



## Writing at St Lawrence's Primary

### **INTENT**

At St Lawrence's, we value writing as a key life skill and are fully committed to enabling our children to become competent and confident writers. We teach a 'text based' English Curriculum from Reception to Year 6. We use a combination of high-quality texts and real-life experiences for pupils to base their writing on. Our writing curriculum is inextricably linked with our reading curriculum and class texts (See Whole School Reading Spine) but also includes many opportunities for children to write about real-life experiences. Considering that our school serves an area of extreme deprivation, experiences are limited and therefore we allocate a large proportion of our funding to facilitate these and improve vocabulary and writing.

As a school, we are still feeling the impact of the COVID pandemic and lockdowns. We have found that writing has felt the greatest impact as pupils have found it hard to develop automaticity in the basic skills which underpin writing. We therefore place a great emphasis on developing not just writing skills, but spelling, punctuation and grammar, and handwriting.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Following a build-up of skills taught throughout our daily English lessons, children complete a piece of extended writing, usually on a two-weekly cycle. We cover a variety of different genres across school – narrative, recount, explanation, discussion, instructions, biography, character and setting descriptions, poetry etc.

We analyse 'good examples' of a similar piece of writing to discuss/model with children, before working together on planning frames to support children with the structure of their writing. We use Success Criteria so children know exactly what they have to achieve in each piece. We plan smaller working groups for children who need extra support and to extend children working at greater depth.

We spread out the writing process over a series of lessons, allowing pupils to edit and improve their writing. In line with our Marking and Feedback policy, our writing and re-drafting process allows teachers to give a clear structure to help pupils become independent proof-readers.

### **Writing in Early Years**

In order to write effectively in later years, children need to develop physical as well as literary skills. Reading and early writing is inextricably linked and so pupils in EYFS are exposed to wide variety of high-quality texts. Writing in Early Years is taught through a combination of direct phonics and writing teaching alongside continuous provision activities.

Literacy is one of the key strands of the seven programmes of study outlined in the Early Years framework. The Literacy curriculum in Early years has been carefully structured so that pupils are given opportunity to develop their gross motor and fine motor skills. They are introduced to letter formation in line with the phonics programme, Little Wandle. Writing opportunities reflect the structure of the writing curriculum in the rest of the school; pupils produce writing based around high quality texts and real-life experiences. There is a separate Early Years writing curriculum which gives a very detailed overview of writing in Early Years.



## Writing in KS1

By the end of KS1 children are able, with support, to revisit their writing alongside the success criteria and then make additions or corrections to their work. As a school we work backwards from this point, and writing in KS1 builds on from the solid foundations created in Early Years and works towards making pupils who are able to write about a variety of topics with increasing independence.

Each piece of extended writing is built up from shorter pieces, for example, a character profile, vocabulary activity, an adjective lesson or a story plan. Writing is often based around a story read in class, or on a real-life experience. Pupils are given opportunity to explore characters, settings and plot in a series of lessons before they write a longer piece of writing. Pupils are supported through adult input, differentiated activities and writing mats. Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their writing with guided support. For example, some pupils may be asked to re-write a very short piece of their writing using correct letter formation and finger spaces. Some pupils may be asked to correct a spelling by being given two spellings of the word and they highlight the correct one. As pupils become more confident through Year 2, they are encouraged to make improvements to their work by changing vocabulary.

## Writing in KS2

In KS2, we follow a well-established and successful system of drafting and editing before completing a final piece of writing. This is usually over a two-week period. We share and collect examples of appropriate vocabulary which children record in word catcher book to use when writing independently. We aim to increase independence of children to improve their confidence. All children should be writing independently in KS2, but with appropriate input, support, modelling and guidance from teachers. One of the main focuses in writing in KS2 is drafting, editing and re-drafting. Pupils write one section at a time over a series of lessons. We use success criteria, where appropriate, to help pupils know what to include in their writing. After each writing session, the teacher completes a Marking and Feedback sheet and good examples, simple errors and common misconceptions are shared in the following lesson. These sessions are an important part of the writing process as it allows pupils to read over their own work and make corrections. The focus of the feedback session may be different, and will allow time for pupils to improve their work as well as correct it. Over the course of the year, pupils will write on a range of topics, both narrative and non-fiction and will be based on class texts and real-life experiences.

