future tense, (writing for the reader), varying sentence openings and closings, autobiographical writing. Off site visits used to inspire (e.g. IWM Duxford, University Collections) Poetry is performed.
- Non-fiction: letter writing (including formal letters of complaint), persuasive writing, speech writing, article writing.
- Poetry: metre, (iambic pentameter), simile, metaphor, structure, poetic devices and their effects
- Grammar: Punctuation conventions in poetry/letters, using quotations, correct usage of colons and semi-colons.
- An increased focus on examination preparation, honing technique and performance through the use of a variety of Future School papers. Pupils are prepared for their specific target school papers, where necessary.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education through English teaching at St John's College School

English develops SMSC in a wide variety of ways, including:

- Developing creativity through imagination, language, perseverance, collaboration, risk-taking, spontaneity
- Reading a wide variety of texts from different cultures
- Exploring moral dilemmas of characters in stories
- Exploring religious ideas in texts (such as writing poems on an 'Apple' including religious references)
- Encouraging the children to see the world in a different way, such as through poetry, and so discover new meanings and insights
- Developing aesthetic appreciation through links to art and music.
- Teaching the children to work collaboratively
- Helping children to explore moods and how these are created in writing
- Sharing non-fiction texts on themes that are in the news and media