

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

Mr J O'Connor – Head Teacher



CURRICULUM POLICY FOR WRITING

Approved by:
Mr J O'Connor

Date: October 2025

Last reviewed
on: October 2025

Next review due
by: To be monitored and updated as required

CURRICULUM POLICY FOR WRITING

Mission Statement

“We Value All in the Name of Jesus the Christ”

Intent

At St Mary’s Catholic Primary Academy, we strive to give our children the best start in establishing secure foundations in writing. Our primary intent is to create avid readers which we believe is the foundation for any greater depth writer.

We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing and write clearly and accurately whilst selecting and adapting their language and style to suit a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

It is our intention that by the end of their primary education, all of our pupils will be able to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas effectively and with a developed awareness for purpose and audience.

Implementation

At St Mary’s Catholic Primary Academy, from Y1 to Y6, we use the Jason Wade writing cluster approach in order to support our children’s literacy skills. This approach focuses on the key skills of vocabulary and sentence structure, using texts as a starting point. Early Years use Pie Corbett’s ‘Talk for Writing’ approach.

We plan engaging units of work in order to enthuse, inspire and motivate our children, which are underpinned by core texts from our carefully developed reading spine. Our learning environments are stimulating but supportive and calming to ensure children are able to access the scaffolds needed to support their developing talk and writing.

Writing Clusters

The learning sequence of writing clusters is split into three clusters, across four weeks, where the children focus on knowledge, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure. Each cluster follows these stages: Read, Focus, Write and Polish.



Early Years Talk for Writing

This approach enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading it and analysing it. Through fun activities to help them rehearse the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their genre, children are helped to write in the same style. It works well from the Early Years up to Year 6.

Early Years 'Talk for Writing' builds on the stages of Imitation and Innovation.

Imitation

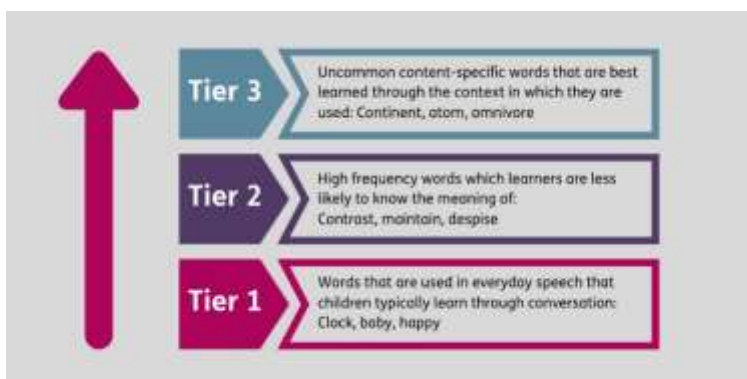
Once the teacher has established a creative context and an engaging start, a typical 'Talk for Writing' unit would begin with some engaging activities warming up the tune of the text, as well as the topic focused on, to help children internalise the pattern of the language required.

This is often followed by talking an exemplar text, supported visually by a text map and physical movements to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece. In this way the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down. Hearing it before reading it with the adult helps the children to further internalise and understand the language of the text.

Innovation

The key activity in this stage is shared writing, helping the children to write their own by "doing one together" first. This could begin with using a boxed-up grid (innovating on the exemplar plan) to show how to plan the text and then turning the plan into writing. This allows the children to see how you can innovate on the exemplar text and select words and phrases that really work.

The Teaching of Vocabulary



"The words that will have the biggest impact on a child's vocabulary are words that you see often in books, but hear rarely in speech.

Words such as: derive, evoke, surreptitious, capricious, incredulous and eradicate all fall into this category."

Tier 1

This is the simplest tier.

These are words that most students will pick up through natural, everyday conversation. They include common nouns like 'clock', 'chair' or 'house', verbs like 'walk' and 'run', or adjectives like 'sad' and 'happy.' These words don't normally require explicit teaching.

Tier 2

In order to improve pupils' literacy, these are the words you want to focus on.

They are ambitious words, such as 'emerge', 'analyse', 'peculiar' and 'context', that your students are likely to come across in a variety of contexts and across all subjects, but aren't used much in everyday conversation. For

example, the Tier 2 word 'soar' can add more sophistication and specificity to a student's understanding of the word 'fly'. They will be able to understand that soaring isn't just flying, but flying very high in the air.

Tier 3

Tier 3 words are subject-specific, used within a particular field.

This is the language of scientists, mathematicians, historians, and literary critics. For Maths, this includes words like 'denominator', while science lessons might require students to understand 'photosynthesis'. Often, these words are integral to teaching content for certain subjects.

Spellings

Through regular spelling sessions, pupils embrace the knowledge of spelling conventions – patterns and rules; giving opportunity to promote the learning of spelling, including statutory words, common exceptions and personal spellings. We are intent that our pupils move onto the next stage of their education with a certainty that they are able to communicate effectively in writing – and to enjoy being able to express themselves in this way.

Handwriting

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. During the foundation stage, the children are taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct position and develop a legible handwriting style. In KS1, we use a handwriting scheme which develops both a child's gross and fine motor skills and their knowledge of letter formation. It is a systematic, differentiated and progressive approach which supports children of all ability levels. Teachers are expected to role model the school's handwriting style when marking children's work, writing on the board and on displays around the school.

Impact

Assessment

A constant cycle of assessing, monitoring, target setting and pupil feedback are instrumental in supporting children's writing development.

Teacher-pupil conferencing is a key strategy used in writing lessons to assess pupils' understanding and ensure all pupils receive valuable verbal feedback from teachers on successes and next steps. The results of such discussions have a direct impact on the teaching materials and strategies employed immediately following the assessment.

Marking of pupils' work is important part of on-going assessment and all writing is marked in line with the school marking policy. This helps children to see what they have done well, note errors and know the 'next steps' in their learning. This is initially done through pupil conferencing, with targets being noted in their writing to help the pupils to improve further.

Assessment of each piece of writing at the end of a teaching sequence is completed using the Writing Assessment grids. Pupils will also use these during discussions with peers and adults.

Moderation of teacher assessment is undertaken regularly for quality assurance and ongoing staff development. St Mary's staff moderate writing using national exemplification materials. In addition, pupils' writing is also moderated by other teaching professionals in local clusters of schools.

Formal assessment is recorded on the school assessment tracking system.

Arrangements for Review

Policies are regularly updated and reviewed by staff and governors to ensure that all aspects of the Writing policy aims are being met and the standards of Writing are continuing to improve. This policy will be reviewed and updated as required by the Leadership team and Writing Lead.