

St Sebastian's Primary School Latin Curriculum

Why have we chosen to teach Latin at St Sebastian's Primary School?

When reviewing our teaching of Modern Foreign Languages, we considered which language would have the best long term learning implications for our children. When researching Latin, we found that:

Latin studies help improve children's overall school performance because it ...

- Lifts academic outcomes in other subjects
- Assists understanding of mathematical concepts
- Strengthens English literacy skills
- Facilitates learning another language
- Provides exposure to ancient history and cosmology
- Prepares pupils for scientific, legal or medical careers
- Equips a child for coding and computer programming

[The unexpected benefits of learning Latin for children — Sompting Abbotts](#)

- We learnt that Latin threaded through modern-day English as a significant proportion of English vocabulary is derived from Latin.
- 'Learning classics is a brilliant way to support children's literacy,' says Dr Lorna Robinson, founder of the Iris Project. 'It helps children make connections between Latin and English grammar and vocabulary, and gives them the key to unlock English. It also gives them a deeper cultural knowledge, helping them understand common concepts and phrases like "et cetera" and "Achilles' heel."'
- 'It extends English vocabulary, prepares children to learn modern foreign languages, and has enormous cross-curricular potential, drawing in literacy, history, geography, art, drama and philosophy, as well as helping children with maths and science vocabulary,' says Jane Maguire, Primary Latin Project committee member and regional advisor for Classics for All.

If an ancient language is chosen the focus will be to provide a linguistic foundation for reading comprehension and an appreciation of classical civilisation. Pupils studying ancient languages may take part in simple oral exchanges, while discussion of what they read will be conducted in English.

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How have we planned our Languages curriculum?

Our Latin curriculum has been planned to be progressive, giving children the building blocks of language learning. The aim is for children to progress from being novice language learners who are slow at recognising the letters and sounds, to increased automaticity and fluency in Year 6, where they can read and write basic Latin vocabulary and sentences with less conscious effort and more accurately. Our aim is that, after time and practice, knowledge becomes easier to access as it enters children's long-term memory and builds into a schema.

When planning our Languages curriculum, we considered these 3 'pillars':

- **Phonics** - the system of the sounds of a language and how these are represented in written words (or scripts other than Roman)
- **Vocabulary**
- **Grammar** - including inflectional and/or derivational features (the systems for changing the form of a word and for creating new words, respectively) and syntax

Phonics

We recognised that clear and reliable pronunciation is integral when learning a second language hence why we mapped the specific phonics that our children would be taught in our Latin curriculum. We recognised that building the skill of decoding with automaticity would help with the children's reading and vocabulary learning in Latin. Graphemes are often pronounced differently in Latin to in English so explicit teaching is key to building understanding and improving pronunciation. Latin uses macrons regularly to differentiate between long and short vowel sounds, which differs greatly from English. Understanding the effect of these macrons on the pronunciation of vocabulary allows children to have a greater understanding of meanings of words. Each lesson begins with a 5-minute phonics recap, focusing on one of the areas on the phonic knowledge progression which has been studied during that term.

Vocabulary

Improving vocabulary throughout school was one of the main reasons we opted to teach Latin. We recognise that a knowledgeable understanding of vocabulary is key to learning a new language proficiently and an understanding of Latin language helps build children's bank of vocabulary. For each topic, we carefully picked the vocabulary to be focused on. Not only did we consider the number of words for each unit, we ensured that we selected key vocabulary (or high frequency words) which are repeated throughout the unit and consolidating further units, acting as anchor points, to help them enter children's long-term memory. We were careful not to overload the children with too much new vocabulary to enable them to develop sufficient depth of understanding and allow them to build to fluency. Further to this, we carefully selected English words for each topic that derive from Latin and plan time to explore the etymology of these words, allowing children to make links between suffixes, prefixes and the morphology of vocabulary.

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Grammar

Another reason we chose Latin was the clear links to the English grammar system. We have chosen to use the 'Minimus' books to support our Latin teaching and they have a clear focus on linking Latin to grammar. Grammar is clearly and progressively mapped and forms a large part of our Latin teaching. It is planned to become increasingly more complex over time so children don't become overwhelmed. It also links closely with the age-related grammar objective in English e.g. subject and object in Year 6. When explicitly taught the grammar feature, children are then given the opportunity to consolidate this in the unit through a range of speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. Teachers build in opportunities to revisit the grammar taught through the 'Builds On' section of our curriculum.

