

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Writing Policy

The teaching and learning of English at St Lawrence aims to acknowledge and build on the child's previous learning experiences in Key Stage 1. As literacy skills are fundamental to the whole curriculum, the teaching of English is a high priority within the school, with a significant amount of classroom time devoted to English teaching. At St Lawrence we also believe that pupils should be given opportunities to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Aims and Objectives

- To fulfil the statutory obligations in the National Curriculum 2014
- To give pupils the confidence to express themselves through the written word
- To extend pupils' imaginative and creative skills and their capacity to share these with others
- To enable children to use language and expression appropriate to the task and audience
- To develop skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar so pupils' written work has clarity
- To help children organise their thoughts and ideas and present them in writing in a logical and structured way
- To develop writers who readily make links between their reading and writing

Planning

The objectives above are achieved through provision of planned, structured lessons in line with the recommendations of the National Curriculum 2014. All teachers have a copy of the Literacy Long Term Planning which ensures coverage. Teachers then work collaboratively to form medium term and weekly plans.

Learning Intentions are drawn from the age-related expectations in the National Curriculum 2014 and focus on a range of word-level, sentence level and text level skills. Often word and sentence level skills will also be practised during a lesson starter and separate word-level (spelling) and handwriting sessions may take place in addition to this.

Planning shows a clear progression from reading to writing so that pupils have chance to immerse themselves in the features and style of a text type before writing for themselves. It also makes clear the audience and the purpose for writing. Plans are often, though not exclusively, based around a model text to ensure that children have a good understanding of a particular genre. Success Criteria will be planned in advance and will support the teacher and the pupil in evaluating their work. Learning tasks are differentiated so that each pupil is able to experience success as well as challenge. Children are given opportunities to edit and improve their writing as well as present their work for an audience.

Teaching and Learning

The children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of writing through a wide range of activities, tailored to suit a variety of learning styles and individual pupils' needs. We aim to use drama and speaking and listening activities to help children rehearse their ideas aloud before putting pen to paper.

Opportunities for writing are planned into the daily literacy sessions and may include: shared, group, individual and paired writing activities. These opportunities are carefully planned and differentiated to meet pupils' needs. Children are taught in mixed-ability classes throughout the school with writing opportunities carefully planned and differentiated to meet pupils' needs. As Guided Reading is timetabled outside the Literacy session, guided groups within the daily literacy session will mainly focus on writing skills. Opportunities for writing across the curriculum are encouraged whenever possible and teachers emphasise links with literacy learning and encourage pupils to recall and apply writing skills.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to be involved in the creation of success criteria. They are then able to assess their work against success criteria and make improvements. Children are involved in the target-setting process and each child has a sheet of year-group expectations which is stuck into the front of their Big Writing books. They are given time to look through their work and identify when they have met a target.

Special Educational Needs

Teaching and special needs assistants are deployed to support children's learning in lessons, be it with an individual child or a group of children. Intervention groups are also in place to support children in developing their spelling, grammar and composition skills, such as WIP (Writing Intervention Programme) and dedicated phonics groups. Key Vocabulary groups enable lower ability children to become familiar with words used in other areas of the curriculum, as well as introducing new grammar vocabulary. For higher ability children there may be groups which aim to extend their writing skills. Handwriting groups are also in place to support children who have difficulty forming letters correctly and developing a fluent, neat style. With the support of parents, children may be asked to carry out extra practice at home in either composition, handwriting or spelling.

Assessment

St Lawrence uses the Target Tracker system which enables teachers to assess children's writing on an ongoing basis by ticking off "I can" statements linked to age-related expectations. Ongoing teacher assessment identifies progress made towards the expectations and where children sit within the bands. Future planning can then be adapted to meet the children's outstanding needs. Each term, teachers meet with their year group to moderate these teacher assessments and annually we meet as a staff with our main feeder school, The Orchard, to standardise assessments between schools.

As class writing is usually, quite rightly, supported by the class teacher or teaching assistant, it is essential that children also have the opportunity to write independently, so their progress can be assessed accurately. Each year group undertakes Big Writing approximately every two weeks, which is transcribed in a Big Writing book and levelled in order to track progress and identify individual need. As a child moves up through the school, the Big Writing Book moves with them to produce a record of progress and achievement. Every half term, a whole-school “cold writing task” will be set as a Big Writing task by the Literacy Coordinator (in consultation with teaching staff) to assist with writing moderation throughout the school.

Recording and Reporting

Teachers make a formal teacher assessment at the end of each term using a combination of evidence from day to day lessons and Big Writing. Progress is formally reported to parents on a termly basis at the parents’ evenings in Autumn (Years 4, 5, 6 only) and Spring term and in the written Summer term report. Parents will be informed of any intervention groups that their child is involved in by the SENCO.

Resources

There are a variety of teaching resources and support materials to support the planning and teaching of writing. These resources are stored in a central location in the staff room. There are also a set of standards files stored in the staff room, which support staff in making accurate teacher assessments. Many resources for staff (websites, display materials etc) are also available on the VLE.

Monitoring

The English subject leader is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in Writing, and reporting back to SLT. This monitoring is undertaken on a termly basis and involves scrutinising data, monitoring planning, lesson observations, pupil interviews, work sampling and monitoring assessment folders.

Last review date: November 2016

Next review date: November 2019