



English at St Benet's

A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. It provides the foundation for all subsequent learning and is key to enabling progress across the curriculum.

At St Benet's, we recognise the fundamental importance that reading has on a child's future academic achievement, wellbeing and success in life; we strive to develop a school environment where every child is not only able to read proficiently, but also develops a genuine love of reading.

Early Reading & Phonics

Children do not just 'become' readers and reading engagement is not possible if children struggle with the basic mechanics of reading. Fluency, comprehension and enjoyment are the result of careful teaching and frequent practice. We believe that ensuring children become fluent, comprehensive and engaged readers at the very earliest stages, and also helps avoid the vicious circle of reading difficulty and demotivation that makes later intervention more challenging.

Read Write Inc. (RWI) is a whole school approach to teaching phonics and ensures that all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. Children begin their reading journey in Nursery, where they are introduced to Speed Sounds Set 1 and the development of pre-reading skills is supported with the children becoming familiar with a wide selection of literature and rhymes. RWI is introduced formally in Reception and continues into Year 1, where phonemes and graphemes are taught systematically and children begin to blend these sounds into words. The use of books which are closely matched to children's phonic knowledge and include common 'tricky' words aid children's fluency and provide opportunities for development of comprehension skills

Reading

As children develop confidence and competence in their phonics knowledge and are able to read fluently, they will transfer to our Oxford Reading Tree scheme. This ensures that children are offered a wide selection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, written by loved and respected authors and carefully developed for appropriate content and reading levels. Children in KS2 will read from a junior programme – Tree Tops. As children progress through the levels, vocabulary and sentence structures gradually become more complex. The gradual increase in complexity gives children the chance to think about what they're learning as they read – so their comprehension skills and enjoyment of reading both improve.

We adopt a whole class reading approach through timetabled discrete reading sessions to teach specific reading skills and the exploration and enjoyment of a class novel is used as a stimulus for writing and enjoyment for reading within English sessions.

Reading for pleasure opens up new worlds for children. It gives them the opportunity to use their imagination to explore new ideas, visit new places and meet new characters. Daily book talk is encouraged to widen children's reading experiences and most of all to encourage reading for pleasure.

Children have a reading log which is used to document their reading progress in school and at home.

Reading Plus

Year 4 – 6 access Reading Plus 3x per week either at home or school. Reading Plus is a programme that helps to improve children's comprehension, vocabulary, motivation and reading efficiency.

Writing

Children are given opportunities within English and across the curriculum to write for a range of purposes and are encouraged to consider the audience of their writing. Clear progression of key writing outcomes for fiction, non-fiction and poetry writing are built upon across a year group to ensure well-structured, detailed writing in which

vocabulary and grammar choices are strong. Exploration of high quality texts and class novels provide meaningful contexts and purposes for writing.

Spelling

At St Benet's we adopt the Read Write Inc. Spelling programme for Y2-Y6. This is a 15 minute fast paced daily session underpinned by phonics. Throughout the programme, children are taught strategies to enable them to spell accurately, including understanding morphology and etymology, plus building and consolidating their knowledge of frequently misspelt words, exception words, tricky homophones and other words that are easily confused. The approach is structured and cumulative, building children's accuracy and confidence year by year.

Handwriting

In Nursery & Reception, children develop essential prewriting skills in line with the Early Learning Goals whereby there is great focus on the development of fine motor skills and strengthening muscles in the arms and fingers. Children are introduced to individual letters and rigorously taught correct formation.

From Y1-Y6 we teach handwriting twice a week and as the children progress through school, there is an increasing focus on fluency, consistency and speed.

Handwriting expectations in Y1 – children are taught to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit correctly at the table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. • Begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. • Form capital letters. • Form the digits 0 to 9. • Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'family' (a group of letters that are formed in the same way). • Use spacing between words that is appropriate for the size of the letters.
Handwriting expectations in Y2 – children are taught to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form lower case letters of the correct size, relative to one another. • Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters, and understand which letters are best left not joined. • Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another. • Use spacing between words that is appropriate for the size of the letters.
Handwriting expectations in Y3 & Y4 – children are taught to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop their joined-up handwriting. • Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting – for example, ensuring that down strokes of letters are straight and parallel, not sloping.
Handwriting expectations in Y5 & Y6 – children are taught to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write with increasing legibility, fluency and speed. • Choose which shape of a letter to use, and decide whether or not to join specific letters.

