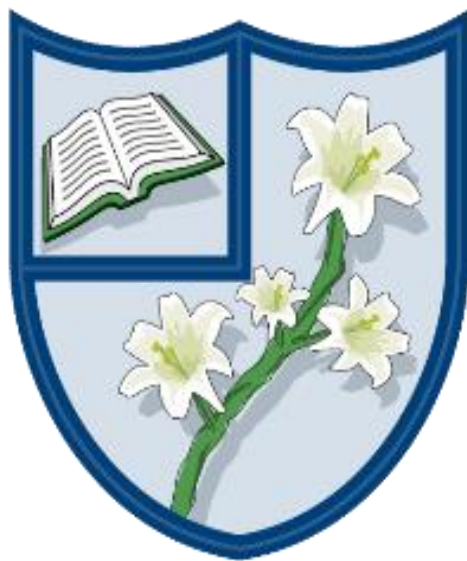


St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

English Policy



Writing

The curriculum planning in English is carried out in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plans are the National Curriculum Objectives to be covered in each year group. Our medium-term English plans have been planned and designed to ensure that a breadth of writing genres are covered across Key Stage One (KS1) and Key Stage Two (KS2). This enables us to see that teaching and learning is progressive and eliminates any repetition of topics/texts used across year groups (See 'English Coverage' on the school website). They give details of the main teaching genres for writing, indicating which genres are to be taught in block sessions for each half term. Although English genres in writing are taught in weekly blocks, these genres are revisited in other subjects.

The short-term plans contain the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and give details of how the lessons are to be taught. These plans are working documents which are adapted and annotated to meet the needs of the pupils. The subject leader and class teacher will discuss them on an informal basis as part of the subject leader's monitoring, as well as when more formal monitoring takes place.

This policy will outline a brief sequential synopsis of the writing that takes place in KS1 and KS2. It covers planning sequences of different genres, writing skills, assessment and target settings.

Writing within Key Stage One

Within Key Stage One, staff will plan from the long term overview for set genres. Children will be expected to engage with new texts each week and quality opportunities to improve key skills of reading and writing will be planned for.

Writing within KS2

Each year group in Key Stage Two is following the long term overview for set genres. Each genre will be taught sequentially following our planning guidelines in order to ensure high quality writing as a result of detailed text analysis, clarity of genre features and key vocabulary.

Cold and Hot Writing

At the very beginning of every new topic/genre, before pupils do any analysis or work, every pupil produces a 'cold' independent piece of writing relating to the outcome of the topic e.g. Genre: Journalistic Writing – pupils would independently write a newspaper article. Once the whole topic has been taught, pupils are then asked to independently complete a 'hot' piece of writing, e.g. another newspaper article. This will show the progress pupils have made as it is a direct comparison from their starting skills and knowledge to their newly learned and applied skills and knowledge.

Writing through other Curriculum Areas

We ensure that writing across other subject areas is high quality and reflects the standards in English books. Pupils are reminded of their English targets in marking and feedback. Minimum expectations in R.E. requires at least 1 high quality pieces of writing per theme and the Topic books must provide one piece of writing per half term (or equivalent over the topic). In addition to this, English is taught across the curriculum twice every weeks. This is an opportunity for pupils to use their knowledge and understanding of the skills learned in English across a variety of different topics.

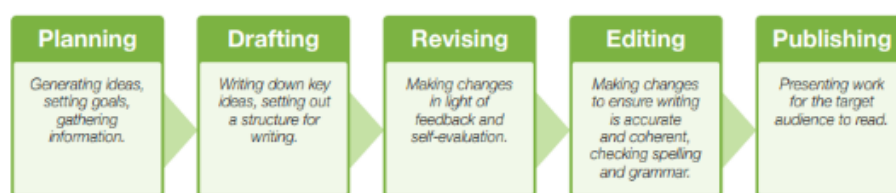
Research based evidence

We use EEF and The Writing For Pleasure Centre recommendations as research evidence to support our writing policies and strategies.

