

## Writing Policy

At St James Primary School we aspire for every single child to succeed. Through our Christian vision we thoroughly believe that all children have the potential to thrive regardless of their starting points, personal context and characteristics. Our children learn through a supportive and purposeful curriculum, linked tightly to national curriculum objectives, that demonstrates that "With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome. Through Him all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26) Our staff are committed to developing a love of learning, whilst developing the skills and values to support the all-round development of every pupil. St James C of E Primary School is a special place where we dream, believe, learn and achieve.

Writing is one of the primary forms of communication. It allows thoughts to be clarified, emotions to be expressed, opinions to be stated, experiences and explanations to be shared. It is also one of the more difficult aspects of the language as its many conventions are difficult to follow and master. The written word is open to critical appraisal as writing faces scrutiny and correction in areas which go beyond meaning and content. Given the right environment and stimulus it is an aspect of literacy that can give enormous pleasure. We aim to enable our pupils to consider themselves as 'writers', to encourage confidence and the motivation to want to write and to have sufficient control over the mechanics of writing to allow for skilful development of the writing process. We aim to develop fluency and legibility. We aim to offer a whole language approach so that pupils can learn to express clarity of thought and be able to manage language appropriately. We aim to set high expectations of pupils and to give writing a high profile in all its forms.

### Intent

We promote high standards of English by encouraging pupils to develop a love of reading, writing, speaking and listening, so that they can communicate effectively for the rest of their lives. It is our intention when teaching the English curriculum that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners. We ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential in reading, writing, speaking and listening, spelling and grammar.

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and a second language for many of our pupils. We understand that English is a prerequisite for educational and social progress as it underpins the work undertaken in all other areas of the curriculum. The acquisition of language skills is of the utmost importance and therefore the teaching of all aspects English is given a high priority within our school.

At St James's we aim:

- To develop children, who are imaginative, creative, independent, inquisitive, inquiring and confident writers.
- To provide children with a range of writing skills and strategies to enable them to write confidently with comprehension, cohesion and enjoyment for a range of purposes, in a variety of contexts and for different audiences.
- To ensure no opportunity is missed to foster an enjoyment of writing amongst pupils and a recognition of its value, by setting work that is challenging, inspirational and motivating, helping them to develop a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards writing, which will nurture a life-long love of writing.
- To provide opportunities to explore a variety of different genres and to be exposed regularly to high quality texts, providing a model for pupils to aspire to.
- To ensure children have a clear understanding of the writing process: plan, draft, revise and edit their own work, and learn how to self and peer assess against the success criteria.
- To develop children's ability to self-assess by reflecting on the quality of their writing, encouraging them to construct informed opinions and implement strategies to improve their own work.
- To monitor writing progress effectively to evaluate, promote and maintain high levels of attainment. • To ensure that children with writing difficulties are identified early and support is given promptly.
- To work in partnership with parents /carers in order to develop each child's full writing potential.

## Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2013) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

The new English programme of study (2014) is based on 4 areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading – word reading, comprehension
- Writing – transcription, spelling, handwriting, composition
- Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

## Long term memory

Knowledge empowers and nourishes children, it belongs to the many, not the few. A knowledge rich curriculum has the power to address issues of social disadvantaged and leaders at St James CE Primary have high ambitions so that all pupils can take full advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life.

Learning can be defined as alteration in long term memory, with this being the case leaders have implemented strategies taken from cognitive science to enhance and support pupils in the transfer of new knowledge into their long term memory.

Teaching staff have drawn on research focussing on Cognitive Load Theory, and teachers understand that pupils working memory is limited and that new content should be introduced to pupils in small and manageable steps to avoid overloading the working memory.

Research from Oliver Caviglioli has also been considered and leaders utilise strategies of dual coding to support pupils in integrating new knowledge into long term memory. By providing simple images to pupils when new content is introduced they can use both visual and auditory strategies to process the information, forming a greater link with long term memory. Spaced retrieval is also a strategy employed by teachers to enhance pupils retrieval and in turn secure knowledge into long term memory. Lessons typically begin with a daily retrieval opportunity and additional retrieval sessions are planned over the year.

