

Writing Policy

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School



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Review Date

Vision and Aims

At St Matthew's, we believe that every child can become a confident and successful writer. Writing enables children to communicate their ideas, thoughts, feelings and experiences and provides them with a powerful way to understand and engage with the world around them.

Rooted in our Catholic mission, we want children to use their voices with confidence, listen respectfully to others and develop a love of language, literature and learning. We promote a culture where children understand that writing is a process which develops through practice, discussion, modelling, drafting, editing and perseverance.

We have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND, pupils learning English and pupils facing disadvantage.

Progression in Mathematics

By the end of Year 6, pupils should be able to communicate effectively through writing for a range of purposes and audiences. They should write with increasing independence, control and accuracy, drawing upon secure knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and text structure.

Our writing curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework in Reception and the National Curriculum for England in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum develops the two interconnected elements of writing: transcription and composition.

Writing knowledge and skills are carefully sequenced from Reception to Year 6. Key knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical structures and writing skills are revisited regularly so that children build secure foundations and apply their learning independently.

Curriculum Design and Planning

At St Matthew's, writing is planned and taught using Ready Steady Write from Literacy Counts as the foundation for our writing curriculum. Ready Steady Write provides a carefully sequenced approach centred around high-quality Vehicle Texts, giving children opportunities to explore vocabulary, sentence structures, grammar, punctuation, text organisation and different genres of writing.

At St Matthew's, the Ready Steady Write programme is a framework which teachers plan and resource carefully to meet the needs of their class. Teachers adapt the sequence, resources, examples, vocabulary and level of support where assessment identifies a need.

Teachers plan five writing lessons each week. Across the week, children develop their understanding of the Vehicle Text, analyse the features of effective writing, plan, compose, revise and edit their own work.

Working walls support the current writing unit and may include key vocabulary, modelled sentences, grammar and punctuation, genre features, success criteria, sentence stems and examples of effective writing.

The Ready Steady Write Sequence

Immerse: Children are immersed in the chosen Vehicle Text through reading, discussion, vocabulary and comprehension. Children explore ideas and respond to the text.

Analyse: Children explore how the writer has constructed the text. They identify and discuss vocabulary, sentence structures, grammar, punctuation, text structures and features of the genre.

Plan: Children gather and organise their ideas before writing. Teachers model effective planning and children create their own plans ready for composition.

Write: Teachers explicitly share the writing purpose and intended audience. The teacher models writing using a writer's voice, thinking aloud about vocabulary, sentence construction, punctuation and organisation. Children then apply the knowledge and skills taught through independent writing.

Edit: Editing is explicitly taught and modelled. Children reread their writing and identify ways to improve spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction and overall effectiveness. Children use a purple pen for editing.

Daily Writing and Sentence Accuracy

At St Matthew's, children have five writing lessons each week. Every writing lesson begins with Sentence Accuracy, taught for approximately 10 minutes.

Sentence Accuracy provides daily opportunities to revisit and apply grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and vocabulary. Activities are responsive to the needs of the class and may include sentence construction, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, conjunctions, clauses, tense, sentence types, word classes and editing.

Sentence Accuracy is explicitly modelled by the teacher using a writer's voice. Children have opportunities to discuss and rehearse ideas before recording them.

From Year 3 onwards, the focus of Sentence Accuracy is underlined in orange and punctuation is circled in blue. Editing continues to be completed in purple pen.

Sentence Accuracy is not an isolated grammar activity; it supports children in becoming accurate and effective writers who apply grammatical and punctuation knowledge within their own composition.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught explicitly and practised every day for approximately 10 minutes.

At St Matthew's, we use Letter-Join to support a consistent approach to handwriting across the school. Neat, cursive handwriting is promoted and teachers and Learning Support Assistants maintain high expectations for handwriting and presentation.

Children are taught to form letters accurately before progressing towards fluent cursive writing. Handwriting skills are revisited and developed throughout each year group.

Teachers explicitly model correct letter formation, letter joins, letter size and proportion, spacing, writing on the line, appropriate pencil grip and posture, and presentation and care of written work.

Strong foundations in Writing

In Reception and Key Stage 1, children develop their writing through rich opportunities for speaking, listening, storytelling, vocabulary development, phonics, mark making and sentence construction.

Oral rehearsal is an important part of the writing process. Children say sentences aloud before writing them, rehearse vocabulary and discuss ideas with adults and peers.

Reading and writing are closely connected. High-quality texts provide models of vocabulary, sentence structures, punctuation, grammar, organisation and style. Children identify how writers create meaning and effect and apply what they notice to their own writing.

Texts and extracts are adapted where necessary to meet pupils' assessed reading and phonics stages while maintaining the intended writing learning.