The EEF's report supports many of the research recommendations related to the 14 principles of world-class writing teaching (Young & Ferguson [2021a](#)). For example, there were recommendations related to the following principles:

- Build a community of writers.
- Read, share, think and talk about writing.
- Pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects.
- Be reassuringly consistent.
- Teach the writing processes.
- Set writing goals.
- Teach mini-lessons.
- Balance composition and transcription.
- Be a writer-teacher.
- Pupil conference: meet children where they are.
- Connect reading and writing.

Figure 11: The writing process



(EEF’s Improving Literacy In KS2. p.31)

At St. Mary’s, we know, each writer’s approach to the process of writing is different and they will use these processes in different ways and in different combinations. Young and Ferguson, 2020 p.60 state that writing habits are individual to all pupils and at St. Mary’s, we meet the needs of all pupils.

| Adventurer | Planner | Vomiter | Paragraph Piler | Sentence Stacker |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Goes straight into their writing with a discovery draft. Uses this early draft as their plan. | Makes a plan before attempting a draft. | Plans, drafts their whole piece, and then revises and proof-reads it. | Drafts a paragraph before revising and editing it. | Drafts a sentence, revises and edits it until it is perfect before moving onto writing their next one. |

(Young & Ferguson 2020, p.60)

We follow the research and follow the Teach, then Invite model as described by Young and Ferguson, 2020.

| Teach includes: | Invite includes: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce. Name and explain what it is you’re about to teach and discuss its purpose. • Share examples. Share examples from your own writing, from professional writers, and from the children’s own texts. • Provide information. Explain any of the conventions writers typically follow, and share your personal advice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try. Invite children to give it a try during that day’s writing time. They can try it within the composition they are developing, or, depending on the lesson, they can experiment on their ‘trying things out page’. • Discuss. At the end of a writing session, let children discuss how they got on, and share any great examples. • Create artefacts. Make a poster or fact sheet of the lesson. By doing this, you will be helping children understand that they have added something to their writing repertoire and that they can use these artefacts for themselves again and again in the future. |

Using the evidence-based research, we give children equal access to writing topics. Part of the writing cycle is to allow pupils generate ideas as writing on a topic chosen by someone else also makes the task of writing more cognitively difficult (Stein [1983](#); Heller [1999](#)). In contrast, when children are allowed to choose and access a topic they are familiar with and emotionally connected to, their writing performance improves and they produce higher quality texts (Bruning & Horn [2000](#); Kellogg [2001](#), [2008](#); Graham [2006](#); Purcell-Gates et al. [2007](#); Flint & Fisher [2014](#); Behizadeh [2014](#), [2018](#); Fletcher [2016](#); Young [2019](#); Harmey [2020](#)). We hold 'Idea Parties' as children have a wonderful ability to come up with unique and original ideas.



The EEF acknowledge that writing is a cognitively demanding activity which requires children to engage in daily practice which is meaningful, motivating and engaging; writing that is orientated towards writing for purpose and genuine audiences. Our pupils write for a reason and genuine audiences. Following the research, our pupils produce varies lengths of work in each lesson; they reflect on their writing and edit and improve. Children's writing should find its way into people's hands, into their ears and across their screens. We make this recommendation not only for its affective and motivational benefits but also because it helps children write higher-quality texts (Boscolo & Gelati [2019](#); Bruning & Horn [2000](#); Gadd & Parr [2016](#); Hickey [2003](#); Young & Ferguson [2021a](#)).

Based on evidence, we know that writing and being a writer is a personal and intensely social undertaking which is both cognitive and emotive. One of the principles of world-class writing teaching is to ensure that children read, share, think and talk about their writing: Young and Ferguson, 2020. We ensure that children learn that they can articulate and develop their ideas with their peers prior to writing them down. Each day they receive direct and explicit instruction in the craft of writing every day (Young et al. [2021](#); Young & Ferguson [2021d](#); Young & Ferguson [2021e](#)) and are given an opportunity to write meaningfully and for a sustained period every day (Young & Ferguson [2020](#), [2022](#)).

