

St. John's C.E. Primary School



St. John's Vision statement

At St. John's we want everyone to grow and flourish. Our small school is a nurturing community where we can develop our gifts and broaden our horizons. We seek to do all this within the knowledge and love of God, where the values of His Kingdom guide and inspire us.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.' Ephesians 3.16-18

'Thriving and learning as we build God's Kingdom'

Policy: Writing Policy

Reviewed: July 2022

Future Review: July 2023

At St. John's we view the acquisition of language skills to be of the utmost importance and so the teaching of all aspects of English is given high priority. Writing is integral to our children's whole language experience; it is a crucial part of thinking and learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the teaching of writing at St. John's. It states how we deliver the writing elements of the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage. At St. John's we want to inspire children's writing to grow and flourish and to be a medium in which they can communicate their thoughts and feelings about and towards God's Kingdom.

Key statements central to the development of writing. We believe that:

- Speaking and listening are significant factors in developing the acquisition of writing
- Reading and writing are closely connected and mutually supportive; we read as writers and write as readers.
- Writing is a craft and most children learn best through writing about a familiar context, rather than through exercises out of context.
- Writing is best framed within recognisable text-types or genres, which inspire and broaden the horizons of the children.
- Writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences.
- Writing tasks should be prepared through preliminary talk and teachers should model writing for their pupils when appropriate.
- Children should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other children both to compose and to revise their writing.
- Writing skills can be improved through reflection and editing.
- Children should be closely involved in assessing their own development as writers.
- More effective writing is dependent upon increasingly informed grammatical and linguistic choices.
- The teacher's response to the child's composition (e.g. praising aspects of the content) is crucial in developing confidence and motivation.
- The skills of transcription (i.e. handwriting, punctuation and spelling) must be planned for and taught.
- ICT can be used as an inspiring stimulus for writing and to enable children to author their own multimedia texts.

Contexts for the Teaching and Learning of writing

Writing is taught and learnt in specific meaningful and effective contexts. These include:

- Core-book based literacy units.
- Modelled and shared writing.
- Complementary sentence and word-level activities.
- Independent or paired writing.
- Sharing and reflecting on their writing.
- Cross-curricular writing tasks e.g. in project work or science.

Literacy Units

We will:

- Provide frequent opportunities to write.
- Encourage children to write clearly, legibly and accurately with attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Promote an awareness of writing in a variety of contexts for many purposes.
- Provide regular modelling of the writing process.
- Provide regular modelling of making judgements about the style, format and choice of vocabulary, for a specific purpose, audience and genre.
- Provide regular modelling of drafting, revision and proof-reading.
- Provide time for children to reflect on the writing process and refine their work.
- Provide opportunities for children to produce independent writing.
- Provide children with opportunities to share their writing.
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own writing development and progress.
- Surround children with a print and vocabulary rich environment.
- Reward and celebrate children's efforts and achievements in writing.
- Provide opportunities for cross-curricular writing.
- Provide a wide variety of texts which broaden the children's horizons and inspire them to have diverse interests, and act as a stimulus to their own writing.

Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of the fine motor skills, essential for pencil control and writing. These include play dough, cutting, threading and using a range of tools. The children are encouraged to mark make as they access a range of materials independently which are carefully planned to promote the development of writing skills. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities including:

- Shared writing
- Role-play (e.g. an office or restaurant)
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Making books
- Writing letters
- Menus

Their efforts at this emergent writing stage are valued and praised and as their phonic knowledge and handwriting skills increase, this will be reflected in their writing.

Daily teacher led activities take place that include shared writing activities. During daily phonic sessions, children are taught how to write the corresponding grapheme (letter shape). At this stage, wide lined sheets are used to encourage correct letter formation and orientation and uniform letter size. As children make progress they use a ruled exercise book which will include

all other writing including creative pieces. Within the Foundation Stage, children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their development stage, ability and competence. To ensure a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage, the Key Stage 1 class has a writing table where children are free to produce work of their own ideas. There is also a role-play area which promotes speaking and listening and which provides further opportunities for writing (lists, prescriptions, notes etc.)

Writing in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

On entry into Key Stage 1, children are initially taught in a writing programme, which has been devised by the school to support the transition from EYFS. In this programme, children use a short core text to explore writing opportunities and embed the skills of creating, holding and writing sentences confidently. When they are reading, the children transition off of the programme into the main class literacy session to continue developing writing skill with more independence.

Modelling writing to the class

Shared writing sessions are used flexibly to provide a bridge between shared and independent work. During these sessions the teacher or TA may scribe for specific children or support focus groups. Through shared writing the teacher demonstrates specific writing skills. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated early on in KS1, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing. The teacher may also demonstrate writing in a particular genre. Shared writing will include:

- Generating imaginative and informative ideas through discussion, drama and questioning (verbalising), and recording these ideas in notes/ plans/ drafts
- Demonstrating planning strategies (e.g. brainstorming, concept maps, writing frames)
- Using a familiar text as a starting point for writing
- Playing with language and exploring different word choices
- Teaching the structural characteristics of a particular text type
- Developing specific word level skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation
- Modelling higher level sentence construction (use of connectives, complex sentences)
- Demonstrating revision strategies (e.g. children checking for meaning, reordering to improve a sentence, rewriting to improve clarity or to enrich)
- Demonstrating editing strategies (checking punctuation and spelling)
- Refining writing to make it clearer and better suited to its audience and purpose
- Developing technical terms and vocabulary for understanding and discussing writing
- Publishing and presenting written texts for others to read and use

At times, there may be extended shared writing sessions, exploring the composition process together in some detail. However, it will often be most effective if shared writing is broken up into chunks and interspersed with opportunities for the children to apply the lessons immediately in their own writing. This approach can maximise learning opportunities, allow

teachers to respond to children's misconceptions or difficulties, and avoid the risk of overloading the children.

