

St. John's C.E. Primary School



St. John's Vision statement

Shine like stars

Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Policy: Writing Policy

Reviewed: July 2024

Future Review: July 2025

Writing at St. John's

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 framework too.

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.

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.
- 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.

Literacy Units

As a school, from Ruby to Emerald, we use 'The Literacy Tree' scheme to help deliver our literacy curriculum. We follow a Year A and Year B cycle, using their mixed-aged class planning to meet the needs of our pupils.

Through this, 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.
- 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 books 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.

Writing in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

The sequence of lessons taught through using 'The Literacy Tree' focusses on a core-book approach. Each half-term there are a range of different texts to explore. For each text, classes cover a range of genres. This scheme focusses on shorter pieces of writing with a specific grammar objective, aimed at allowing children to master the skills in a range of contexts. There is a clear progression of skills over time, which nurtures independence and excitement for writing.

St. John's Literacy non-negotiables

- 4 lessons of literacy a week
- Good work examples displayed in each classroom
- Resources readily available for children to foster independence
- A range of writing resources (pencils, pens etc)
- A working wall to reflect the current 'Writing Root'

Independent Writing

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

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

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 our bespoke TAF sheets, 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

For all classes, we organise a Poetry Day 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 the use of stickers and rewards and through inviting children to share their writing during Celebration Assembly.

Our Star writer certificate 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 hall on display.