Learning is a long term process and teachers utilise four main strategies to support pupils in being successful and confident learners. The agreed strategies are:

- Knowledge organisers (Topic and Science)
- New content in small, manageable steps
- Images to support new learning
- Spaced retrieval

## Intent

It is our intent at St James to provide pupils with a high-quality education in English that will teach pupils to speak, read and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others effectively, creatively and successfully. Writing is a crucial part of our curriculum. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum carefully in order to ensure that the children can learn more, know more and remember more.

All children from Foundation Stage to Year 6 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. With regards to writing, we intend for pupils to be able to write independently with resilience, apply the AGPS skills they have learnt, plan, draft, edit and evaluate their writing before producing their final pieces of writing.

To be able to do this effectively, pupils will focus on developing effective transcription and effective composition. They will also develop an awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Teachers will ensure pupils have an awareness of the complexity of the English language and are taught their year group spelling rules through daily spelling sessions using the Pixl spelling tracker resources. Pupils will have weekly

spelling tests including the testing of common exception words. Pupils will be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English.

## Implementation

The role of the teacher is:

- To enable pupils to know more, remember more and understand more and use their writing skills as a means of demonstrating this
- To promote a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards writing
- To create an interest in words and their meanings in order to broaden vocabulary
- To create confident, independent, resilient writers and spellers
- To provide the chance for every child to become a writer
- To create writers who can plan, draft, re-read, edit and improve their own writing
- To create writers with a legible, joined and fluent handwriting style
- To provide regular opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes and audiences
- To develop a broad range of writing skills that can be applied to a wide range of text types and genres across the whole curriculum.
- To prepare pupils for the next stages of their education.

Teachers have a good subject knowledge and are kept up to date through professional development and personal reading.

Strategies we use to develop Writing Skills:

- Both transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition skills (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) are explicitly taught.
- Transcription and composition skills are also applied and developed in writing for curriculum areas.
- Children have frequent opportunities to read aloud their written work for an audience.
- Throughout the teaching of writing, links are made to reading. We have adopted the Talk for Writing method to structure writing units in Key Stage One. At the start of a new writing unit children analyse the structural and language features of a specific text type and develop their own success criteria to guide their subsequent writing.
- In KS2 we use Read, Write, Perform to structure the writing units. Each unit starts with a benchmark piece and ends with an independent write and then the most useful grammar is taught throughout.
- Pupils are taught how to plan, edit and redraft their writing, as well as producing a best copy.
- Pupils are taught effective composition by forming, articulating and communicating ideas, before organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Teachers have a good subject knowledge and are kept up to date through professional development and personal reading.

## Developing Writing Skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and celebrated. As their phonic knowledge increases, so does their ability to write independently. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities and independently apply their phonic skills through role play, creative activities and the outdoor area.

## Developing Writing Skills in Key Stages 1 and 2

### Modelled Writing

This is used in English lessons. During this style of teaching, the teacher thinks aloud while writing and models strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model writing skills such as punctuating, rehearsing, proof reading, editing, word selection, sentence construction and paragraphing.

## **Shared Writing**

This can take place in any curriculum lesson but most frequently during English lessons. This strategy has far greater input from the children than modelled writing. The teacher invites contributions from the children and teaches writing skills such as rehearsal, proof reading and editing, and production of a final draft. Teachers may also demonstrate how to create or use success criteria to self or peer assess.

## **Talk for Writing (KS1)**

Good speaking and listening skills are crucial to the development of writing. Drama and role play opportunities are provided prior to writing when teaching poetry or narrative. Teachers also plan for talking opportunities through drama, talk partners and group discussion to enable children to verbally rehearse their ideas before writing. We adopt Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing approach to the teaching of narrative and non-fiction writing, through which children learn to internalise text structures and widen both their spoken and written vocabulary. This understanding is then used as the basis for their own writing innovations. During the Talk for Writing units of work, children complete a cold and hot write as well as a feedback, edit and redraft session.

