



St. Cross Catholic Primary School Writing Policy

January 2024

To be reviewed in January 2025



Intent:

Through a cross-curricular approach, we ensure that writing is not only taught as a discrete subject; we offer our children opportunities to write in a broad range of purposeful, motivating contexts across the curriculum. We teach our children to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style to suit a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

As we want our children to take pride in their work, they are encouraged to develop a neat, joined handwriting style and to be mindful of their presentation.

At St. Cross, we believe that all good writers refine and edit their work, so we teach our children to independently recognise their areas for improvement and edit their work effectively both during and after the writing process.

Overall, we strive to teach our children to make well-informed, considered word choices to produce competent, creative writers, who can compose, edit and improve their writing with confidence and expertise.

The following statements are central to our view of writing development. At St. Cross, we believe that:

- Speaking and listening with confidence are significant factors in developing effective writing;
- Reading and writing are closely connected and mutually supportive; we read as writers and write as readers;
- Writing is a craft and most children learn best through their own writing, rather than through exercises out of context;
- Writing is best framed within recognisable text-types or genres;
- Writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences;
- Writing tasks should be prepared through preliminary talk and adults should model writing for their pupils;
- Children should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other children both to compose and to revise their writing;
- Writing skills can be improved through reflection and self-editing is encouraged;
- Children should be closely involved in assessing their own development as writers;
- More effective writing is dependent upon increasingly informed grammatical and linguistic choices;
- The adult's response to the child's composition (e.g. praising aspects of the content) is crucial in developing confidence and motivation;

Implementation

At St. Cross, we have adopted 'I am a clever writer' as an approach to teach writing, while EYFS teach to the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals. This is to ensure a consistent and systematic approach to teaching the skills of writing across all cohorts. This also means that children know what to expect when they change classes.

At St. Cross, we believe that the context for writing should be anchored by a rich reading stimulus. Therefore, each sequence of writing is based on a text, which is linked to another aspect of the children's learning (i.e. History, Geography or Science topic). Teachers have the freedom to select texts which will motivate their class, provide a strong vehicle for deepening the children's love of reading, or enhance their learning in another curriculum area. Teachers then produce a model piece of writing (a 'WAGOLL'), exemplifying the chosen genre for that week. Within the model, teachers include the genre and grammatical features they aim to teach that week as well as the spelling pattern. To know which genre features/grammatical rules are year group appropriate, teachers refer to the Genre Progression Document and the Progression of Skills documents, which breaks down each year group's grammar and punctuation skills.

The WAGOLL becomes the anchor for the writing unit, and provides a standard for children to aim for. Teachers plan a sequence of lessons which move the children's writing on, culminating in a longer, independent piece of writing at the end of the week, produced on a Friday (Star Write). This is an opportunity for the children to include all the new skills taught that week, and teachers then use this as an assessment tool to inform future planning.

Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected in their writing. 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. Amongst these are:

- Shared writing
- Role-play (e.g. an office or restaurant)
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Making books
- Writing letters/cards
- Menus
- Instructions

Through engaging in these activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English. A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include playdough, cutting, threading and tracing.

Within the Foundation Stage, both the indoor and outdoor environment include resources to support the children's mark making, drawing and writing. Staff involve themselves in the children's mark making by modelling the process and by helping to order the children's thoughts.

Writing can take place at any point in the day and in any area of the EYFS setting.

Writing in KS1 and KS2

Cross Curricular Application

This works best for non-fiction units. It usually takes place some time after the completion of the English unit and in another area of the curriculum. This provides opportunity for children to revisit text types and revise skills. Pupils should be given time to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the text type, looking back at their own writing and prompts created.

Again, this outcome is particularly useful for assessment purposes and children should be given opportunity to edit and improve their own writing.

Publishing Writing

Children invariably write more effectively when they have a real audience and purpose for their writing. Thought should be given to this at the outset and shared with the children. This might involve:

- writing stories to entertain Year 2, then arranging an opportunity for the children to share their stories with them in small groups;
- writing, then redrafting, non-chronological reports to make a class book which is put on display in the school library;
- children reading, rehearsing and performing their own poetry to be recorded and shared on the school website.

Grammar and Punctuation

Age-appropriate grammar and/or punctuation objectives are selected for each unit, based on the genre or text type from the unit. To know which genre features/grammatical rules are year group appropriate, teachers can refer to the Genre Progression Document and the Progression of Skills documents, which breaks down each year group's grammar and punctuation skills into these domains:

- adjectives
- adverbs
- conjunctions and clauses
- prepositions
- sentences and punctuation
- tenses
- speech

However, it is important that teachers consider the children's current skills in relation to grammar and adjust this focus if necessary. For example, it is not appropriate to teach main and subordinate clauses to a Year 3 class who are not secure with simple sentence construction.

