

ST MARY'S CE (A) FIRST SCHOOL

Whole School Writing Policy

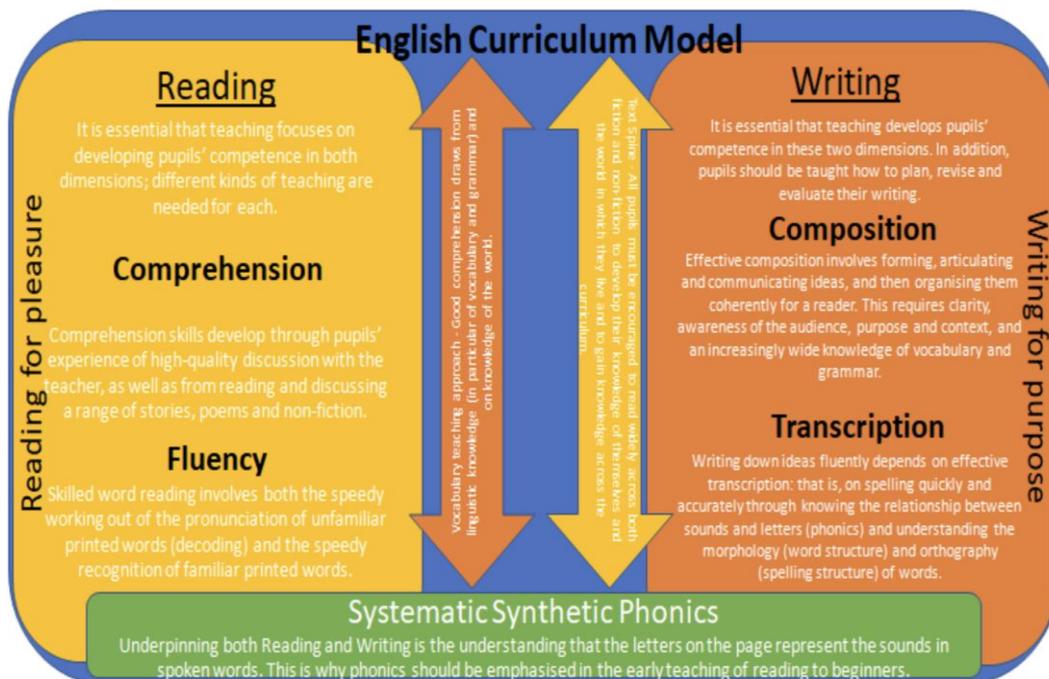
Intent

At St Mary's we have taken a holistic approach to English to ensure there is coherence between all facets of the English national curriculum. By the time the children leave our school, they will have an enduring love for the subject in its own right and see English as an essential life skill which will enable them to have a successful future.

We believe that reading is the keystone of our English Curriculum providing opportunities for our children to ignite their imaginations and fan the flames of their curiosity. We aim to underpin the strength of high-quality texts and our children's response to reading them by building in opportunities for reading into writing and applying the use of taught vocabulary. Our English Curriculum Model has been carefully designed to combine our cohesive approach to the teaching of English as a whole, whilst recognising the various component strands. All of the strands complement each other and support our children's development and success by:

- ensuring a solid grounding in spelling, handwriting and punctuation
- promoting ways of working within the classroom, which encourage full participation of pupils.
- teaching children the craft of writing in order to develop in children the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience.
- promoting an interest in words, their meanings and developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- creating opportunities for developing the powers of imagination, creativity and critical thinking
- valuing and celebrate diversity in culture and language

The diagram below illustrates how the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and reading for pleasure are woven around writing for purpose:



Implementation

Based upon the National Curriculum and the individual needs of our children at St Mary's First School, we have created an approach to writing that not only allows children to write for genuine purposes but also has, at its core, a high degree of response to quality texts as its main driver. From year one to year four, writing lessons are focused on a stimulus from a high-quality text, selected specifically for its richness in language, themes and grammatical demand. All chosen texts have been sequenced to take account of progression in thematic and text complexity for every term, in every year group. The sequences of lessons are similar in each class, following a *Gather, Practise and Apply (GPA)* format. A guiding principle is that children write as often as possible, be it a small response to a question in the gather element of the sequence, a skill that needs developing from the text stimulus or within application which may be extended pieces of writing. We believe that writing should be done as often as possible and reflective of the stage within the teaching sequence. This may be little, but often, in the earlier stage of the sequences of learning.

