

WRITING POLICY

ST MARY'S LEWISHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL VISION

To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's school serves our community by providing the highest quality of education and experiences so everyone can achieve their full potential. Faith is at the heart of our life together which celebrates our diversity. Christian values unite and guide our relationships based on respect, responsibility and forgiveness.

AIMS FOR WRITING

At St Mary's, children will become creative, enthusiastic and highly proficient writers. We continuously raise standards in writing and ensure that all children reach their potential, through the delivery of a well-planned, rich and stimulating English curriculum, underpinned by consistent, up-to-date working practices.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The 'Year Group Overviews' detail which text will be taught when in every year group from Nursey to Year 6. These have been carefully plotted to ensure progression in both language and grammatical features. Each text has a clear teaching focus (setting, characterisation, description, dialogue, suspense or openings and endings) which are found on the 'Year Group Overviews'. Teachers refer to our 'Writing Progression of Skills' document and 'Writers' Toolkits' to ensure that they are teaching the appropriate grammar and text features for their year group. Our programme of study is cumulative and ensures that each year group consolidates and builds upon the learning that has taken place the year before.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We believe that in order to create excellent writers we must first expand and develop students' oral language skills and then teach the necessary steps for exceptional sentence, paragraph and text construction to create quality writing. We learn to write by observing writing, practising writing, by trial and error and, most importantly, through becoming familiar with what works – by **reading good writing**. Initially, pupils read simply for pleasure and interest. But during writing lessons the children's reading becomes increasingly focussed on written style and how information can be powerfully composed. Grounded in a high quality text, our approach consists of three key stages from imitation through innovation onto independent application (invent). The first task for any unit is a 'Cold Write', this is an informally assessed piece of independent writing. The teacher uses this to identify the skills and knowledge that need to be taught in the coming unit according to the 'Writing Progression of Skills' document and the National Curriculum. Then, teachers adapt the model text, ensuring that it is appropriate for the class and exemplifies the features that need to be taught. Teachers then plan subsequent lessons using the 'Talk for Writing Planning' documents, which have key prompts and reminders to guide them through the process. Shared and Guided writing are a key feature of all lessons within Talk for Writing. Pupils have frequent opportunities to edit their own and others' writing, both independently and as part of a pair or group.

GRAMMAR

Grammar is taught discretely in 5 minute 'Grammar Starters' at the beginning of each lesson. From Reception onwards, teachers use the correct technical vocabulary in their teaching to encourage the use of this by children. The class teacher regularly demonstrates application of the grammar learned through shared and modelled writing.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Engaging children in conversations is our primary method of supporting the **development of early childhood vocabulary**. Staff talk with children about what they see and experience in their environment, modelling Standard English and exposing them to new words. During each talk for writing unit at least 10 new words are introduced through the model text. These are taught and displayed in the classroom. Teachers model the use of these words in sentences and encourage children to use them in conversation and in writing. Genre specific vocabulary is also taught and rehearsed in every unit.

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

All children are given access to a broad and balanced English curriculum regardless of gender, ability, race or religion. Provision is tailored to ensure that **all children** make maximum progress from their individual starting points. All children are regularly assessed and set individual targets to ensure that they are appropriately challenged. In collaboration with the school SENCO, provision for children with SEN is carefully planned to ensure that they are well supported and taking the appropriate next steps in learning.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers make formative assessments as part of every lesson and adjust their daily plans accordingly. Written or verbal feedback is given daily to help guide the children's progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

Each unit starts with a 'Cold Write' which is used to assess what needs to be taught over the next few weeks. These pieces of writing are also used to set individual targets for the unit. Targets are written on target cards and put in the back of children's books. These are regularly checked and ticked off by both the child and the class teacher. Each child should be meeting at least one target per half-term. Every unit ends with an independent 'Hot Write' which is used to assess the progress that has been made.

Summative assessments are completed at the end of each term. Each term, a 'Hot Write' is put into every child's 'Writing Development Portfolio' and our year group 'Assessment Grids' are highlighted by the class teacher. These are used to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The class story map or non-fiction text map is clearly displayed in all classes, alongside new vocabulary posters. The posters show the new word, a picture to support understanding and (where appropriate) a definition. As each unit progresses, a toolkit, brainstormed vocabulary and modelled writing are added to the display.

HANDWRITING

Handwriting begins in the Nursery with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early fine and gross motor skills. The needs of left handed children, or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention. Pupils are encouraged to develop correctly orientated, cursive letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. Discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen take place at least 3 times a week. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources.

Nursery Teach correct pencil grip

Reception Teach correct letter formation

Year 1 Teach correct formation of lowercase letters, correct formation for uppercase letters, all lowercase letters starting with an upstroke, flicks on appropriate letters.

Year 2 Develop ability to write in a consistent size, in a neat, joined hand using ascenders above and descenders below the line.