## **Read Write Perform (LKS2)**

First, the class considers an 'exemplar text', one that exemplifies the final piece that they are aiming to create. The deconstruction of this text affords learners the opportunity to understand the genre itself. It helps them gain a greater understanding of the language choices an author has made. Why has the author chosen this word or used that language? What effect does it have on the text? What effect does it have on the reader? Now that we have considered the model text, it's important to look at how other writers have tackled the same genre and begin to question where similarities and differences lie. The use of comparative texts is essential if we are to move away from simply using a single text or experience as a 'hook' to engage and motivate future writers. Instead, by offering a variety of texts from a range of authors, learners begin to appreciate the limits and freedoms to which all writers are bound and, more importantly, begin to value the writing process itself.

It is during the deconstruction of these texts at word, sentence and whole text level that core reading skills are developed. This enables children to interrogate the text and authorial choices much more confidently. In this sense, they are applying higher order reading skills that have been taught explicitly during guided reading sessions in an authentic and purposeful way. 'Reading into writing' is the key that unlocks creativity and understanding. It supports and encourages children to develop their own writing style and nurtures their creativity. It gives them ownership of the writing process. To start, the teacher spends a lesson modelling a 'shared write'. This demonstrates how to reconstruct the written work and focuses on why particular sentence structures and features are to be used. Learners are given time to play around with these suggestions, which eventually leads into writing their own independent piece of work. It is important to note that these suggestions are seen as a set of tools, rather than rules. If an individual wants to use ideas and language of their own, they are encouraged to do so.

Now that the final piece has been written, it is all about the performance. Our children need to hear the texts others have written as well as hearing their own, in order to make revisions and understand the purpose of their writing. Through the performance element of these units the children will access technology in a way that empowers them to creatively transform their written work into a more engaging form of media, opening it up to a much wider audience. Sharing via twitter and facebook, contacting authors and actors and sharing their writing to a wider audience. Not only will this improve their digital literacy skills, but it will enhance their overall communication skills and confidence levels too. Adept speakers – those who can emote their work and connect with their audience, who bring their work to life in a meaningful and purposeful way – are the learners who possess greater depth. The human voice, with its power to engage and empower, should not be taken for granted.

It is why a performance element must be included. It allows the shy to step forward and the least confident to stand proud. It is a powerful tool that should be embraced and encouraged.

## **Grammar and Spelling –**

At St James, we firmly believe that a sound understanding of grammar will lead to an improved understanding of English and how the written and oral language works. Grammar is taught in Key Stage 1 and 2, in line with the objectives in the new curriculum and as outlined in the writing intent. In KS1 grammar is taught through RWI. Children who are off the RWI program are taught bespoke grammar and reading sessions on a daily basis. In addition to this, grammar is threaded through the Reciprocal Read Units that we teach and through the Talk 4 Writing approach. In KS2 grammar is taught through Reciprocal Reading units and Read Write Perform and in UKS2 through a ‘Wrap around a quality text’ approach. We believe that the teaching of grammar should, as far as possible, feed into the writing activity that the children are undertaking and should not be taught in isolation. Punctuation and grammar skills are taught within English lessons and spellings are taught through the Pixl spelling tracker resources.

### **Impact**

We ensure that our children develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and as a result achieve well. Pupils at St James achieve well in comparison with national standards and are ready for the next stage of their education. We intend that the impact is that children will have an understanding that writing has a real purpose and for them to be able to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions with confidence and fluency to others in a range of genres.

Throughout school, teachers used PiXL assessment materials to analyse pupils’ strengths and areas for development so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. Teachers then use this information to ensure that high quality interventions take place focusing on the gaps in their learning.

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