

**ST MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

WRITING POLICY



'Growing Together in Faith & Love'

September 2025

Mission Statement

Growing together in Faith and Love''

As a Christian community school life is based on the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church and consequently to fostering a commitment to justice, and the equality of all people in the eyes of God. Every child is encouraged to high ideals and equal opportunity is given to all pupils to develop their talents to the full.

Intent

In St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School we believe that writing is a key skill for life both inside and out of education and that is why it features across all subjects taught in our school. Our aim is to provide children with key, transferrable writing skills to build on year on year, that can be used throughout each phase of their education and prepare them for secondary school.

Teaching children to write for a range of purposes and audiences can be very exciting, and we provide children with a wide range of engaging books to capture their imagination! We aim to provide children with varied reasons for writing and believe that this not only produces higher quality writing, but allows our learns to apply their skills to a range of different contexts. Writing across all subject areas will prepare our children for secondary school and beyond and the more in-depth approach to analysing, planning and innovating their writing.

Oracy is prioritised in our writing curriculum in order to build vocabulary for all learns and increase understanding of trickier texts used across our curriculum. Discussion, questioning and learning texts with actions all increase understanding and prepare our children with the tools they need in order to be successful in their writing. Our aim is for ALL learners to achieve their full potential in writing and we are committed to providing the scaffolds and challenge needed in order for our children to achieve this.

Implementation

Children receive a daily Literacy lesson and are exposed to age-related expectations for writing within a range of texts. Writing and reading are closely linked and we ensure that children are reading daily in order to build on their knowledge of different genres of writing and develop their vocabulary. All classes use Literacy Shed along with a variety of supplementary materials to plan writing units which encourages plenty of oracy to facilitate the writing process – this means discussion, questioning, imitating and learning texts that are rich with key skills.

A high standard of joined, cursive handwriting is modelled across school and children are encouraged to imitate this. Handwriting is taught and practised regularly in separate books but is expected to be evidenced throughout all work produced.

Teachers demonstrate high quality modelling within each Literacy lesson and encourage children to include key vocabulary (linked to their topic), structure their work appropriately into coherent paragraphs and use the grammatical skills and punctuation taught at their year group level.

Our school intends to develop writing as a transferrable skill across all subjects taught in the curriculum. Our aim is to provide engaging writing books that are linked to each topic to give children an audience and purpose for writing. Children are expected to transfer their key topic knowledge and vocabulary into their writing and vice versa to transfer their spelling, grammar and

punctuation knowledge into their topic work. We expect the high standards for writing in Literacy lessons to be evident within the work in all books.

Children are encouraged to deconstruct texts and identify key features for specific genres of writing. Teachers model the practising of these skills and children then apply them to their own writing. This ability to identify specific features we believe is a key skill across both reading and writing and will improve comprehension in children. As a school, we ensure that genres of writing studied run alongside the learning taking place in our class novels so that children are fully immersed in the text type.

Our school ensures that children are aware of their strengths and areas for development in writing so that learners can take ownership of their progress. Teachers leave next steps/targets in books or through oral feedback to ensure that children know exactly what they need to do next to make progress in their writing. We ensure that ALL learners are given next steps and that scaffolds and challenges are put in place for those children working below or above age-related outcomes.

Children who are identified as not achieving age-related outcomes and/or those on the SEN register may be assessed against the outcomes for the year group below. Daily interventions/support may be put in place in order to accelerate writing skills in this case. The nature of the intervention will be decided by the teacher. Support in class may include small group work with an adult during lessons to model key skills, scaffolds created by the teacher to assist with completion of work and word band/sentence openers provided to assist the child when writing.

Impact

Assessment in writing is ongoing as teachers carry out in-depth marking of children's writing of at least two pieces of writing per topic. This is then used to set individual targets for each child in order for them to progress. Big Write is carried out half-termly and this also informs both teacher and pupil of next steps.

Children are tested termly on spelling, grammar and punctuation knowledge and this data is also used to inform next steps for writing.

Progress across classes is closely monitored by the subject leader and senior leadership team. Monitoring will include: regular book looks, lesson observations, gathering evidence of good practice, pupil voice interviews, looking at assessment data and regular learning walks.

The findings of this monitoring will be used to inform next steps for the children and implementation of writing across the school as a whole.

Rationale

At St Mary Magdalene, we believe that the ability to write with confidence and accuracy is an essential life skill. We endeavour to enable all of our children to communicate effectively using the printed word in a wide range of contexts. Writing is a complex process that requires many skills such as handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, grammar, punctuation and awareness of text structure and audience.

