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: September 2026

Future Review: July 2027

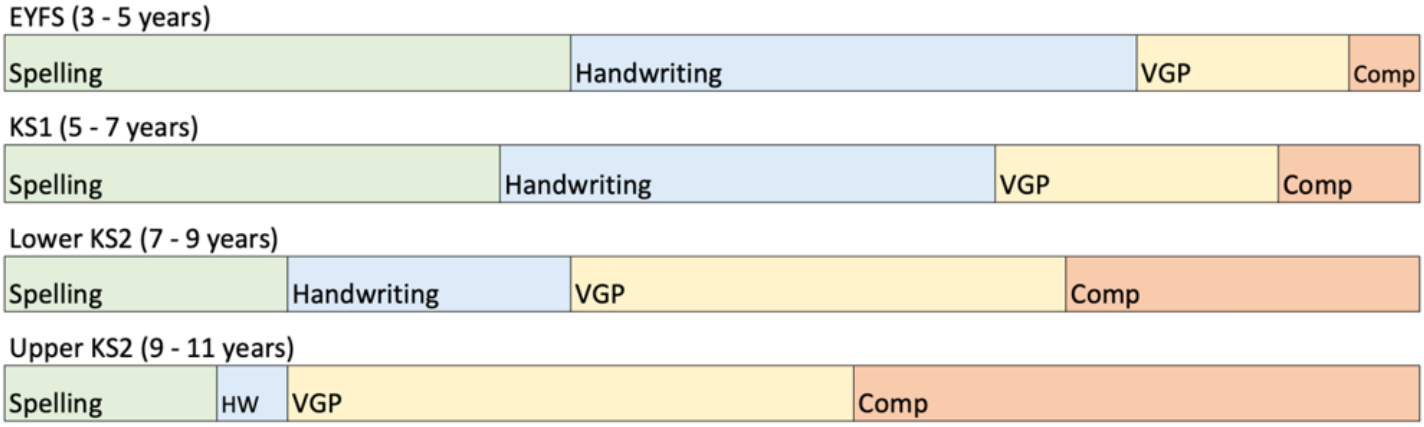
Writing at St. John's

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 are 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.

Our curriculum priorities over time:



Literacy Units

As a school, from Year 1-6 we use 'The Literacy Tree' scheme to help deliver our writing curriculum. We follow a Year A and Year B cycle, using their mixed-aged class planning to meet the needs of our pupils. Teachers have carefully mapped out writing objectives from the Stanley Road 'sentence-level curriculum' to help teach key writing skills. Each unit focusses on 3 objectives that we want children to master before progressing.

Through this, we will:

- Place importance on the acquisition of key writing skills before progressing onto longer pieces of writing.
- Encourage children 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 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.

- Use a wide variety of high-quality texts to 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 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 'The Literacy Tree' focusses on a core-book approach. We have chosen high-quality picture books which aim to inspire and engage all pupils. For each text, classes cover a range of genres with one outcome at the end of the unit.

In KS1, we focus on using ideas from the planning, supported by the sentence-level curriculum.

The Teaching Sequence

A typical 6-week block over a half term

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Focus	**Sentences** Sentence level work from Sentence Progression Curriculum	**Sentences** Sentence level work from English Sentence Progression Curriculum	**Scaffolded writing** using teacher modelling	**Scaffolded writing** using teacher modelling	**Independent Writing** based on modelled work from previous weeks Talk, plan, draft, edit, publish.	**Disciplinary Literacy** Writing linked to wider curriculum content from Foundation subjects or analysis of texts studied in Reading lessons e.g. What were the causes of the Second World War?
Reason	Pupils are learning to develop automaticity in writing sentences. Pupils will practise until they can't get these wrong. Practice makes permanent		Pupils are learning how to construct a coherent piece of writing using the sentence knowledge from previous teaching (in particular, the sentence knowledge acquired in Wk 1 and 2) Scaffolded application of sentence knowledge.		Pupils are developing their knowledge of the writing process. Further independent application of sentence knowledge acquired in weeks 1 and 2.	Pupils are learning to understand the conventions of writing in a range of different subject disciplines including relevant structure of entire text. Additional opportunity to apply sentence knowledge
Talk	Pupils orally rehearse sentences before writing		Pupils orally rehearse sentences before writing		Pupils discuss their ideas for their writing in the initial phases of planning	Pupils discuss their writing and read aloud to a partner to check their writing
Key Questions	Can pupils write these sentences with 100% accuracy? Can pupils use grammatical terminology accurately to describe the structure of their sentences?		Do pupils understand how to use their knowledge of sentences to build a coherent piece? Do pupils understand how authors select specific vocabulary and literary devices for effect?		Can pupils apply what they know about sentence structure, vocabulary and literary devices to produce a more independent piece? Are pupils explicitly taught to discuss, plan, draft and edit their work?	Can pupils write in a range of different subject domains retaining the specific features of each discipline? Is the vocabulary, grammar and structure of pupils' writing in keeping with the discipline?
In books	Daily sentence level work including sentence expansion and sentence combining activities.		Scaffolded model (a longer piece built up over two weeks)		Planning, drafting and editing pupils' independent work	Extended writing on a specific subject built up over a number of days.

In KS2, we focus on more frequent shorter pieces of writing with a specific grammar objective, aimed at allowing children to master and apply the skills in a range of contexts.

St. John's Literacy non-negotiables

- 4 lessons of literacy a week
- 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 their 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

Handwriting
In the EYFS and KS1 we follow the RML handwriting scheme. In KS2, we follow letter-join. Please see the handwriting policy for more information.

Grammar and Punctuation

Throughout the school, grammar and punctuation are given high priority. Sentence-level teaching is most effective when it is specific, focussed and engaging.
Accuracy in basic punctuation (capital letters and full stops) is given a high priority, until it becomes completely automatic. We explicitly teach these skills to avoid misconceptions and to give children all the knowledge they need before applying it to their own work.

Examples of activities:

Name of Activity	Description	Example
1. Explicit Modelling	At the start of the teaching sequence, teachers will dissect a number of model sentences with the class indicating the grammatical features as described in the sentence knowledge curriculum document. Teachers will model writing sentences and 'thinking out loud' about what they need to focus on. All sentence focused teaching begins with this and must be revisited throughout the week.	n/a
More Scaffolded Teaching Tools (used early on in teaching sequence)		
2. Examples and Non-Examples	Teachers will present a number of sentences to the class. Some will follow the correct structure of the sentence type being studied while others will not. Pupils must identify the examples and non-examples and explain why they have been selected. Pupils may then go on to the 'Fix the error' activity with the non-examples.	2.2 Conjunctions to list nouns • The nurse helped Jack and Sophie and Abdul. • The shop sold bread sweets crisps. Which is incorrect? Why?
3. Missing words	Sentences are presented to children with one or more words missing. Pupils then write the sentence in full, filling in the missing information.	3.3 Adverbs that modify adjectives The _____tall girl entered the room. (Pupils can then add in an adverb such as 'incredibly') Note that the missing word is the key aspect of the sentence. It would not be as effective if the missing word had been 'girl' in this instance.

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 to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas scribed by an adult and they may 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. 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 weekly spellings either from the national curriculum or from their current learning in class. Spelling is also taught in writing lessons for key vocabulary.

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 spellings once a week. Spellings are displayed in the classroom 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 or through the ETSP.

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 using stickers and rewards (e.g. team points) 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.