



Writing Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Description of School

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided Catholic School where parents, school and parish work together to deepen the children's awareness of their faith and to provide a challenging fulfilling education.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is

A calm, holy place where we pray, think and celebrate God's world.

Where we can share a true love of learning through our creative and inclusive curriculum.

Where we celebrate and nurture the gifts and talents of every person as uniquely created in the image of God.

A supportive community where home, school and church work together.

Learning and laughing together in the light of God's love.

1. Intent and Aims

The English national curriculum (2014) intends to ensure that all pupils:

- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied language heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At St Joseph's we endeavour to create a love for literacy. We want every child to leave our school with the skills of an excellent writer who has the ability to write with fluency and able to embed basic skills in order to widen their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. This will allow them to develop their writing so they are able to articulate, communicate and organise their ideas for the intended audience and purpose.

- That they have an author's voice.
- They think about the impact they want their writing to have on the reader and know how they will achieve this.
- Children have a sophisticated bank of vocabulary and an excellent knowledge of writing techniques to extend details or description.
- They can structure and organise their writing to suit the genre they are writing and include a variety of sentence structures.
- Children are able to display excellent transcription skills that ensure their writing is well presented, punctuated, spelt correctly and neat.
- Children are able to re-read, edit and improve their writing so every piece of writing they produce is to the best of their ability and better than the last.

Throughout their time at St Joseph's, children develop their skills by exploring a whole range of different genres, with a focus on exploring a range of models of excellence and using these to guide the drafting and editing process.

It is important to note that we not only develop a real enjoyment of writing in English lessons but in all subjects across the curriculum. We expect the highest standards of writing every time a child writes in any subject.

In order to fully support our children in their writing, at the heart of our English teaching is the Pie Corbett 'Talk for Writing' (T4W) approach.

- The T4W approach means that children will rehearse sentence and language patterns that they can then draw upon and adapt in their own writing, not only in English, but across the curriculum.
- T4W encourages regular discussion of vocabulary and the meaning of unfamiliar words which will help the children to broaden their own vocabulary.
- Children are encouraged to take ownership of their own ideas in writing and revisit their writing critically.
- Teachers model the high expectations through shared writing which will then be displayed for children to access to support their independent task.
- Children learn to write confidently across both fiction and non-fiction which can then be applied across the curriculum.

2. Talk for Writing - Planning Structure

Talk For Writing, developed by the author Pie Corbett, is a fun, creative yet also rigorous approach to develop writers. At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we use Talk for Writing to support our text-based approach to the English curriculum.

For Years 1-6 each unit of work follows a clear structure of imitation and innovation as well as including assessment in the form of the 'Cold Writes' and 'Hot Writes' (invention). Early years (Reception) use elements of the structure to support the pupils emerging writing.

Teachers will plan for year appropriate grammar and spelling patterns / phonic sounds to support the writing process, with reference to the National Curriculum.

3. Cold Write

A 'Cold Write' is completed at the beginning of each unit and informs the teacher's planning depending on what skills the children need to develop. A prompt is given to the children as a focus for their writing.

4. Imitation

The main focus of the imitation stage is storytelling focused on a model text, which enables the children to explore text features, sentence structure, language patterns and how a specific text-type is composed. Model texts are provided by the teachers.

The imitation stage will consist of the following activities:

- Storytelling using a text map of the model text. Actions for key words are agreed across the school. Children then have the opportunity to create their own text map.
- Warm-up and embed words through poetry and short burst writing
- Deepen understanding through drama and role play
- ‘Read as a reader’ activities are completed. This may include vocabulary work and comprehension activities.
- ‘Read as a writer’ activities are completed. The structure of a model text is explored using the boxing up technique and a Writer’s Toolkit is completed as a task with a pre-agreed focus.
- Grammar and punctuation is taught through the model text where possible.

5. Innovation

Children use their in-depth understanding of the model text to write their own version, based on a whole class change to the original text.

- Planning is completed using the boxing up grid completed during the innovation stage.
- Writing is completed over a series of lessons.
- Shared writing is completed during each of the lessons and is informed by previous learning and writing completed by the children to enable misconceptions to be addressed quickly.
- Children have frequent opportunities to revisit their writing and edit at the point of writing.

6. Hot Write (Invention) - Impact

The ‘Hot Write’ is completed at the end of each unit of writing. The same prompt as the ‘Cold Write’ can be given. All writing is recorded in children’s English books (except Year 2 and 6 who have an extended writing book). This provides a valuable assessment opportunity and shows the progress the children have made over the course of a unit.

Our Writing curriculum is of a high quality, well thought out and is planned to demonstrate progression. If children are keeping up with the curriculum, they’re deemed to be making good or better progress. In addition, we measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- A reflection on standards achieved against the planned outcomes.
- Children can understand and apply the fundamental principles of spelling grammar and punctuation in their writing.
- Children can evaluate, improve and redraft their writing.
- Children are responsible, competent, confident and creative writers.

