



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Part of the St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Writing policy

"Believe, Succeed and Soar"

January 2025



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Grantham

Mission Statement

Believe, Succeed and Soar

Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to **Believe, Succeed** and **Soar**. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.

'Do little things with great love' St Therese of Lisieux

Our Gospel Values

With God's love we show:



Love

'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.' John 15:12

We recognise God's unconditional love to be our source of love. A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.



Respect

'In everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

We believe that, as children of God, we have a duty not only to respect our friends and teachers but also to show respect to our environment as we are stewards of the earth.



Honesty

'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' 1 John 3:18

We show honesty in all we say and do, in the pursuit of justice and fairness.



Forgiveness

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven.' Luke 6:37

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others, finding God in all things.



Generosity

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35

Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we have a role to serve our neighbours and the wider community. Through fundraising and prayer, we will strive to help the people in our world, our common home.



Patience

'Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' John 13:7

We remember to be patient and trust in God as we know he has a much greater plan for us. He allows us to be tested so that we learn to walk in his ways and trust in him.

Introduction

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. It is during a child's primary education that the foundations of all aspects of English are laid. This makes English the most important aspect of the curriculum in a primary school. In the literate society in which we live, an ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in the written word, and to read a wide range of different types of text including ICT texts, is essential if children are to achieve their potential throughout their schooldays and on into adult life.

English is the medium through which all learning takes place, inside and outside the classroom. Most learning takes place through the development and use of language. This gives the teaching of English /Literacy a special place within the curriculum of St Mary's School. English is a core subject in the National Curriculum and is delivered as a dedicated subject, but is also an integral part of every lesson, which is taught in school. The teaching of English embraces all aspects of language development, giving equal consideration to both the spoken and the written language. The development of language skills is of the utmost importance across the whole curriculum and therefore the teaching of English is given high priority. To ensure our learners have opportunities to access all areas of the English curriculum and in order for these opportunities to be effective, input is required from: parents, speech and language therapists and advisory services for learners with sensory impairments. Learners for whom English is a second language, bi-lingual support and acknowledgement of the importance of their mother tongue is paramount.

Curriculum Intent

At St Mary's Primary Academy School, it is our intent to nurture and develop the whole child. We intend that the curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion. One of our priorities is helping children read and develop their all-important comprehension skills. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening and who can use discussion to communicate and further their learning. The overarching aim for English in our curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

Implementation

We have a rigorous, progressive English curriculum and framework, that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. We use a wide variety of quality texts and resources to motivate and inspire our children. Teachers also ensure that cross curricular links with concurrent topic work are woven into the programme of study.

We aim:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their audience.
- To encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard.
- To show children how to adapt their speech to variety of audiences and situations.
- To teach children effective communication skills, including both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of creative activities which include drama, art and music.
- To help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge.
- To use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- To help them to be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
- To develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts.
- To read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- To develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, knowing that reading is a wonderful relaxation tool and enhances mental health, as well as

developing knowledge. We aim for them to be able to identify a number of authors and genres they enjoy reading.

- To acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- To appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- To write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

Impact

The impact of the engaging rich, literate curriculum will be evident in the oracy skills, passion for reading and range of writing that children of all ages produce across the school. The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. With the implementation of the writing journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children will become more confident writers and by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar to them and the teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills.

Curriculum

At St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy, we follow the statutory guidance for the teaching of English, as set out in the National Curriculum 2014. We aim to develop the English skills children will need to equip them for everyday life in an ever-changing society. We strive to create an engaging, language rich environment, where children can learn and develop skills in a purposeful manner, making strong links with other curriculum areas where appropriate. Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Primary National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014).