Teaching and learning the St Matthew's Way

Writing lessons follow the St Matthew's Way of teaching and learning. Teachers establish what pupils already know, introduce precise vocabulary and the learning goal, model new learning explicitly, check understanding, provide guided practice and provide opportunities for independent application.

The I do, we do, you do approach is used to gradually move pupils towards independence.

Teacher talk is purposeful and concise, allowing substantial time for children to think, rehearse, discuss, write and improve their work. Silent signals support calm transitions and attention.

Mixed-ability seating and talk partners provide opportunities for children to discuss ideas and explain their choices. Flexible grouping is used where a specific writing need requires additional support or challenge.

Teachers use modelled writing, shared writing, guided writing, independent writing, dictated writing where appropriate, oral rehearsal, talk partners, choral repetition, sentence stems and purposeful questioning. P4C approaches may be used where they support discussion and the development of ideas.

Inclusion and adaptation

All pupils should have access to ambitious writing opportunities. Teachers adapt teaching and resources responsively while maintaining the intended learning goal.

For pupils with SEND, adaptations may include Widgeo symbols, visual prompts, vocabulary banks, sentence stems, writing frames, word banks, oral rehearsal, additional modelling, reduced recording demands where appropriate, alternative methods of recording, targeted guided writing and additional time.

Pupils learning English benefit from explicit vocabulary teaching, visuals, oral rehearsal, repetition and opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts.

Adaptations remove barriers to learning without unnecessarily reducing the ambition of the writing curriculum.

Assessment and responsive teaching

Assessment is an integral part of writing teaching. Teachers assess prior knowledge through discussion, targeted questioning, writing samples, retrieval activities, Sentence Accuracy, short tasks and low-stakes quizzes where appropriate.

During lessons, teachers continually assess pupils' understanding through observation, questioning, discussion and written work. A no-hands-up approach, including lollipop sticks and supportive cold calling, enables teachers to assess a broad range of pupils while allowing appropriate thinking and processing time.

Teachers actively identify misconceptions and gaps in sentence construction, grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, handwriting, composition and text structure.

Where misconceptions are identified, teaching is adapted immediately or planned for subsequent lessons. End-of-unit writing provides information about pupils' ability to independently apply the knowledge and skills taught. Assessment information is used to identify consolidation, further teaching and next steps.

Personal development and Building the Kingdom

Writing provides pupils with opportunities to explore themselves, others and the world around them. Through literature and writing, children explore different experiences, cultures, communities, relationships and viewpoints. They learn to listen to others, communicate respectfully, develop empathy and express their own ideas.

Writing opportunities may be linked to visits, visitors, drama and performance, local history, community experiences, other curriculum subjects and Catholic life.

In keeping with Catholic Social Teaching, children are encouraged to consider themes such as dignity, compassion, fairness, stewardship, service and care for others where these arise naturally from the curriculum.

Leadership monitoring and review

Class teachers are responsible for planning, teaching, adapting and assessing writing in their classrooms.

The Writing Lead provides support, guidance and professional development to ensure that writing is taught consistently and effectively across the school.

Allocated subject leadership time enables the Writing Lead to undertake learning walks, review planning, monitor books and standards, review curriculum coverage, monitor the impact of Sentence Accuracy and handwriting, support Ready Steady Write planning, provide coaching and team teaching where appropriate, identify strengths and areas for development, and share effective practice.

The Writing Lead provides regular reports to governors so that governors are aware of strengths, areas for development and next steps in writing. Monitoring findings, assessment information and staff feedback inform action planning, curriculum development and future CPD.

Working with families

Parents and carers are encouraged to support children's writing development through reading, talking, discussing vocabulary and providing opportunities for children to write for real purposes.

School information may provide families with guidance about supporting spelling, reading regularly, developing vocabulary, handwriting, grammar and punctuation. Teachers communicate with families about individual progress and support where appropriate.

Homework

At St Matthew's, children receive weekly SPaG homework to reinforce and practise the grammar, punctuation and language knowledge taught in school.

Homework is linked to current or previously taught learning and provides children with regular opportunities to revisit key knowledge and develop fluency. Teachers use pupils' responses to identify areas which may require further teaching or consolidation in school.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing is applied across the wider curriculum. Children are provided with opportunities to write for meaningful purposes in subjects including Science, History, Geography, RE, PSHE and other curriculum areas.

Teachers explicitly teach the vocabulary, sentence structures and subject-specific language required for children to communicate their understanding effectively. Children's writing across the curriculum provides opportunities to transfer and apply the writing skills taught through English.

Related guidance

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework; National Curriculum for England – English; Ready Steady Write – Literacy Counts; Letter-Join handwriting programme; school phonics and spelling provision; School SEND Policy; School Assessment Policy; School Reading Policy; School Curriculum Policy; Catholic Social Teaching and the school's Catholic mission.