At The Writing For Pleasure Centre, they have recognised the need to take sentence-level instruction seriously and to teach children about sentences in a way that helps them write what they mean. Their research has shown that that formal grammar instruction has always had a negative impact on children's writing development (Kolln [1996](#); Fearn & Farnan [1998](#); Andrews et al. [2006](#); Weaver et al. [2006](#); Wyse & Torgerson [2017](#); Hudson [2017](#); Myhill [2018](#); Young & Ferguson [2021](#)), which is why our grammar work is taught within a context. We believe work around sentences should be in the service of developing children's style as writers. We describe sentence-level instruction, and by extension instruction on style, as being about helping children:

- Share their writing voice and identity.
- Achieve the purpose they have for their writing.
- Write with clarity and simplicity.
- Develop, elaborate on and embellish their initial ideas.

Reading Skills

Reading is an essential part of pupils' learning and as a result, we listen to pupils read on a regular basis - every pupil reads to an adult at least once per week. In Early Years and KS1 children are taught how to read using systematic synthetic phonics. The programme followed at St Mary's Primary School is the Sounds-Write programme. This starts with pupils listening to the sounds in a word, before looking at the word itself to learn the spellings of each sound. The skills of segmenting (breaking into the sounds) and blending (joining the sounds together) are essential to the process of reading, and this is reflected in daily teaching sessions.

At St Mary's we are aware that we must pronounce each sound correctly and model this correctly in order to help children blend and read words. In KS1 pupils will often get 'stuck' with a word. We are patient with them and do not simply tell them the word (as tempting as this may be). We encourage them to sound out each spelling and blend them together until the word is read.

In KS2, we encourage our pupils to re-read the sentence once they have blended an unfamiliar word in order to comprehend what they have read. The ability to decode (read a word) fluently is also a key skill which enables pupils to better understand what they have read. If they are fluent, they are better placed to understand the meaning of the sentence as they can focus on its syntax, rather than each sound. Often pupils who need extra reading support are a little stilted in their reading and this hinders their comprehension.

Guided Reading

At least two Guided Reading and Comprehension lessons are timetabled each week. In KS2, each year group has been allocated at least 4 comprehension papers to enable the pupils to be taught the skills they need to read, understand and infer the text and answer questions appropriately. The teachers also use Reading Explorers, which provides suitable and challenging texts. When reading in school, pupils will be encouraged to read a text which is of a slightly higher ability than they currently are. This is because we do not want children to become complacent and bored with their reading and they can continue to make progress with their reading ability when they are challenged in a safe and supportive environment.

Working systematically ensures coverage of all reading objectives and allows us to identify gaps in pupils' learning, enabling us to target specific areas for individual pupils and also challenge the more able in certain comprehension areas. In Early Years and Key Stage 1 the guided reading and comprehension structure varies slightly. During each week, differentiated texts are used and pupils are given specific, targeted questions to provide a clear insight into their understanding of the text. Once sufficient evidence of attainment at each reading objective has been clarified, teachers are able to plan and deliver teaching and learning sessions which promote good progress. During the spring and summer terms, Year Two use a range of texts, extracts and past SATs questions to teach children the skills and techniques required to answer comprehension questions aptly and precisely in an assessment.

Home/school reading

We place an emphasis on reading for pleasure and reading at home. We provide the pupils with a variety of reading material to capture every pupil's imagination and inspire them with a love of reading. In Key Stage One, children choose reading books to take home weekly. In Key Stage Two, the children take one reading book home, but they can change this book as soon as they have read the book and made a comment in their Reading Record Book. Their home/school book must be matched to their current reading ability. Children also have access to the school library to promote their love of reading and reading for pleasure.

