

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

Writing Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Future Review: September 2026

Writing at St. John's

At St John's, we view the acquisition of language skills as essential, and therefore the teaching of all aspects of English is given high priority. Writing is integral to children's wider language experience; it is a crucial part of thinking and learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of writing at St John's, and sets out how we deliver the writing elements of the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

At St John's, we aim to inspire children's writing to grow and flourish, enabling them to communicate their thoughts and feelings about and towards God's Kingdom.

Our Curriculum Priorities Over Time

Literacy Units

From Year 1–6, we use *The Literacy Tree* scheme to deliver our writing curriculum. We follow a Year A and Year B cycle, using mixed-age planning to meet the needs of our pupils. Teachers have mapped writing objectives using the Stanley Road *sentence-level curriculum* to support the teaching of key writing skills. Each unit focuses on three core objectives that pupils are expected to master before moving on.

Through this approach, we aim to:

- Place importance on securing key writing skills before progressing to longer writing outcomes.
- Encourage pupils to write clearly, legibly and accurately, with attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Provide regular modelling of the writing process, including drafting, revising and proof-reading.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to produce independent writing and to share their work.
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own writing development.
- Celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements in writing.
- Use a wide variety of high-quality texts to inspire writing, broaden interests and develop diverse reading experiences.

Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

A range of resources is used to develop children's fine-motor skills, which are essential for pencil control and writing. These include play dough, cutting activities, threading and using a variety of tools. Children are encouraged to engage in mark-making independently through carefully planned materials that promote early writing. Opportunities include:

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

Children's early attempts at writing are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge and handwriting skills grow, this is increasingly reflected in their work. Daily teacher-led sessions include shared writing, and during phonics lessons children are taught how to form

corresponding graphemes. Wide-lined books support correct letter formation and size; as children progress, they move to ruled exercise books used for all writing, including creative pieces.

Within the Foundation Stage, children develop their writing according to their developmental stage, ability and competence.

Writing in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Through *Literacy Tree*, writing units follow a core-book approach using high-quality picture books chosen to inspire and engage learners. For each text, classes explore a range of genres before producing a single end-of-unit outcome.

- **KS1** focuses on ideas from the planning, supported by the sentence-level curriculum.
- **KS2** emphasises more frequent, shorter pieces of writing linked to specific grammar objectives, helping pupils master and apply skills across contexts.

St John's Literacy Non-Negotiables

- Four literacy lessons per week
- Resources accessible to encourage independence
- A range of writing tools (pencils, pens etc.)
- A working wall reflecting the current *Writing Root*

Independent Writing

Children are given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills modelled in shared and guided sessions transfer into their own work. Because accurate, fluent writing depends on secure phonics knowledge, daily systematic phonics teaching remains a high priority throughout EYFS and KS1 using *Letters and Sounds* and *Read Write Inc.*

During independent writing, pupils compose without direct teacher support and use writing resources more independently. As they move through KS2, they are expected to write at greater length, developing stamina alongside other writing skills. Independent writing across the curriculum may involve:

- Talk, collaboration and drama for writing
- Using imagination and expressing ideas
- Applying skills learned in shared and guided writing
- Working towards individual writing targets
- Editing and revising in response to feedback
- Responding constructively to peers' writing
- Proof-reading to improve transcriptional features
- Preparing work for presentation

Handwriting

In the EYFS and KS1, we follow the RML handwriting scheme. In KS2, we use Letter-join. Further detail can be found in the handwriting policy.

Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation are prioritised throughout the school. Sentence-level teaching is most effective when it is specific, focused and engaging. Accuracy in basic punctuation—particularly capital letters and full stops—is emphasised until it becomes automatic. We

explicitly teach these skills to prevent misconceptions and provide pupils with the knowledge needed to apply them confidently.

Spelling

Through regular, focused spelling instruction, children learn to become confident and competent spellers. They will:

- Identify sounds in spoken words
- Recognise common spellings for each phoneme
- Blend phonemes for reading
- Segment words for spelling
- Learn high-frequency irregular words
- Use onsets and rimes to support spelling
- Investigate spelling rules and conventions
- Identify spelling errors in their own writing
- Develop independent spelling strategies
- Use dictionaries and thesauruses
- Practise spellings for weekly tests

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to mark-make and attempt spelling independently. Adults may scribe their ideas for them to copy. As phonics knowledge develops, children begin to use initial, final and medial sounds in their writing.

Throughout EYFS and KS1, daily systematic phonics teaching ensures a secure grounding for spelling. Children practise spelling patterns in phonics sessions and apply them to words and sentences. Teaching follows *Letters and Sounds* and *Read Write Inc*, supplemented with additional support for those who need it.

In KS2, children learn weekly spellings from the National Curriculum or from vocabulary linked to current learning. Spelling is also addressed in writing lessons.

Weekly Spellings

Weekly spellings are set for children in KS1 and KS2. Practice sheets are used daily both at home and school. Spellings are differentiated to meet learners' needs and tested weekly. Spellings are displayed in classrooms for reference during writing. Lists follow National Curriculum expectations, including common exception words. Children also learn the first 100 High Frequency Words, sent home from Autumn Term in Year 1.

Assessment of Writing

Children's writing is assessed half-termly from Reception onwards using assessment grids and bespoke TAF sheets linked to the National Curriculum. These assessments inform target setting and planning. Writing is moderated in meetings with school leaders and through ETSP.

Raising the Profile of Writing

All classes take part in an annual Poetry Day where a professional poet works with pupils, often producing publishable work. We also celebrate World Book Day with writing activities linked to an author or genre.

The annual *Catriona's Writing Competition*, established to honour a former pupil, invites entries from every year group and recognises excellence in writing across the school. These experiences inspire pupils and allow their writing to flourish.

Celebrating Writing

Positive reinforcement is given through stickers, rewards (e.g., team points) and opportunities to share writing in Celebration Assembly. Our *Star Writer* certificate recognises one outstanding piece of writing per week per class and is awarded during Friday's Celebration Assembly.

By recognising children's efforts and celebrating their successes, we nurture confidence and enthusiasm in writing. These experiences help pupils see themselves as capable and creative writers. As a school, we remain committed to supporting every child to develop the skills and self-belief needed to thrive.