The National Curriculum in England breaks down English into these key areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Inclusion

We aim to provide the best teaching for all children so that they all reach their potential in English according to their individual abilities. We identify pupils or groups of pupils that may need additional support and take steps to improve their attainment or deepen their learning. Staff also use SEND adaptations to support the children. This can include a pre-teaching approach, precision teaching for identified children or use timely intervention to support marking and feedback within lessons etc. Children that are consistently achieving above age related expectations are identified and suitable learning challenges provided in line with greater depth challenges to assist them to achieve and gain a deeper understanding of their learning.

At St Mary's, we agree that a more able child is any child who is attaining beyond their 'age related expectations'. This means they are achieving at a higher standard within their own year group expectations. Higher attaining pupils will be predominately supported by their class teachers and given activities that allow them to gain further 'mastery' of their learning by applying it in different ways.

Some pupils who are more able in English may generally demonstrate levels of literacy or oral skills that are notably advanced for their age group. Other pupils may have unusual abilities in specific areas eg poetry, drama, or their knowledge of grammar, while being unexceptional in the rest of their English work. In these cases, it may be hard to relate pupils' ability to age related descriptions. It is important to take a whole-school view to ensure that higher ability in English is also demonstrated in different areas of the curriculum.

WRITING

English is delivered at St Mary's as both a discrete subject and through a cross-curricular approach. Long, medium and short-term plans for writing are based on objectives in the National Curriculum 2014.

The National Curriculum for Writing consists of:

- Transcription – spelling and handwriting
- Composition – articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing (this includes planning, drafting, writing, evaluating, proof-reading, editing and reading aloud their work)
- Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Discrete lessons will usually have a whole class beginning, some small group and individual work and finish with a plenary session to evaluate what has been learnt. During the lesson, the teacher will circulate to explain a teaching point or to consolidate learning. Where barriers to learning have been identified, learners will receive extra support through planned Intervention programmes and personalised learning in order to help them achieve their individual learning targets. Throughout the school, the children are encouraged to recognise that to write is to communicate meaning. Our school views writing as a developmental process and therefore what each child is able to do at each stage is valued, praised and built upon. However, we will have high expectations of what each child can achieve in writing, with appropriate support from the teacher.

Core texts rationale:

We endeavour to ensure that all children, even the most reluctant reader, have read and studied, at least 6 quality texts each year. Where possible, these texts will link with the school's overarching themes that run through each term; allowing children to make links and show clear progression through each Year group. Where quality texts do not directly link with a theme or a topic covered in foundation subjects, there will be a clear rationale for their selection, with an aim for drawing on links for current or previous themes, or links with other areas of the curriculum for that term. All class core texts will be used as a stimulus for writing lessons to ensure deep understanding of the text with contextual value to their writing. English planning from EYFS to Year 6 centres all writing around a high-quality text and a variety of WAGOLL/model texts.

EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets literacy as one of the seven areas of learning for children, and this includes beginning to write. It says, "literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write." Children aren't formally assessed on their writing in the EYFS but are assessed through daily observation throughout the year. We assess our pupils' progress through termly benchmarking sessions to moderate children's performance. We use our developmental age bands for EYFS to inform whether our children are working towards, in line with or beyond the national expectation.

Children learn to write in the EYFS through a combination of adult-directed activities and child-initiated play. For example, they might play at going shopping and 'write' their own shopping list. Alongside play, teachers will encourage children to begin to write through more formal activities. For example, they might draw a picture of a flower and be asked to label the parts or write their own version of a well-known story like Goldilocks.

Adults support children in small group, guided writing sessions to develop writing strategies that are specific to the individual child or small group. Daily, systematic phonics teaching enables children to learn correct grapheme, phoneme correspondence and key non-decodable words, which they can then use in their writing. Talking is the basis for all writing in the EYFS. Children do not have the skills to write anything down, so what they say is a precursor to their writing. You cannot write a sentence unless you can say it. Learning to write also involves all the senses. 'For instance, if the children are learning about The Gingerbread Man, not only will they read it over and over again, but they'll act it out, join in with reciting it, and use story maps with pictures of what happens to act as a visual

reminder. Using the senses helps the story to become deeply embedded in children's minds and adds to their store of language and sentence patterns. Introducing Talk for Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully. Learning to write is a gradual process. At first, children's writing is just mark making, but as time passes and they begin to learn the alphabet, they will begin to make letter shapes, often starting with the letters in their name. Through adult-directed activities, they will also pick up conventions like moving from left to right on the page, and from top to bottom. As children begin to learn about phonics, their writing enters a new phase where they start to write letters. At first, they tend to write down the most obvious sounds in a word – so, for instance, 'cat' might be 'c t' – but as their phonics learning progresses, they will write with more accuracy.