Gather (G)

This element allows all our children to engage with a selected text and analyse elements from it. There is a heavy focus on reading within this aspect where children may get the opportunity to explore authorial intent and techniques, discuss characters and settings or explore the wider context (theme or setting) of which the text is based. Within this part of the sequence there may be heavier elements of drama, speaking and listening sessions and linking with other subjects and texts. Exploring the authors use of language and vocabulary effectiveness in this aspect of the sequence is a key feature of the St Mary's approach to English and compliments the vocabulary policy.

Practise (P)

This element allows all our children to practise the skills required that would inform a final written piece of work. These skills may be of a grammatical nature, with accurate and effective sentence construction as a key focus. Talk for Writing, with the principles of imitation, innovation and independent application, will be used to orally rehearse and practice before the writing process begins. During this element of the sequence, staff and pupils often work together to produce shared work which may then go on to stimulate further ideas.

Apply (P)

This element of the teaching sequence is where all the final written pieces are created and will have stemmed from the original text source. Children will have the opportunity to edit and refine their work in order to produce high quality pieces of writing which suit a variety of forms, types and purposes and that they are proud of. Planning templates for the various purposes are consistent and developmental throughout the whole school.

Implementation: FICTION

- St Mary's uses "text based" planning method: one quality text is used each half term, and this will be the stimulus for fiction and non-fiction work.
- Teachers use different approaches to teaching writing: shared writing with class (teacher as scribe, children providing ideas) and modelled writing (teacher writing at board talking out loud to show the process of a writing thinking)
- 'Talk for Writing' strategies will be used in English lessons (imitation, innovation, invention) See Appendix 1
- Stories are mapped and planned using the "boxing up" approach
- Drama is used as a stimulus for writing.
- Children are encouraged to talk through their stories before writing as part of the planning process, and to share their stories after writing as a way of celebrating their work.
- Working walls are used to collect key vocabulary and phrases
- Working walls show what "good" work looks like.

Implementation: NON FICTION

- All year groups will teach a range of non-fiction types each year using progression documents to aid planning.
- Non- Fiction texts, where possible, will link with Topic work or the main English Text.
- Non-fiction skills taught in English will be applied to Topic/RE work writing in the afternoon.
- Working walls are used to collect key vocabulary and phrases
- Working walls show what "good" work looks like.

Implementation: WRITING EXPECTATIONS

- Children will complete at least one piece of extended piece of writing in English and one in Topic/RE each week.
- Children will be provided with Success Criteria and use this to self-assess.
- Time will be provided for children to edit their work using editing pens.
- Children are given opportunities to read and share their work.
- TAG reviews (Tell/ Ask/ Give advice) and Peer Review (P.R) will be used by pupils to peer mark work.

Implementation: VOCABULARY

Teachers use questioning and provide opportunities for discussion and investigation to support the development of specific language and vocabulary which stems from the stimulus text. Such vocabulary is identified in planning and specifically taught. This is complimented by our vocabulary policy which focuses heavily on the acquisition on tier two vocabulary. Vocabulary will be caught and taught at St Mary's.

Implementation: SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

- Progression in spelling, grammar and punctuation will be taught according to the National Curriculum for English.
- Twinkl phonics is Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme used in EYFS, KS1 and for phonics intervention in KS2.
- Twinkl Spelling and Grammar plans are used in Key Stage 2
- Spelling booklets will be sent home and contain spellings to be tested weekly. Spelling booklets are progressive throughout the school and completion of booklets is celebrated in awards assemblies.
- Alan Peat sentence types are used progressively throughout the school to show variety in sentence types. Punctuation will be taught alongside Alan Peat sentence types.
- Grammar is included in English lesson at least once per week. Punctuation will be taught alongside grammar and writing.