7. Word Aware

As a school we are enhancing the way we teach vocabulary by using the strategies and ideas from the ‘Word Aware’ program. Word Aware is a comprehensive and structured approach to use throughout the school to promote vocabulary development in all children.

Children need twelve meaningful encounters of a word before they really know it. Word Aware promotes a method called STAR, which stands for Select, Teach, Activate and Review. This process ensures the children encounter the new words many times and many different ways.

Word Aware allows us, using a whole school approach, to teach all pupils how to understand the relationship between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.

Pupils will be taught how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Word aware is equally effective for specific classes and groups or individual learners. It builds on the knowledge of the components of a word.

8. Handwriting

- Reception introduces pre-cursive writing to children to ensure a smooth transition into continuous cursive in year 1
- continuous cursive script will be taught in all year groups, from year 1 -6
- An agreed cursive script is displayed in all classrooms

- All teachers to use cursive script in all modelled writing.
- Handwriting practise will take place in Years 1- 4 to ensure neat, joined handwriting.
- Years 5 and 6 will need to do interventions for children with specific needs to support their handwriting.

9. Spelling

Years 1-6 use the 'Spelling Shed' program, using evidence-based best practices and strategies to teach and practice spelling. Learning to spell is a key ingredient to becoming a good reader and is far more intricate than just memorising words. Read-Write-inc is also used to support spelling throughout the school. This effective spelling instruction of Spelling shed teaches strategies rather than memorisation, and typically includes a combination of direct instruction, word study, and practice.

Direct instruction is explicit and systematic and involves teaching patterns of the English language, as well as common exceptions. This includes:

- Alphabetic Principle
- Spelling-Pattern Knowledge (phonics)
- Generalisations, not 'rules'

The word study involves teaching pupils strategies for decoding and encoding words, such as identifying morphemes, prefixes, suffixes, and roots. This includes:

- Spelling Variations - based on word origins (etymology)
- Meaning (morphology)

Practice is both guided and independent, giving pupils the opportunity to apply their learning to new words and contexts. It also incorporates multisensory techniques and activities to build a broader understanding of a concept.

Encoding, or writing of words, is based on the same fundamental abilities as decoding, or reading print. They are reverse and compatible processes that rely upon each other.

Spelling instruction is linked with phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. Many of the practices and strategies used to teach phonics also help to teach early spelling.

In later year groups, the focus of instruction and practice shifts to morphology and etymology. This helps pupils to use their knowledge of word parts and origins to connect to new and unfamiliar words and build vocabulary acquisition.

In class pupils use spelling journals in their lessons. These will enable the children to:

- take responsibility for their spelling learning
- refer back to previous learning

10. Phonics – Read-Write-Inc

'Read Write Inc.' produced by Ruth Miskin, is a method of learning centred around letter sounds and phonics, blending them together to read and write words and using these learnt sounds in their reading and writing.

In Reception and Year 1, children will follow a daily phonic programme to create fluent, enthusiastic readers, confident speakers and willing writers. When possible, in year 2 and KS2, some children who are not yet fluent readers and accurate writers will complete a 1:1 or a group intervention programme that equips them with the skills to read and understand texts confidently, write fluently, think critically and articulate thoughts and ideas clearly.

Video lessons are also sent home regularly, so that children can continue to practise their sounds at home. At the core of the programme, we deliver a lively and vigorous teaching of synthetic phonics. Children learn the 44 common sounds in the English language and how to sound-blend words for reading (decoding) at the same time as developing handwriting skills and spelling (encoding). The children have the pleasure of reading exciting storybooks which is matched to their level – so that they have early success in reading.

Children are given home reading books which match their RWI level. The children are assessed and grouped according to their ability at the end of each half/term.

11. SEND Provision / Enrichment and Challenge

As an inclusive school we recognise the need to tailor our approach to support children with SEND as well as those who are identified as benefitting from further enrichment and challenge.

We teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all children. We provide differentiated learning to ensure all children make expected progress from their individual start points. WIDGET is used effectively to scaffold children's work when necessary and dyslexia font is used whenever possible.

A range of targeted interventions provide opportunities to address gaps in knowledge and understanding / diminish the difference between peers. Pre-requisite skills address the specific needs of individuals and support the application of interventions into classwork.

12. Assessment

Assessment of writing is done on a continuous cycle and progress is tracked using assessment windscreens and our National Curriculum assessment trackers.

Termly in-house moderation sessions take place amongst teaching staff to ensure judgements are robust and are standardised across the school. These are led by the assessment coordinator with the support of the English writing Lead.

13. Professional Development and support

Professional support, coaching, training and guidance is made available for staff to support their understanding and develop their skills in the teaching of writing through:

- Staff meetings.
- Discussions with SLT and English Subject Leader.
- Discussions and good practice within teams.
- Moderation of children's writing across year groups, phases, whole schools and with other schools.
- Talk for Writing training for all staff
- Planning support from English lead/ English team
- Talk for Writing planning resources (Fiction and Non-fiction books)
- Spelling Shed planning resources