Twice per week, in KS1, the Teacher and/or the Teaching Assistant listens to every pupil read their home/school reading book. In KS2, the children continue to be read with; teachers also promote independent reading. Any child who is not confident when reading will be given the support which they require. In addition to listening to pupils read, staff will follow up with a short discussion about an aspect of the text to ensure they have understood what they have read.

Reading records are kept in the form of a reading comment sheet and in their reading record book. These comment sheets are used for assessment and moderation purposes.

Additional Reading Support

In St. Mary's and at home, children (up to Year 4) also have access to Lexia to continue to develop their reading skills, including their understanding of phonics and their comprehension skills. The children in Years 4, 5 and 6 have access to Reading Plus, which continues to build on their understanding of vocabulary and gives them the opportunity to answer questions about what they have read.

Some children do not get enough opportunities to read to an adult at home, so additional reading support is offered in school to enable them to read to someone who will model, encourage, excite and praise their reading.

We are very fortunate to have extra adult support in our school in order to provide children who are struggling, coasting or disengaged from reading with the time and support that they require to become fluent readers.

Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach English in our Foundation Stage where we relate the relevant aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals underpin the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We give every pupil the opportunity to develop their interest and understanding of reading and writing linking to sounds to their visual representation (letters). This is achieved through varied activities that allow them to enjoy, explore, practise and talk confidently whilst using a range of books, poems, animations and other materials as a stimulus.

Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling

One English lesson every week should be designated to teach GPS. We must remember that this is a stand-alone lesson, but should be embedded into all areas of the curriculum and teachers link their GPS lessons to their writing genre where possible. This GPS learning is essential to improve children's writing and their understanding of the English language. All GPS writing must be evident in the GPS book and/or Spelling book.

Handwriting

It is paramount that pupils are taught correct pencil hold and letter formation from the outset of their time at school. We have very high standards of handwriting and presentation of books and pupils are proud of the work they present. When pupils are communicating their ideas in writing, it is very important that they use a neat, legible style. Our school follows the Letter-join Handwriting Scheme and we have specific books in KS1 to develop their handwriting skills early in their education. It is expected that staff model the school handwriting style at all times.

Assessment and Target Setting

The marking of the pupils' work follows the school's Feedback and Marking Policy. The principal purpose of marking writing is to provide pupils with feedback to move their learning forward. It communicates to a pupil whether they have applied the correct genre features and skills and gives them alternative ways to approach the writing form. It also serves to inform teachers' planning in terms of any misconceptions or gaps in learning.

Written comments must be purposeful and focused on moving learning forwards and model rich vocabulary, a breadth of punctuation and encourage the imagination to come alive. Responding to marking and corrections should be carried out at the start of the next lesson (or within the lesson). The process of correcting work is encouraged to establish the importance of self-checking work by pupils and to avoid making similar errors in

the future. It may be appropriate to tackle misconceptions and challenge progress during lessons as well as promote children's independence and use of support strategies.

'Hot' pieces of writing and independent writing from topics and R.E. are used to assess each pupil. An overview of the assessment guideline is kept in each teacher's assessment file which will be updated after each writing genre. This will clearly show where the children have progressed to and the areas which they still need to develop. This is a working document and enables both pupil and teacher to identify next steps in writing. This next step will form the target set in the front of the English book.

Assessment for learning

Assessment for learning is embedded into each lesson with techniques and strategies used daily with an aim to identify pupils' strengths and difficulties, inform the next steps for each pupil's learning and improve the learning outcomes. Short-term planning is constantly reviewed and modified on the basis of these assessments. Children and staff also use formative assessment in the form of bronze, silver and gold success criteria within lessons. This helps both the teacher and children identify what they have learned and developed within each lesson. All children are encouraged and challenged to achieve gold.

Summative assessment

Some of the evidence base for these summative assessments will come from day-to-day class work, but there is an emphasis on evidence that comes from specific tasks and tests used to assess the degree of retention, independence and breadth of application shown. We use these judgements to assess progress and achievement against individual, school and national targets. We identify and target those pupils not making expected progress and intervene accordingly.

