



English – Writing

2022- 2023

Our School Aims / 'Intent'

At St. Elizabeth's Catholic Academy, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all children. Our ethos is based on the Franciscan values: Joy, Forgiveness, Faith, Respect, Service, Peace and Stewardship. Commitment to these values ensures that the children have the confidence and incentive to produce their best work. Similarly, teachers feel valued and receive the necessary support to further their teaching expertise.

With regards to writing in English and across the curriculum, we aim for the children to progressively build and strengthen an understanding of 'how to write' and 'how to write to engage a reader'. The culmination of the teaching and learning experience is for our pupils to have the knowledge and ability to write detailed, fluent and imaginative pieces, on a number of topics throughout the curriculum, in order to engage a reader.

More specifically, we aim for the children to have:

- A love of writing and its educational, cultural and entertainment value, alongside an appreciation of its power as a communication tool.
- A vivid imagination, which makes readers engage with and enjoy their reading.
- A conscientious approach towards grammar, punctuation, spelling and composition that will manifest as strong, life-long skills.
- A repertoire of highly developed and ambitious vocabulary.
- The ability and support to write fluently and creatively, with interesting detail, over a variety of topics.
- Well planned, structured writing, with an understanding of the writing process including proof-reading and editing to enhance their work.
- The ability to be articulate and confident communicators who express themselves and enhance their learning when engaging in discussions.
- Excellent transcription skills
- A culture where they love to read, take pride in their writing and apply this learning in different contexts.

Implementation

Our curriculum design is based upon evidence from cognitive science. Three main principles underpin this:

- 1.1 Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
- 1.2 Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- 1.3 Retrieval of previously learning content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to the three main principles, we also understand that learning is a change to the long-term memory and is therefore invisible in the short-term; sustained mastery takes time.

A) An overview of writing at St. Elizabeth's school

To ensure consistency and progression at St. Elizabeth's, we have adopted the Talk for Writing (T4W) scheme, created by Pie Corbett. The approach is based on a cycle of:

Imitation – Innovation – Invention (I do - We do - You do)

Teachers start each new genre with a 'Cold Task' - where children have around 20 minutes to write in the style of the proposed genre, to show what they can already do. This allows the teacher to assess the children's initial strengths and weaknesses and plan meaningful lessons. Children are encouraged to draw upon prior knowledge for these tasks, making links between previously studied topics and their current genre.

All teachers start with a short, high-quality text (either carefully chosen, adapted or written themselves) selected to appeal to even reluctant writers. The text includes the structure and toolkit features that the children will be required to imitate. A breakdown of toolkit features for each genre and each year group has been created and shared with staff to ensure consistency across the school.

The class will learn the text and its structure; internalising new vocabulary, delving into the text's layers of meaning; learning and practising the writer's tricks in daily 'short-burst' writing games and experiencing similar 'tricks' in other pieces of writing. This process is called **Imitation**.

The teacher will then go on to model how to plan and write an innovated version of the text, using the structure and toolkit features studied in the modelled text. Shared writing is key at this stage. Children are actively involved with this process, which is called **Innovation**.

Finally, the children will write their own version, using the planning grid and toolkit features that have been embedded during the imitation and innovation sequence of lessons. The class teacher can support with editing. This process is called **Invention**.

The 'Invention' pieces of writing are assessed against the pupil's assessment grid (stuck into the front of each child's writing book) to give a grade of Below, Working Towards, National Average, Exceeding or Mastery. This data is inputted termly into the Insight Tracking System.

B) Differentiation – including SEN

The pedagogy of Talk for Writing supports the learning of **all** children, including those identified as having special needs, children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those for whom English is an additional language. Children in any of these groups benefit considerably from the strategies and approaches used in T4W.

All children are exposed to the same model text and whole class teaching of English writing unless the class teacher feels it is unsuitable for a Special Educational Need. In this case, a simpler version of the text may be given and/or different writer's tricks are focused upon. TA support (and in some cases SSSEN support) is provided in these cases.

During independent work, children will work with resources and support to match their level of learning. Expectations are differentiated for each group of learners – for example children are encouraged to innovate the model text at their level; a struggling learner may simply be required to change the name of the main character, whereas a learner requiring greater challenge will be required to use a variety of writer's tricks to become more independent from the model text.

Scaffolds are used to support pupils working towards the learning objective through the use of resources e.g. word mats, sequencing cards, pictorial representations, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, working in mixed ability pairs and 'keep up' intervention sessions.

SEN children are assessed against a criteria that is suitable for their level of learning in order to show progression.

C) Phonics and spelling

Phonics is taught daily in streamed sets in EYFS, Year 1 and 2 via the Ruth Miskin Read, Write, Inc. scheme (see Early Reading III for further details). In KS1, the RWI phonics scheme is used to teach spelling as part of their daily session. In Year 2, after the initial RWI learning scheme is complete, the children engage in daily 15-minute spelling sessions, taught via the Read Write Inc. Spelling Scheme continuation. In KS2, via the same scheme, spelling is taught 3x per week for 15 minutes. At present, these lessons are streamed in Key Stage phases (Y3/4 and Y5/6) to address any gaps quickly and effectively. Covering all NC requirements, this engaging scheme teaches spelling cumulatively and systematically with deliberate, focused practice building upon the teaching strategies of RWI phonics, such as dots and dashes, team teaching and dictation. Each spelling rule is taught in 4 sessions in the same cyclical pattern, and children work in their own spelling workbook. Children are also provided with a 'log book', where they keep a record of the words that they personally need to practice more than other words. These are then addressed in the following unit's speed spell session, in place of your typical 'spelling test'. We encourage the children to practice their log book words each day for 5 minutes at home, and have provided all children and parents with a list of activities to support this.