KS1 and KS2

Children are taught how to write in a variety of genres, including stories, poems, non-chronological reports, instructions, balanced arguments etc. They are encouraged to write for a range of audiences, including themselves. They are given meaningful purposes for writing. Throughout the school, the children are given opportunities to plan, draft, edit and re-draft their written work. Key Stage 1 children will do this in the context of discussion with their teacher, in Talk for Writing sessions.

Key Stage 2 children are given frequent opportunities to be involved in the whole writing process of planning, drafting, editing, redrafting and presentation, in both Shared and Guided Writing sessions. Whenever possible, the computer will be used for drafting and editing writing.

- Each unit of writing is linked to a high quality, vocabulary rich text that the children have studied in depth. The children learn the features of the genre e.g. the layout/organisation of the text and the associated language features.
- Children will first be 'immersed' in the text and this is when the children get to see and engage with different examples of the text type. They will use a lot of Speaking and Listening skills, such as following instructions (verbal and written), verbally explaining how to do specific tasks, recounting about a trip or event in/out of school, looking at different texts to find out information on a topic (maybe one from their Science, History, Geography, DT or RE work). They will capture their thoughts and ideas through daily incidental writing (post-its, brainstorm, mind maps etc.) in their books and for the teacher to model choosing most effective ones to go up on to a working wall.
- Before writing, grammar, punctuation and writing skills are practised and referred to throughout the unit and displayed on working walls.
- After the 'text immersion' stage, children will then learn about a particular text type based on the core text and this is taught over the course of two weeks.
- Word banks are used across the curriculum to support children in using adventurous and technical vocabulary in their writing. Children also have access to spelling support displays in their classroom. These could include high frequency words, 'tricky' words and topic words.
- In KS2, children produce a first draft of writing using a checklist of the features that they need to include which is then assessed by themselves or another child. They then can respond to feedback given and use a purple 'polishing' pen to make improvements to their work. A final draft is then produced.
- In KS1, the children assess their writing regularly. Teachers display a child's work and the whole class then discuss, edit and improve the writing with the support of the teacher. The children then edit their own writing before continuing the piece of work. Only one draft is produced.

- Regular extended writing sessions are provided and allow the children thinking and oral rehearsal time before being becoming a quiet, calm environment for the children to write.
- The majority of children work independently during the writing session. However, some groups may receive extra support from an adult.
- Children have the opportunity to practise their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment of Writing

EYFS

Assessment in the EYFS consists of two main types – on-going assessment which is what teachers do on a daily basis to make decisions about what the child has learned or can do already in order to help the child move on in their learning. This is sometimes called ‘formative’ assessment because it informs the next steps that are planned with the child and the parent. The second type of assessment known as ‘summative’ assessment takes place twice in EYFS. Firstly, when a child is between 24 and 36 months – outcomes of this assessment are recorded and parents and practitioners use the information gained to identify a child’s strengths and their learning needs; the second assessment takes place towards the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage when children are in the final term of the reception class. This ‘sums up’ all the different information from on-going assessments that have been made about the child. This information is added to a record of children’s achievement, which is related to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) – showing the levels different children have achieved in the seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS.

