

WRITING AT ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Intent

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe that writing is a fundamental skill that empowers children to express their thoughts, ideas and creativity with confidence and clarity. Our writing curriculum is carefully designed to foster a love for writing, develop essential writing skills and provide children with a solid foundation for their future personal and academic success, increasing access to all other school subjects.

Our progressive and creative curriculum combines the teaching of conventions of writing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar to build confident and competent writers who can produce well-structured pieces of writing across a range of genres and for a variety of audiences.

We aim for children to be able to write at length in a variety of styles. We use high quality texts across genres to enable children to develop a deep understanding and the skills to apply features of texts to their own writing utilising their ever-growing vocabulary.

Implementation

Pathways to Write

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we follow a mastery approach to writing through the comprehensive writing programme, Pathways to Write, which is carefully mapped to ensure that all elements of the National Curriculum for English are taught in each year group. Pathways to Write develops the writing skills of children from reception to year 6, engaging and guiding children through the writing process using high quality texts. Writing skills are built up through repetition and progression within the units and children apply these skills in daily writing opportunities, supporting them to remember more.

Pathways to Write offers deliberate opportunities to widen children's vocabulary, this builds on the intentional building of vocabulary in school, for example, through VIPERS, speaking and listening and within foundation subjects. Pathways to Write approach is designed to equip children with skills to guide them through the writing process towards their final outcome writing piece. Teachers utilise Pathways to Write lesson plans and resources to teach engaging and purposeful English lessons. Each Pathways to Write unit is specific to a genre of writing and uses a mastery approach to teach vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, comprehension strategies, speaking and listening skills and results in a final writing piece where children are required to apply these taught skills to be successful.

This process consists of 3 stages:

1. The Gateway- Each unit begins with a 'hook' to excite and engage children. These lessons use objects, props, role play etc to enthuse and intrigue children. The Gateway allows children to make predictions, ask questions and revisit previous mastery and gateway skills.
2. The Pathway- During the pathway children will be introduced to 3 new writing skills from their year group curriculum. They will have daily opportunities to practise and apply these skills through our I do, we do, you do pedagogy, resulting in short and extended pieces of writing, including character descriptions, poetry, dialogue, diary entries, fact files etc.
3. Write Away- During the Write Away lessons children will have the opportunity to apply their gateway and mastery skills to produce an extended piece of writing, this is usually written in sections over multiple lessons. During the Write Away children will have time for planning, writing, checking, editing, redrafting and publishing.

Adaptation

In the implementation of Pathways to Write, teachers will diligently follow the lesson plans and utilise the carefully designed resources. However, they will also ensure that every child makes progress by through thoughtful and considerate adaptations.

It is our commitment that all children, regardless of their abilities, will have access to and actively participate in both the "I do" and "We do" components of the lessons. This approach guarantees that they will experience high-quality modelling from their teacher, both in oral and written form. They will have ample opportunities to engage in carefully planned partner discussions, enabling them to learn from their peers while accessing the curriculum appropriate for their year group.

During the "We do" phase of the lesson, we recognise that some children may face challenges in accessing the learning objectives. To address this, we have implemented three key components of support:

1. Year group specific task: Children will engage with the lesson's "Can I" objectives in a way that meets their individual needs. This may involve activities such as oral rehearsal or collaborative group work, ensuring they can actively participate and achieve success.
2. Independent task: Students will undertake a task related to the day's learning that they can independently and successfully complete. This task will be tailored to their abilities, providing them with a sense of accomplishment and fostering confidence.
3. Supported task: Children will work with an adult, receiving targeted support and guidance to address their own next steps. This approach allows for focused attention on their specific areas of development.

It is important to note that for children who are working towards greater depth, Pathways to Write offers a range of adaptations to further support their progress and challenge them appropriately. Our aim is to ensure that each child receives the necessary support and opportunities to reach their full potential in writing.

Sounds Write

Writing in Reception class starts with phonics teaching using Sounds Write. As children progress they are encouraged and supported to write words using different spellings of sounds. As their confidence increases they are supported to put words together to form captions and sentences. During summer term our reception children will enjoy their first two Pathways to Write Units providing them with the Gateway skills to be successful as they move to year 1. Alongside Sounds Write, reception children can access a range of early writing opportunities in our play based provision. Sounds Write is taught throughout key stage 1 with the eventual aim of rolling this out as a full school programme.

Spelling Shed

To support our children to become confident and competent spellers we use the online platform, Spelling Shed. Teachers will explicitly teach spelling using Spelling Shed resources and offer children regular independent spelling practise and assessment.

Impact

The teaching of writing at our school is implemented in a structured and progressive manner, ensuring that each unit builds upon previously taught skills. This approach allows children to develop a strong foundation in writing.

We have observed that children enjoy discussing their writing and take pride in their achievements. We actively foster a love for writing throughout the school, creating an environment where students are excited to engage in the writing process.

Our books demonstrate progression of skills across different year groups, showing the successful implementation of the Pathways to Write program. As children progress through our school, they not only develop a genuine passion for writing but also acquire secure and embedded writing skills that they can effectively apply across various genres and to a range of audiences. This ensures they are prepared for the demands of the secondary curriculum.

Assessment plays a crucial role and we use end points and BHCET steps as assessment tools. At the beginning and end of each Pathways unit, teachers assess writing pieces to identify students who may require additional support or extra challenge based on the gateway and mastery keys.

The teaching of writing is closely monitored through our comprehensive monitoring cycle. This process includes lesson observations, book looks, learning and environment walks, and pupil voice. These monitoring activities allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching of writing and make informed decisions for further improvement.