## Spelling and Phonics

Spelling and phonics are closely linked. We use Little Wandle, a systematic synthetic phonics programme, from Reception onwards to teach phonics. We encourage pupils to use their phonics knowledge to help with spelling. In KS1, spelling patterns are taught using Little Wandle. All phonics patterns as well as Common Exception words are taught in phonics lessons. Time is dedicated throughout the week for pupils to practise their phonics. From KS2 onwards, pupils are taught spellings using Twinkl spellings. All pupils are taught key spelling patterns as outlined in the National Curriculum, as well as words from the Spelling Lists for Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. Time is dedicated throughout the week to teach the spellings and practise them, and a weekly spelling test. Spellings are also shared with parents so they can be practised at home. A detailed overview of our phonics programme and the spelling patterns taught for each year group are shown in separate policy documents.



## Punctuation and Grammar

We have a whole school curriculum for Punctuation and Grammar. In KS2, we teach a weekly discrete Punctuation and Grammar lessons but also integrate a grammar focus into our daily English lessons and extended writing. We have developed a grammar overview for each year group. This shows the grammar objectives that should be taught each half term. There is time at the start of the year to revisit important objectives from the previous year. There is also time at the end of each year to revise key grammar objectives.

## Vocabulary

Our school serves an area of extreme deprivation. There are 30 different languages spoken within our school and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs, is also well above the national average. As a result of this, we have identified the development of vocabulary as a key focus in our teaching. All classrooms have a vocabulary display which includes 'Word of the Day' and relevant vocabulary for the current topics. We also have a Reading Tree in the library where pupils can share books they recommend and also new vocabulary they have read. Children have word catcher books to record new vocabulary and the Word of the Day. Children are provided with word banks and writing mats to assist them in their writing. Teachers grab any opportunity to identify and discuss new words throughout the day. We encourage the independent use of dictionaries and thesauri.

## Handwriting

We have dedicated time within the weekly timetable to teach discrete handwriting lessons. We also use spelling lessons as an additional opportunity to practise handwriting. We use the twinkl handwriting scheme as it is progressive and teaches key handwriting objectives as outlined in the National Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use good handwriting in all lessons. Our marking and feedback policy specifically allows for comments on presentation. Handwriting pens are used from Year 4 onwards for most pieces of writing. Interventions such as additional practise, providing examples of good handwriting and giving highlighter lines are all used as a way to support pupils who are struggling to produce neat handwriting.

## Writing across the Curriculum

We provide additional opportunities across the curriculum for children to write. These do not replace our weekly extended writing. Skills such as 'explanation writing', 'newspaper report' or 'letter writing' which are taught in English, can then be used for added experience in Science / RE/ Humanities across the year. Our medium-term English planning identifies the planned opportunities for each term. This piece of writing is completed in the appropriate subject book and not the extended writing book.

## **IMPACT**

### Assessing Writing

Every term, children complete an independent piece of Writing. We show children the 'marking criteria' and discuss what is expected of them. This writing is then assessed against end of year expectations for that particular year group. These independent pieces of writing help teachers to



make the decision about whether pupils are working below, within or exceeding age-related expectations.

#### EYFS data

	2017	2018	2019	2022
Overall GLD	69%	65%	60%	57%
Writing	69%	71%	67%	60%

#### KS1 data

	2017	2018	2019	2022
Expected	71%	69%	71%	70%
Greater depth	11%	15%	10%	14%

#### KS2 data

	2017	2018	2019	2022
Expected	78%	78%	80%	66%
Greater depth	11%	25%	20%	24%

We were externally moderated for writing in KS2 in 2022. We are therefore confident that our judgements are accurate and help to demonstrate the progress that is made in writing across school.

As a school, we are very proud of the writing provision we offer for all of our pupils. It is tailored to the needs of our pupils and gives all pupils the opportunity to practise writing skills in as many ways as possible. Our writing curriculum is appropriate to the needs of our pupils, but is also ambitious and challenging.