KS1 and KS2

The daily assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson helps them to adjust their daily plans. They match these lesson-by-lesson assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Verbal feedback during the lesson is given to help guide children's progress. All children are encouraged to assess their own work against the agreed success criteria and to make judgements about how they can improve. (ref: Marking and Feedback policy). In KS2, towards the latter stages of a two-week cycle, the class teacher will give verbal or written feedback about how their ‘final piece of writing’ can be improved next time. The children will be expected to show that they have achieved this target in the next piece. This will then be used to measure progress against key objectives, and to help teachers plan for the next unit of work. Cross-curricular writing is considered when assessing children’s overall writing at the end of the year.

In addition to daily assessment, teachers make summative assessments at three stages during the academic year, using SATs to assess spelling, punctuation and grammar in Year 6 and NFER tests in Yrs 2, 3, 4 and 5. Moderation of writing (both internal and external) are used as quality assurance for ensuring accurate assessments of writing. These are used by the subject coordinator and senior leadership team to assess progress against both school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, interventions for the next term are planned.

Grammar and Punctuation

Within the national curriculum, grammar and punctuation are key focuses and as such, we now teach these as an explicit part of the curriculum.

At St Mary’s, we use a ‘3-pronged approach’ to grammar and punctuation and this begins in KS1 and follows through into KS2. It is essential that children are taught to use the correct vocabulary from an early age and all teachers model the use of this when they teach grammar.

The first stage of our grammar teaching is the explicit stand-alone session. This allows teachers to explain and model for the children the grammar or punctuation which is being taught. Children are then able to practice this new skill. This develops the use of fluency of the new grammar/punctuation skill.

The second stage then shows the teacher modelling the grammar or punctuation through the class text or a cross curricular example. Children are then able to see the new learning being used in context.

Finally, children would be expected to use the new learning in their own writing therefore embedding the skill. This learning is then assessed in all writing and in an end of unit piece of writing.

Inclusion

All children have particular learning needs, including children on the SEND register. Progress is monitored termly, as well as through formative classroom assessment, and provisions are put into place to support identified children. Writing support is carefully chosen to meet the needs of all children, particularly those who need extra support or challenge. These include 1:1 sessions, small writing groups and phonics intervention groups.

SPELLING

Good spelling is a result of good teaching which requires a full understanding of what spelling is—not the rote learning of strings of letters, but a sociolinguistic construction, each word a wonderful tapestry of meaning and history. (M. Adoniou, 2019, International Literacy Association)

Introduction

Research, as well as classroom experience, indicated that a lack of competence in spelling can cause severe problems to young writers. They may feel embarrassed and frustrated. This may lead them to write fewer words and create compositions of lower quality, which are limited to the words they know they can spell (Joshi et al, 2009)

Spelling is a skill which is learned, not an innate ability and therefore it can and should be taught.

Aims:

- To teach spelling systematically throughout the school; and to adopt a whole school approach.
- To encourage children to develop and learn a personal bank of frequently used words, as indicated in the English National Curriculum.
- To equip children with the strategies to tackle unknown words independently and sensibly, thus avoiding dependence upon the teacher.
 - To encourage children to focus on the quality of the word and its impact, rather than choosing a word that they can spell, that may not have the same effect on their writing.
- To make children aware of the writing process so that they can write fluently, confidently and independently, concentrating on spelling when and where it is appropriate.

Developing Spelling:

In order to be an efficient speller, a child needs to:

- Be able to segment words into component phonemes.
- Know which graphemes represent the phonemes in words.
- Be able to distinguish visually between words which are 'legitimately' spelled, e.g. wait, wate.
- Know the meanings of the homophones, e.g. been and bean, so that the correct spelling is used.
- Recall, e.g. by mental image, memorising the order of tricky letters and 'tricky' words.
- Know spelling conventions, e.g., relating to double letters.
- Look for similarities in the spellings of words which are etymologically related, eg. sign, signal.

The Teaching of Spelling

Active Spelling is an approach to teaching an understanding of spelling and vocabulary for children in Year 2 to 6. It uses the principles of mnemonics, images and verbal reasoning (through a dialogic talk-based approach) to aid the retention of spellings and in turn develop the breadth of vocabulary.