Aims

Our aims are for all children at St Mary Magdalene to:

- Enjoy writing
- Become confident, capable writers and see themselves as writers
- Understand how to write in a range of genres (including fiction, non-fiction and poetry), using the appropriate style, structure and features
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own work, and learn how to self and peer-assess against the success criteria including punctuation and grammar objectives
- Develop their imagination and creativity through exciting, meaningful experiences which inspire them to write for a range of purposes and audience
- Develop ambitious vocabulary
- Use neat, cursive handwriting
- Understand and apply their knowledge of phonics and spelling
- Provide purposeful writing opportunities for a variety of audiences
- Enable children to independently produce high quality writing across all curriculum areas

Teaching and Learning

Writing at St Mary Magdalene is taught and celebrated daily across a range of subjects. We aim, wherever possible, to create cross-curricular writing opportunities. Our children are taught the skills of writing across a range of different genres. We follow the National Curriculum (2014) to include narrative, non-fiction (eg. persuasive texts, non-chronological reports, recounts and instructions) and poetry. Children are taught to consider the purpose, form and audience of their writing.

A daily English lesson of 45-60 minutes is taught in Years 2 - 6. Year 1 follow the Read, Write, Inc scheme daily. These lessons are 45-60 minutes long (Year 1 from summer term at the latest). Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation are taught as an integral part of each genre to enable them to be taught and learnt within a meaningful context. To develop vocabulary, the children are continually encouraged to 'magpie' new vocabulary from their reading, as well as playing structured warm-ups that focus on language development. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught separately as well as being integrated into the literacy lesson.

Throughout each topic, the links between reading and writing are made explicit - children are encouraged to understand that we read as writers and we write as readers.

We believe that children need to read before they can write and they need to be able to 'talk' their writing before they can write it down. Speaking and listening is therefore very important and are an integral part of this process.

We believe that in order for children to see themselves as successful writers they need to be involved in writing for a purpose. Therefore, as well as sharing their writing with staff and other pupils, we have star writers who have their work displayed.

Strategies to develop Writing Skills

- Both transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition skills (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) are explicitly taught during English lessons
- Transcription and composition skills are then applied and developed in writing for curriculum areas
- Within each writing unit taught, the correct technical vocabulary is modelled to children, which the children then use to discuss their own writing
- Children have frequent opportunities to read aloud their written work for an audience

- Throughout the teaching of writing, links are made to reading. At the start of a new writing unit, children analyse the structural and language features of a specific text type and develop their own success criteria to guide their subsequent writing
- Pupils are taught how to plan, edit and redraft their writing, as well as producing a best copy
- Pupils are taught effective composition by forming, articulating and communicating ideas, before organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar

Developing Writing Skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription; that is, spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. This understanding begins in EYFS through daily, high quality phonics lessons.

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and celebrated. As their phonic knowledge increases, so does their ability to write independently. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing. Legible letter formation is explicitly taught and modelled on a daily basis (see Handwriting Policy). We teach cursive writing from reception.

A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities and independently apply their phonic skills through role play, creative activities, computing and the outdoor area.

Phonics

At St Mary Magdalene School we recognise that phonics is fundamental to children's development as readers and writers throughout the primary school years. From EYFS and throughout Key Stage 1 children engage in high quality, focussed phonics lessons on a daily basis to develop both reading and writing skills, following the Read, Write, Inc programme. From Year 2 they receive daily 'Read, Write, Inc', get spelling lessons and those who are not yet ready for this continue to develop phonic skills through specific interventions (see Spelling Policy).

Modelled Writing

This happens during English lessons and within guided writing groups. During this style of teaching, the teacher thinks aloud while writing and modelling strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model writing skills such as punctuating, rehearsing, proof reading, editing, word selection, sentence construction and paragraphing.

Shared Writing

This can take place in any curriculum lesson but most frequently during English lessons. This strategy can also be used in guided writing groups and has far greater input from the children than modelled writing. The teacher invites contributions from the children and teaches writing skills such as rehearsal, proof reading and editing, and production of a final draft. Teachers may also demonstrate how to create or use success criteria and marking ladders to self or peer assess. This may be the starting point for independent or guided writing.

Guided Writing

Guided writing is an important step in making the link between shared writing and independent writing. During guided writing, the teacher guides learners at an appropriate level by:

- Providing focussed feedback to a group of learners with a similar identified need and then teaching skills to address it
- Working with a group to model group or individual targets
- Developing or reinforcing skills taught in shared writing
- Orally composing a group text
- Focussing on the oral composition of sentences prior to writing
- Demonstrating a specific stage in the writing process
- Encouraging children to extend their writing further by writing effective questions on their work for the children to respond to

It can be seen that guided writing is a powerful teaching approach and provides a good opportunity for teacher assessment. Teachers will plan guided writing sessions flexibly and will often plan to work with a particular group of children as a result of their teacher assessment of a previous writing task, where children with similar needs are identified. At other times, teachers may identify a group of children with similar learning needs during a lesson and decide to pull these children together immediately.

Paired Writing

Pupils write with another pupil to:

- Share ideas and gain immediate feedback through peer assessment
- Orally rehearse ideas prior to writing

Pupils often write with a partner when working on laptops, annotating texts or using whiteboards.

