

English at St Cuthbert Mayne.



English - Able to communicate and able to articulate!

At St Cuthbert Mayne our ever evolving curriculum is designed to encourage our pupils to develop their own 'voice'.

A live Audience Motivates

Recently our Year 6 presented a living museum to parents and children. They had learnt about key inventions, written about them, made them and then appeared dressed as the inventors to explain their ideas and to answer questions. They were able to pursue a personal fascination combined with reading, writing which culminated in disseminating their knowledge. This outcome encouraged the children to be extremely productive and willing to learn new skills. A 'live' audience is highly motivational and the children had a great investment in their work.



Two Sides of the Coin

Debate is actively encouraged. Recently children were involved in considering the issue of Fair Trade. They were encouraged to think about the two sides of the argument, some playing devil's advocate. Our school is a safe place to experiment with different ideas so that well-reasoned opinions may be formed and expressed.

Act to learn

Drama groups are invited into the school to underpin learning in different areas of the curriculum. They always involve the children and are very interactive. It allows the children to view many ideas from a distance but develop an empathy in different situations. Drama is used in our classrooms as a way of: children exploring texts; voicing thoughts; developing ideas for writing. The children thoroughly enjoy times when they can hot seat a character, particularly if the character is villainous. These opportunities increase confidence and furthers communication skills. We also have an annual production which is thoroughly enjoyed by the children.

The Basics

Basics are necessary for every child to be able communicate their ideas for them to be articulate.

Perspectives

'Lively minds' enjoy a wide range of texts. Across the year groups the children are introduced to a variety of texts, fiction and non-fiction, traditional and contemporary. This range introduces different perspectives and different challenges to our children. It gives access to different plots and gives examples of excellent language. Not all texts can be met with enthusiasm but the children do learn to experiment, explore and state their preferences. They all enjoy visiting our library and it is staffed mainly by the Year 6 children. Our older children enjoy reading with the younger children. The younger children are so excited to have this opportunity where possible, therefore successful mentoring.

Timetabling

At St Cuthbert Mayne the teaching and learning of English is valued. It is taught discretely everyday. Where possible positive cross curricular links are made between subjects. This means children have a good understanding of the value of good communication skills in all subjects and this affects the quality of the work produced. In Year 1 the children research castles.

Therefore the writing and reading links to this subject. They read about castles and dragons. They then wrote about knights, becoming more familiar with nouns and adjectives.



Reading

We use books as a basis for our English teaching. The children access high quality texts which actively promotes good literacy skills. They learn to read between the lines. The children have guided reading times with the class teacher where they can discuss language, characters and plots. They learn to develop preferences and express opinions in a small group. In KS 1 it is expected that the children will read books which are carefully banded so they can progress quickly in their reading skills. This can continue into key stage 2 as the children move at their own pace.



Ideally children should read to parents in a comfortable environment as often possible. With older readers the focus should be expression, fluency and intonation and a good discussion about the story. With younger children the focus is sounds and fluency and also to answer questions about the story. All children have access to the library and enjoy the choice. Parents and grandparents are always welcome to listen to the children read, which is such a vital contribution to our school community.

Phonics

Phonics is taught throughout Key Stage 1 to support reading and writing. In Year 1 and 2 the classes are mixed together as we recognise that some children may need some support as they may find it harder to retain sounds. Similarly more confident readers are given opportunities to work in another group therefore there is no ceiling on their learning. Our aim is to use phonics to increase fluency in reading and spelling. It is taught daily where possible as the impact is very clear to see in the children's reading and writing. As children progress into Key Stage 2 some children may need to revise sounds and teachers plan for this where needed. Year 1 are expected to sit a national phonics screening test in June every year. We use Letters and Sounds which is a government directive as a basis for our planning.

There is a book in all of us

Writing for all purposes is encouraged. The current Year 2 and Year 5 participated in a national poetry competition. They worked hard on their ideas in school. There was the first draft, the edit and the final one. The process was challenging but the children themselves were delighted with the draft of their final poem. The poems were successful and published which added to their enjoyment of the writing process and the success encouraged them to believe in their abilities.

Apprenticeship

We confidently teach writing through Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' approach. The children learn different stories which they use as a model to write their own. They look at excellent examples of vocabulary and sentence structure and learn to use them for themselves. Much time is spent in dialogue with children extending their ideas and deepening their thinking so their writing has depth and breadth. The merits of using excellent vocabulary and figurative language are discussed which in turn leads to a higher level of literacy demonstrated in the children's writing.

Grammar

Writing accurately and conventionally is imperative. Grammar is planned for and taught regularly to a very high and challenging standard. Also when texts are read with children examples are identified, discussed and the children are referred to their previous learning. Our pupils are familiar with the terminology of grammar and use this vocabulary in their discussions with their class teacher. Grammar is taught from reception to year 6. Both Year 2 and Year 6 also sit a national test where their understanding of grammar is rigorously examined. This is inline with government directives and National Curriculum 2014.

Handwriting

We teach cursive handwriting from a young age as children need to be able to write quickly and fluently as time goes on. Year 1 learn to orient the letters correctly. From Year 2 onwards the children are encouraged to write in a joined style. Handwriting is taught regularly and the children are given time to practice this skill independently. The children take a pride in their handwriting and presentation, particularly when they are publishing a piece of their work.