For consistently weaker spellers, spelling interventions (such as precision teaching) can be put in place, and support can be sent home to address the needs of identified children. Spelling patterns are also practised during English lessons.

In their writing, children are encouraged to attempt unknown and ambitious spellings, identifying them with a wiggly line underneath. These are either ticked or corrected by teachers when marked.

Grammar

Grammar progression across the year groups is mapped out in the Whole School Writing Progression Map, which teachers are encouraged to use as a working document to inform their planning. The teaching of grammar rules is applied to the context of the lesson, often as a grammar game starter, and uses the texts learnt in English writing and reading. Children complete an NFER grammar test termly, from which GAP analyses are made to identify elements that need revisiting. By years 5 and 6, grammar sessions take on the focus of the requirements for SAT grammar papers. Stand-alone grammar lessons are taught if required, particular in the Y6 Pentecost term, to better equip the children for the requirements of the SAT grammar paper.

D) Handwriting

Correct letter formation is taught from EYFS and is practised daily. Once Year 1 are confident with printing letters, they are introduced to cursive, unlooped handwriting. We recognise that children's bones develop at different rates and children with dyspraxia for example may find handwriting a challenge. To support this, EYFS develop gross and fine motor skills through methods inspired by Shonette Bason Wood – for example Dough Disco and Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle.

Across the school, teachers model presentation at the beginning of all writing sessions, including the correct writing posture, and time is always dedicated to presentation at the start of each Advent term. A font (Twinkl Cursive Unlooped) that follows our school handwriting expectations has been adopted throughout school to be used on all pupil handouts (where adaptable).

Since 2021, we have also provided the children with exercise books containing handwriting guidelines for English, R.E., Science, History and Geography. The long-term goal is that, with a solid and secure approach to cursive handwriting, we can remove these handwriting guidelines by Year 5 to promote a smooth transition into writing in KS3, but this may change dependent upon the year group's needs.

E) The Role of the Subject Leader

- Take the lead in policy development and keep up-to-date through research and continuing professional development – for example, by forging and maintaining links with others schools.
- Pass on information learnt to enhance the teaching of English across the school. Support other teachers and TAs in their understanding and implementation of new ideas, resources and interventions. Ensure that good practise is shared across the school.
- Ensure moderation occurs to quality assure assessment: Within school, ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to compare work produced by different classes and key stages. Furthermore, moderate with another school, at least once a year.
- Conduct learning walks, book scrutinies (with the teacher or pupil present) and pupil interviews. Report to the Senior Leadership Team for progress meetings and data analysis.
- Make recommendations for the SIP in relation to English.
- Ensure resources are up-to-date.

F) Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Class teachers make regular, formative assessments of pupils' work in order to establish their level of attainment and progress, and subsequently inform next steps, future planning and interventions. As a school, we have adopted 'live marking', which where possible is done during the lesson, through verbal feedback, either 1:1 or with a small group. Teachers follow our key stage specific marking codes when marking writing (both in English lessons and cross-curricular). Teachers complete a 'Marking Sheet' which allows them to record common misconceptions and feedback needed, which will then be addressed in the following lesson. Each writing lesson from Year 1 onwards starts with feedback from the previous lesson and this is usually followed up by purple pen editing time, which can be independent, or support by the class teacher, dependent upon age.

Impact

As learning is a change to long-term memory, it is impossible to see impact in the short term. However, we do use probabilistic assessment based on deliberate practise. This means that we look at the practices taking place to determine whether they are appropriate, meaningful, related to our intentions and likely to produce results in the long-term. Indicators of these are as follows:

- Children are **engaged and thoughtful in lessons**. Their communication skills are strengthened and they can articulate themselves well.
- As part of the T4W cycle, children complete a cold task, prior to the commencement of the unit, and a final hot task, completed at the end of the unit of work. After hot writes, teachers tick off the termly assessment criteria met – which is stuck into each child's book. Teachers also assess how effectively children have met and utilised the T4W toolkit criteria for the specific genre. This allows teachers to **assess the progress that the children have made between the cold and hot tasks**.
- Teachers make **assessments of writing** on a termly basis against year group specific writing TAFs (teacher assessment frameworks), providing children with a grade of Working Below, Working Towards, National Average or Greater Depth. This data is inputted into the Insight Tracking System. We work towards a high percentage of children achieving age-related expectations.
- **Formal, summative assessment** is carried out at the end of each Key Stage (Years 2 & 6) through SATs. Evidence of comparative judgement in writing is moderated every few years by external moderators.
- **Comparative teacher judgement** allows us to assess the effectiveness of our teaching and learning based on current pupil progress. This is assessed in line with the T4W progression documents and toolkits.
- **Termly achievement team meetings (ATMs)** are held between members of the SLT and class teachers to discuss individual children's progress. This enables us to plan and identify ways to support pupils not yet making the expected progress. These are then reviewed to ensure that impact is effective.
- **Moderation of writing** is carried out on a timetabled basis each term. We moderate across phase teams, between Key Stages and between schools. For example, we work alongside St. George's Catholic Voluntary Academy and their writing lead (who is also a writing moderator) to moderate writing.
- We use our **monitoring cycle** to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning of writing across our school. This takes the form of lesson observations, book looks, learning walks and pupil voice interviews. We also provide staff with high-quality CPD, tailored towards Talk for Writing.