Talk for Writing

Good speaking and listening skills are crucial to the development of writing. Drama and role play opportunities are provided prior to writing when teaching poetry or narrative. Teachers also plan for talking opportunities through drama, talk partners and group discussion to enable children to verbally rehearse their ideas before writing. We adopt a “Talk for Writing” approach to the teaching of narrative and non-fiction writing, through which children learn to internalise text structures and widen both their spoken and written vocabulary. This understanding is then used as the basis for their own writing innovations.

Independent Writing

We want children to enjoy writing from an early age. Our ultimate intention is to enable children to independently and effectively communicate in writing for a wide range of audiences. In the EYFS, children are encouraged to write independently using their own emergent writing from the time they come into school. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 children have the opportunity to write independently and at length.

Big Writing – Independent Writing Assessment

This occurs half-termly, integrated into one of the Literacy lessons to link to the skills and genre(s) currently being taught.

Independent writing can be recorded directly into Big Write books or photocopied from the child’s Literacy book.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Spelling lessons are taught on a daily basis through the school. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, this is taught through phonics lessons. In Key Stage 2, children are set spelling appropriate to their ability, with a focus on learning and applying spelling rules (see Spelling Policy for further details). Punctuation and grammar skills are taught within English lessons; however, specific grammar lessons are taught where new skills are introduced. Within these lessons, children are taught the terminology and subject content specified in the National Curriculum 2014. Subsequent lessons are then planned for the children to apply their learning.

Cross Curricular Links

Writing has obvious links to many subjects in school and teachers aim to make the most of those links to create exciting and purposeful writing opportunities. School trips and visitors are an integral part of our creative curriculum and often foster inspiration to write. Children practise and develop their writing skills in other subjects such as science, history or geography and use knowledge from other subjects to inform and inspire writing in English lessons. Writing from all subject areas is recorded in the children’s writing books.

Assessment for Learning

The purpose of assessment for learning is to ensure that children are involved in their own progress and are motivated to improve their work. Assessment for learning takes place through the setting of lesson objectives, self and peer assessment using success criteria and marking ladders. At all stages, children are encouraged to reflect on their progress and identify where they have hit set targets.

In the Foundation Stage, the child and the teacher read written work together. The teacher may re-write the child's attempts underneath as a form of translation. Throughout the school wherever possible marking takes place with the child so that it is interactive. Work is marked against the success criteria following the school Marking Policy and related challenges are often set. Children are always given the opportunity to review their work and respond to feedback, marking and challenges (see also Marking Policy). The school also uses 'Big Write'. This is marked according to the Ros Wilson criteria. Portfolios of work for each year group is also retained at the school.

Children with Special Educational Needs

Children who are making less than expected progress with writing are quickly identified so that appropriate support can be put into place. Progress will be monitored carefully to measure the impact of the support or intervention programme used. Where progress continues to be a concern, the SENCO is consulted to plan further support.

Learning Environment

St Mary Magdalene Primary School is an attractive and stimulating place where displays reflect current and recent learning. Classrooms have clear areas related to topics and themes which are changed, added to and updated as topics progress. Class displays include examples of written work. Class teachers include interactive elements with questions and activities to stimulate children's development of their own thoughts and ideas about authors, texts and language.

Planning and Resources

Planning objectives are taken from the English Programme of Study and literacy shed within the National Curriculum 2014. Wherever possible, links with other subjects are identified and used as opportunities to develop children's writing in a range of genres using cracking writing and literary shed. Weekly plans give details about how the objectives will be taught to differentiated groups and how adults in the class will be deployed.

Children have access to dictionaries, thesauruses, spelling log books (KS2) word mats, pens and pencils, rulers etc. Pupils are given opportunities to write on mini whiteboards to 'try out' ideas before committing them to paper. In EYFS there is also a large collection of materials to utilise the kinaesthetic aspects of writing, such as sand trays, foam and other materials. Various teaching books and big books are available in school and are generally kept in class, though shared resources are also available.

The school is keen to ensure that children develop a range of computing skills to enable them to use computing effectively as a tool for communication. Children are supported in the development of their computing skills and given opportunities to use these as early as possible in their written recording. The school has two trollies of chrome books and two class sets of iPads.

Monitoring

Children's independent writing is assessed using the agreed end of year expectations and closing marking is used for at least 2 pieces of writing per topic. Children who are identified as not making expected progress will be highlighted for support via an appropriate intervention.

The English subject leader(s) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure rigorous assessment and monitoring takes place through regular book look and moderation of assessed work, learning

walks, moderation, external moderation, and formal observations. They will also ensure that appropriate training opportunities are provided for staff to meet identified needs.

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the English subject leader(s) and leadership team and shared with all stakeholders.

Policy last reviewed: September 2025

Policy to be reviewed: September 2026