Implementation: THE PLACE OF READING

Reading is *the* central element to our approach to writing. The reading and sharing of only the very best texts inform all our children's writing. The children will have complimentary texts that they will be exposed to that may add layers of richness to the driving text. This may be due to the link in themes, characters or historical/geographical settings. In doing so, the children at St Mary's will be exposed to the academic language of schooling and the disciplinary vocabulary in the subject. Furthermore, being exposed to rich vocabulary will add layers of quality to children's writing as it will encourage them to use specific and effective vocabulary.

Implementation: EYFS

We teach English in our foundation stage classes as an integral part of the children's learning. The foundation planning and delivery stems from Twinkl Phonics where deliberate links between phonics, reading and then writing are made explicitly clear. We relate the writing aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for

Impact

The impact of our writing curriculum is measured in a variety of ways: questioning during lesson time, marking children's written work, listening to child-led discussion, interviewing pupils across the school about their learning, book trawls and using images/videos of children's practical learning.

Our school understand that our curriculum develops children's acquisition and proficiency in their ability write over a long period of time. The *GPA* approach enables a spiral effect where children's skills become deeper and more refined as the year goes on. Therefore, the support and scaffolding that children receive will be heavier within the first half of the year and gradually the amount of independent work will increase. However, throughout the year teacher judgment as to how much a child needs challenging and/or supporting will inform day to day practice.

The assessment of writing and responding to children's writing is covered in detail in the school marking and assessment policies. Children will complete at least one piece of independent writing each term to aid formative assessment.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Head and Deputy Head Teacher will:

- provide support by encouraging staff and praising good practice.
- monitor learning and teaching through lesson observations.
- monitor planning and assessment
- support staff development, through in service training and provision of resources.
- monitor English in the school e.g. through lesson observations, termly curriculum walks and the scrutiny of children's work, teacher's planning, assessments and evaluations.

The English Leader will:

- ensure continuity in levelling throughout the school and lead practical staff meetings to support this.
- monitor English in the school.
- keep up to date with new developments and keep the staff informed.
- play a key role in formulating, maintaining and reviewing the English policy.
- lead colleagues and be supportive.
- audit resources regularly.

Formulated by Sarah Turner

Updated: October 2023

Agreed by: Staff and governors

Review: October 2025



Handout 1

The Talk for Writing process

| Key stages | The underpinning process | Essential features | Useful ideas |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Imitation</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold task to establish key features of model text/processes to focus on • Hook to interest pupils • Warm up topic, words, phrases & display • Internalise model text/process • Read as a reader to ensure comprehension • Read as a writer: Box-up structure, & analyse ingredients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ set a task where provide some content but no help in expressing/ doing ○ earlier work of a similar type ○ games and activities that involve pupils saying the words and phrases in context; display ○ Daily spelling and sentences games at primary and secondary English as appropriate ○ Text map and actions ○ Book talk approach to encourage open discussion ○ colour code model text once class analysed it, eg: Brown = structure; Pink = links ; Green = effective phrases; Blue = technical vocabulary ○ Plan it; Link it; Express it; Check it ○ Focus on techniques not grammar features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ never heard word grids; cloze; sorting/clumping activities; word dominoes; icons & mime; drama; etc ➤ Display words/ phrases on washing line ➤ hear it , map it & recall word for word ➤ see it , map it and recall gist ➤ One box per paragraph/ key section ➤ Highlight generic features/ sentence signposts ➤ Identify ingredients |
| <p>Innovation</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-construct toolkit & display • Show class how to innovate on model • Pupils produce own version • Share with partner • Teacher assesses • Focused teaching based on assessment • Consolidate learning • Hot task to show progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shared planning & writing & model how to talk about the ingredients; all views valid ○ Increasingly model how to move away from the model ○ Provide a range of different models; support visually ○ Use toolkit as model of key ingredients ○ Provide time to act on initial feedback so pupils improve work ○ Devise a range of explaining to others activities ○ pupils compare cold & hot tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Writing journals/ magpie books ➤ Talking partners ➤ Pink for progress; green for growth ➤ Post-it notes to indicate ingredients ➤ Pupils comment on own work before hand in ➤ Use same two colours eg pink and green ➤ mini lessons/ guided writing ➤ visiting professor; each one teach one; word dominoes; summarising activities; annotate exemplar; present work and analyse etc. ➤ invention/independence indicator to encourage pupils not to hug close to model |
| <p>Independent application</p> | | | |