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St Sebastian's Primary School – Latin Curriculum Overview

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National Curriculum Aims:	If an ancient language is chosen the focus will be to provide a linguistic foundation for reading comprehension and an appreciation of classical civilisation. Pupils studying ancient languages may take part in simple oral exchanges, while discussion of what they read will be conducted in English. A linguistic foundation in ancient languages may support the study of modern languages at key stage 3. Pupils should be taught to: • listen attentively to spoken language and show understanding by joining in and responding • explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words • engage in conversations; ask and answer questions; express opinions and respond to those of others; seek clarification and help* • speak in sentences, using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures • develop accurate pronunciation and intonation so that others understand when they are reading aloud or using familiar words and phrases* • present ideas and information orally to a range of audiences* • read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing • appreciate stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the language • broaden their vocabulary and develop their ability to understand new words that are introduced into familiar written material, including through using a dictionary • write phrases from memory, and adapt these to create new sentences, to express ideas clearly • describe people, places, things and actions orally* and in writing • understand basic grammar appropriate to the language being studied, including (where relevant): feminine, masculine and neuter forms and the conjugation of high-frequency verbs; key features and patterns of the language; how to apply these, for instance, to build sentences; and how these differ from or are similar to English. <i>The starred (*) content above will not be applicable to ancient languages</i>			
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	Meet the Family Children are introduced to a real family that lived in a fort called Vindolanda near Hadrian's wall in approximately AD100. Children learn the basic rules for Latin (that a V was pronounced W, there was no soft c sound only a hard k, all letters were sounded and that they did not have a J sound – J was pronounced with a h sound). This chapter focuses on nouns and noun endings – masculine –us and feminine –a. Children learn how to introduce themselves and family members. They learn about artefacts found in Vindolanda and that Roman's celebrated birthdays and had parties. They learn to sing Happy Birthday in Latin and use greetings.	The Best Days of your Life Children learn about Roman school life in chapter 4 and consolidates previous learning of nouns, verbs and adjectives. They continue to look at Latin roots.	The Military Machine The historical aspect of this chapter is the Roman army and concentrates on further verbs in the form of commands and orders. More nouns are introduced and children visit their bank of vocabulary. Plural forms of verb commands are taught e.g. veni = come (one person) venite (veni +te) = come (more than one person). Children play Simo dicit (Simon says) to reinforce the commands. Further investigation into the derivatives of English is explored e.g. milites – soldiers and children are asked questions such as What does a porter do? The Latin word to carry is portare.	How Beautiful! In this chapter children are introduced to conjunctions and begin to link two sentences in Latin together. They learn the Latin for because, but, and, although and begin to write and speak aloud longer linked sentences.
	Food Glorious Food In chapter 2 children revisit nouns and are introduced to adjectives. The family are hosting the Governor of Britain for a special dinner. The children learn adjectives to describe animals and one another and learn that adjectives also have the masculine and feminine endings. They begin to investigate Latin roots e.g. porcus is a pig (pork). Equus is a horse (equestrian)	Romans and Britons Chapter 5 introduces adverbs and the fact that Latin adverbs end in er. The story includes history links about life in Briton before and after the Roman invasion and revises nouns, verbs and adjectives.	Clean and Healthy Continuing with adverbs this chapter is based around the Roman baths, health and exercise. It introduces longer statements and more complex language. Children begin to write whole sentences in Latin and translate into English. More historic facts are introduced linked to modern life and Latin roots continue to be investigated: frigidarium – cold room (fridge). A visit to the doctor consolidates commands and introduces further vocabulary.	A Sad Day This chapter looks at a death in Roman times and how people were remembered and honoured. The grammar focus is subject and object and how this can affect the way this changes the noun ending. If the noun is the subject of the sentence (doing the action) the ending is –am and if the noun is the object (the action is being done to it) the ending is –um.
	Work, work, work Chapter 3 focuses on verbs but revisits nouns and adjectives. Children begin to build up a bank of vocabulary. Children learn that in Latin the end of the verb shows who is doing the action and that the language does not have a word for I, you or they but is expressed through the verb ending. E.g. scribo – I write, scribit – he writes, scribunt – they write.	Off to Town The family go to Eboracum (York) shopping. The children are introduced to a larger number of nouns and learn how to talk about where they live. They look at Latin roots: – e.g. habitat (he lives). fractus (broken)	A Soldier's Life Prepositions are introduced in this chapter. Children begin to learn about place and position through the day in the life of a soldier. They continue to see the derivatives of English and links to prefixes e.g. circum – round and sub – under.	Gods! Hear our Prayers! The final chapter in Minimus focusses around religion in Roman times. This chapter consolidates learning around the main word classes –nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions. The children now have learned a large amount of vocabulary in Latin and English through derivatives of language. After each chapter the children are also introduced to a Greek myth. Through the myths children are exposed further to language links and historical facts. The myths can be read in class or the children can listen to them read aloud on the Minumus website.

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Gradual Latin Roll Out

As Latin was introduced to our curriculum in 2020, we have a plan for gradual release. Please see the table below for which curriculum is being taught in each group.

	Year 3 (Tigers)	Year 4 (Penguins)	Year 5 (Elephants)	Year 6 (Giraffes)
2020-21	Year 3			
2021-22	Year 3	Year 4	Year 4	Year 4
2022-23	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5
2023-24	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6