Independent Writing

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing will be transferred into their own writing.

Since accurate, fluent and independent writing is dependent on a secure grasp of phonics, a high priority is placed throughout EYFS and KS1 on daily systematic phonics teaching (based on the 'Letters and Sounds' and 'Read Write Inc' programmes). This gives children the strong and essential foundation upon which all their future development as writers will be built.

During independent writing the children compose without direct teacher support and make use of writing resources more independently. As children move through KS2, they will be expected to write at increasingly greater length, developing crucial writing stamina alongside other skills. Independent writing, both within Literacy lessons and across the curriculum will involve:

- Collaboration, talk and drama for writing
- Using the imagination and expressing ideas
- Applying skills learned in shared writing and guided writing
- Focusing on individual writing targets
- Revising work in the light of feedback from teachers or peers
- Commenting constructively on other children's writing
- Editing and proof-reading to improve transcriptional features
- Preparing work for presentation

Grammar and Punctuation

Throughout the school, grammar and punctuation are given high priority. Aspects of grammar and punctuation are best taught in the context of real reading and writing activities, rather than through isolated exercises. This gives children the opportunity to see the relevance of sentence-level work and how real writers make such choices to help them communicate clearly. Sentence-level teaching is most effective when it is short, sharp and frequent, incorporated perhaps as a lesson starter or in the context of shared writing. Word and sentence games may encourage children to enjoy playing with language and to experiment with different constructions that they may then apply in their independent writing.

Accuracy in basic punctuation (capital letters and full stops) is given a high priority throughout the school, until it becomes completely automatic. Explicit teaching may be needed, even for older children, on what a sentence is and how to punctuate it accurately.

Teacher use a grammar progression map to ensure coverage of grammar skills over the text types learned and written.

Spelling

Through regular, focused teaching of spelling, children will be taught to become confident and competent spellers. They will:

- Identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
- Recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/ grapheme correspondence)
- Blend phonemes into words for reading
- Segment words into phonemes for spelling
- Acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words
- Identify onsets and rimes as an aid to spelling
- Investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules
- Identify spelling mistakes in their own writing
- Develop and use independent spelling strategies
- Use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work
- Practise spellings for a weekly test

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas for writing scribed by an adult and they may occasionally copy this writing. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record final and medial sounds. Throughout the EYFS and KS1, systematic daily phonics teaching takes place to ensure that children develop a secure grounding in phonics knowledge upon which their future progress in spelling will be based. Children practise spelling patterns during their phonic sessions daily and are given opportunities to apply these to word and sentence work. As they learn a new sound, examples of words containing the sound are given out along with a Spelling Detective book which contains Tricky Red Words for the children to take home. This teaching is based on the 'Letters and Sounds' and 'Read Write Inc' programme and is supplemented by other small group or 1-1 interventions for children who require additional support.

In KS2, children learn specific spelling rules and patterns using create tasks to aid their memory.

Weekly spellings

In the Foundation Stage children are given Red/Tricky words from their phonic sessions to learn in Spelling Detective books. These are tested during phonic teaching.

Weekly spellings are given to children in KS1 and KS2. Spelling practice sheets are used for practising spellings daily both at home and in school. Spellings are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Children are tested on their weekly spellings once a week. Spellings are displayed in the classroom throughout the week so that they can be referred to by the class teacher during writing sessions and can be used by the children in their own writing.

Spellings are based on spelling lists as listed in the National Curriculum, including common exception words specific to each year group. In addition, children are required to learn the first 100 High Frequency Words and these are sent home alongside weekly spellings, from the autumn term in Year 1.

Assessment of writing

Children's writing is assessed half-termly from Reception using assessment grids and descriptors, which are linked directly to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for each year group. These assessments then inform our target setting and are used as the basis for our planning.

Writing assessment is discussed and moderated in meetings with school leaders.

Raising the profile of writing

In order to aid raising the profile of writing across the school we also participate in The Lord Mayor's Award for writing for KS2 children. For all children we organise a Poetry Day at least once a year where a professional poet works with the children to produce work based around a variety of themes, some of which has been published. We also celebrate World Book Day where children participate in writing activities linked to a particular author or genre. To celebrate the life of a former pupil of the school The Catriona's Writing Competition takes place annually for all children to take part in with writing from every year group rewarded with an overall reward for the best piece of writing in the school. These activities provide children with the opportunity to be inspired to write and see their writing flourish.

Celebrating writing

Positive reinforcement of good writing is conducted through use of stickers and rewards and through inviting children to share their writing during Good Work Assembly. Our Star writer competition celebrates a fantastic piece of writing from one child per week from each class. Children are awarded a certificate during Friday's Celebration assembly and their work is displayed in the foyer on the Star Writer display for one week.