Children are taught how to use phonetic, visual, morphemic and etymological knowledge to spell words (sounds, the 'look' of words, meaning of parts of words, and the derivation of words etc).

We allow discrete time for our pupils to study words and thus build their knowledge of how words are constructed. Children in turn develop their own repertoire of to aid the learning and retention of spellings and vocabulary.

Staff will:

Share the word first- use metacognition strategy of I do, we do, you do

Use:

a) Morphology- do the children know the meaning of the word (verbal or written)

b) Orthology- they must:

- Study the word- box up/ list of questions (what is the first word/last word/prefix/suffix/root words/ascenders/descenders/ double letters/ digraphs etc)
- Write the word 5 times on wbs, rub it out each time and rewrite it- check against the spelling you have modelled

EYFS and KS1

Phonetic knowledge underpins the teaching of spelling in EYFS and KS1. At St Mary's, we use the RWInc phonics scheme. This is to support children in developing their phonetical understanding and is taught daily and consolidated during writing sessions and when writing across the curriculum.

In Year two, children who have passed the phonics screening check will follow the Key Stage 2 expectations for spelling in line with the year two National Curriculum objectives. In Year 1 and 2, the 100/200 high frequency words and Common exception words are explicitly taught.

In EYFS, spelling is taught alongside the learning of graphemes and digraphs. Children initially master spelling their names before moving on to applying the sounds they have learnt in their own independent writing. E.g. map, cat, etc. Emphasis is always placed on children 'having a go' at applying the sounds that they have learnt rather than achieving the correct spelling.

There is also a great focus on children learning how to spell high frequency 'tricky' words e.g. the, so, are.

Spelling activities are planned for both in focus English activities and as part of the continuous provision of the learning space. These might include:

- Exploring rhyme
- Making words out of magnetic letters
- Making words out of playdough
- Matching 'tricky' words

Key Stage 2

It is expected that in Key Stage 2, the majority of children will have a secure understanding of phonics and will increasingly use morphology and etymology to support their spelling. Phonics is not taught explicitly (unless as an intervention to target individual or group needs) but is still consolidated through the teaching of spelling, reading and handwriting. In addition to consolidating phonetical understanding, in Key Stage 2, children need to understand relationships between meaning and spelling where relevant e.g. understanding the links between medical and medicine. Pupils will also understand the principles of prefixes and suffixes. Teachers are aware of spelling patterns taught throughout the school so that rules can be consolidated and built on. Wherever possible, children are encouraged to identify their own spelling errors. Children are taught to use dictionaries, word banks and other classroom resources to gain access to correct spellings of words.

Dictionary Use

There are a range of dictionaries and thesauri in each class, which are differentiated to suit the range of needs within the class. As well as carrying out investigations using dictionaries and undertaking specific dictionary work, the children are also encouraged to have dictionaries on the table during reading and writing lessons in order to research the meaning of an unknown word.

Assessment of Spelling

KS1 children, who are taught through the RWInc programme, are assessed every half term.

In addition, children are formally assessed at the end of every term. The 100 and 200 high frequency words and common exception words are checked by the teacher.

In KS2, the children are assessed on the common exception words for their year group and in addition to this, SWST spelling tests are used to find a spelling age for the child.

Teachers will also assess spelling through the application of these spelling words and spelling patterns across the child's written work and through an end of term writing assessment.

Class teachers are accountable for tracking, monitoring and assessing the progress that their children are making towards meeting the expected age-related spelling standards. There is a firm expectation that:

- Teachers use daily assessment and performance data to pick out gaps in their learning and action next steps.
- Assessment of spellings will be undertaken 3 times a year.

In addition, children's spelling ability will be assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs. All year groups are assessed every term using optional SATs in Year 6 and NFER grammar assessments in Years 2-5.

Inclusion

Where appropriate, staff create individualised spelling lists to target individual gaps with individual children. This will be evident in GAFs and through intervention records.

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