As well as the acquisition of grammar skills, knowledge and terminology, it is important that children are shown how to apply these appropriately in their own writing. The process involves:

- Short, sharp grammar warm-ups - a highly effective way of introducing and practising the skills initially;
- The teacher modelling the appropriate application during the writing phase;
- Establishing the expectation that the children will apply the skills appropriately in their own writing;
- The children having opportunity to self and peer assess;
- Teacher feedback and marking which reflects the grammar or punctuation focus.

Teaching Vocabulary

At St. Cross, we believe that vocabulary is best acquired through both indirect exposure to words and the explicit teaching of vocabulary. We are aware that the vocabulary deficit needs to be addressed as a priority. In order to do this our staff model and expose our children to Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary. Teachers use new words gained through whole class reading and Reciprocal Reading to expand the children's vocabulary, displaying it on the Vocabulary Triangles, and encouraging their use in lessons. Rehearsal of new vocabulary takes place through whole class/paired games to promote retention. To support the teaching of new vocabulary, teachers include a bank of new words/phrases in their WAGOLs for each writing sequence. This vocabulary is discreetly taught and explored as part of the learning sequence before any grammatical or genre features are introduced. As well as this, to suit the needs of all our children, we carefully select books for pleasure and unit-specific books that will inspire writing and expose our children to rich vocabulary. As a school, we strive to expose our children to an increasingly broad range of inclusive texts, which reflect the scope of Britain's diverse, multi-cultural population, so that our children feel valued, understood and aware of other perspectives differing from their own.

Spelling

Through the carefully planned and progressive teaching of spelling, we aim to:

- encourage children to become confident and competent spellers;
- teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage;
- help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learned.

The daily teaching of phonics in EYFS/Year 1 and the explicit teaching of spelling in KS1 and KS2 through the No Nonsense Spelling Programme ensure accuracy of spelling. Through focused teaching of spelling, children are taught to:

- identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness);
- recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/grapheme correspondence);

- blend phonemes into words for reading;
- segment words into phonemes for spelling;
- acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words;
- investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules;
- attempt a spelling before checking with the adult;
- identify misspelt words in their own writing, keep individual lists in spelling dictionaries and learn to spell these words;
- develop and use independent spelling strategies;
- use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work.

Handwriting

Please see separate Handwriting Policy.

How often should children write?

In KS1 and KS2, pupils should be given the opportunity to write in every English lesson. This does not always have to be a sustained piece of writing, however it is expected that children receive an opportunity to write at length once a week in a Star Write in order to build stamina.

Writing Across the Curriculum

In addition to writing within the English lesson, we provide opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum and apply the skills learned in English lessons.

The Learning Environment

To ensure that the learning environment in all classes is consistent and supports the teaching and learning of writing, all classes contain the following:

English Display

- Grammar and punctuation skills
- Vocabulary from the current unit
- Model sentences highlighting grammatical uses/terminology
- Quality WAGOLL
- Examples of children's work

In addition, teachers should display a checklist ('I am a clever writer because...'), which keeps a record of all the children's acquired, secure writing skills. This should be used as a tool to hold children accountable, reminding them of the skills they have already learned, and which they should be applying confidently across all cross-curricular writing opportunities. The checklist should be displayed at the front of the classroom, but not on the English board, to reinforce the expectation that they apply their skills in all areas of the curriculum, not only in English lessons.

Impact

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy.

Writing is measured against year group expectations (St. Cross uses the 'I am a clever writer' assessment checklists, which breakdown these expectations into specific skills). It is expected that children will achieve all year-group appropriate skills by the end of the year. We strive to ensure that our children's attainment is in line or exceeds their potential when we consider the varied starting points of all our children.

Children will make at least good progress in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening from their last point of statutory assessment. The impact of our English curriculum will ensure our pupils are academically prepared for life beyond primary school and throughout their educational journey.

Teachers use effective formative assessment to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Regular feedback is given to pupils (see the school's Marking Policy) and helps them to understand how to be successful, what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

Moderation of Writing

Teachers receive the opportunity to moderate children's writing together using the 'I am a clever writer' assessment checklists. Team moderation ensures that the termly data recorded is consistent throughout school.