Assessment is tracked half-termly using the school's tracking system and pupils' progress is discussed in Pupil Progress Meetings. Pupils who haven't made the expected progress become a focus in teacher's planning. We pass all assessment and tracking information on to the next teacher at the end of the year, so that they can plan for the new school year.

We give parents the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and attainment each term in a teacher/parent meeting. We also write a summary of each child's progress and achievement in the Annual Report for parents.

English Learning Environment

We aim to create a rich and stimulating environment that promotes learning and independence through Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling displays, Phonics displays and English Working Walls in each classroom. English Working Walls and resource areas in the classroom will:

- support the children with their reading and writing,
- contain information relevant to current teaching e.g. key vocabulary, definitions, genre features
- provide accessible resources e.g. dictionary, thesaurus,
- be clear/large enough for pupils to read,
- be updated and changed regularly.

English Timetable

The new National Curriculum places a great emphasis on Reading, Writing, Grammar, Spelling, Phonics and Speaking and Listening skills. At St Mary's, we have adapted the daily timetable to incorporate all areas of the English Curriculum sessions:

- EYFS – Nursery have an English focus during each two and a half day session, daily phonics sessions and story time. Wordless reading books are introduced during Autumn Term.
- EYFS – Reception have one English session each morning based on the ‘book of the week’, daily 20 minute phonics input and weekly individual readers.
- KS1 – 5 x 60 minute English lessons and 5 x 20 minute Phonics sessions per week.
- KS2 – 4 x hourly English lessons, 1 x hourly Grammar lesson, Guided Reading and Comprehension lessons and 4 x 20 minute daily.

Home/school links

We aim to raise the profile and understanding of our approach to English with parents, and they are encouraged to be actively involved in supporting their child’s learning in school. The school website includes a breakdown of the English Curriculum for each year group. Additionally, pupils and parents can access English links to help their child via our school website.

The role of the Subject Leader

The Head teacher will:

- Provide support by encouraging staff and praising good practice.
- Monitor learning and teaching through lesson observations.
- Monitor planning and reviews.
- Give feedback to teachers following lesson observations.
- Support staff development through in service training and provision of resources.

The English Leader will:

- Provide a strategic lead and direction for English in the school;
- Provide support and advice to staff in the delivery of the English programme of study;
- Remain informed about current developments in the subject by attending INSET sessions and being involved in independent research and reading;
- Disseminate relevant information to staff;
- Deliver INSET sessions to staff, to support staff development;
- Monitor and evaluate teaching and learning of all areas of English;
- Monitor standards in the subject, through planning and work scrutiny, statistics, quality of teaching and pupil assessments;
- Order and maintain resources to enhance effectiveness of English teaching within the school;
- Consider with staff and work with SMT members in the evaluation and planning of actions included within the School Development Plan.

The Class teachers will:

- Be responsible for the teaching of English as set out in the policy,
- Provide planning and reviews for the Head Teacher and English leader to have access to,
- Provide samples of English work to the English leader when required,
- Assess children’s work in order to detail future planning.

Special needs provision, including gifted and talented

At our school we teach all areas of the English Curriculum to every pupil, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all. Through our teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable, including those pupils who

generate Pupil Premium, those with special educational needs, those with disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language. We take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the pupil may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors such as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation, so that quality first teaching enables the pupil to learn more effectively. Ongoing assessment for learning and summative assessment allows us to consider each pupil's attainment and progress against expectations. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the pupil's needs. Intervention will take place through SEN support for pupils with special educational needs. Action plans identify barriers to learning and may include, as appropriate, specific targets, strategies and intervention programmes relating to all areas of English.

We also ensure that we meet the needs of those pupils with special gifts and talents. This may be achieved in a variety of ways, such as individual learning programmes and collaboration with other year groups and schools (including feeder Secondary Schools).