

St. Andrew's CE Junior School

Writing Policy 2025

Intent

At St. Andrew's Junior School, we believe a high-quality writing curriculum fosters a love of the written word, supports the development of grammar and spelling skills, and is rooted in strong communication. Our priority is to help children succeed in grasping the English spelling system, understand and apply a range of grammar skills, and communicate effectively through writing. We aim to prepare them for a range of audiences and their next stage of learning.

Spoken language plays a vital role in our writing curriculum. Children use discussion and oral rehearsal to plan and structure their writing, engage in drama and role play to deepen understanding of character and narrative, and participate in collaborative talk to generate ideas and enrich vocabulary.

We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge base in writing, which follows a clearly structured curriculum where children can build and embed skills to secure learning. A secure basis in writing is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as members of society.

For all writing across the curriculum, we have identified key basic expectations (5 Star Writing):

Years 3 and 4:

- Say your sentence (Think, Say, Write).
- Use capital letters and full stops.
- Use correct letter formation and sit letters on the line.
- Use joined handwriting.
- Re-read your writing to check it makes sense.

Years 5 and 6:

- Use capital letters (start a sentence and proper nouns).
- Use a range of punctuation.
- Use joined handwriting.
- Check spellings.
- Re-read your writing to check it makes sense.

These key expectations are displayed in classrooms and in books as a reminder of the expectations for writing in all subjects.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to following the National Curriculum, in conjunction with the 'I am a Clever Writer' approach, we lay the foundations for a well-sequenced, progressive Writing curriculum. The 'I am a Clever Writer' approach is a research-based method which provides a clear structured approach to teaching writing where each skill is broken down into small steps to allow pupils to experience success. It builds on the foundations set in Hadfield Infants.

The National Curriculum for Writing ensures that all pupils:

- Develop effective transcription skills through phonics and handwriting.
- Compose writing by articulating and organising ideas clearly.
- Expand and apply a rich vocabulary.
- Use Standard English appropriately in speech and writing.
- Apply punctuation and grammar to structure their writing effectively.

Through the effective implementation of the Little Wandle phonics programme, we continue the journey of phonics for children who need additional time to cement their understanding. This gives the children the knowledge and confidence to read and write with more accuracy and success.

Writing lessons occur daily in each class. These lessons follow a carefully sequenced curriculum designed to ensure that writing skills are systematically built upon, embedded, and revisited. The 'I am a Clever Writer' approach uses a WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) to demonstrate what children should aim for in their independent writing. The WAGOLL provides an example of how new skills are incorporated alongside previously taught skills and is referred to daily.

Each classroom utilises a Writing Working Wall, which is an active learning space built up during the week. It displays high-level vocabulary and examples of the skills being learned. A writing checklist is also displayed to empower children to verbalise their success criteria and discuss their progress.

The weekly lesson format includes:

- Skill lesson – to introduce and practise the newly taught skill.
- Embed lessons – to refine new and previously taught skills in context.
- Star Write – an independent, extended piece of writing that brings skills together.

During writing lessons, children are exposed to a wide range of age-appropriate genres, themes, and authors. These high-quality books have been purposefully selected to immerse our children in a wealth of vocabulary. Where appropriate, they are linked to the Christian Values and Global Goals for each term and also make cross-curricular links. In doing so, our writing curriculum also contributes to pupils' cultural capital by broadening their understanding of the world, exposing them to diverse perspectives, and enriching their experiences beyond the classroom.

The 'I am a Clever Writer' approach is fully implemented in Lower Key Stage 2, with Upper Key Stage 2 employing elements as appropriate. Planning follows the format and Long-Term Plans outline progression in genre, grammar, and punctuation. Live marking is applied daily to identify errors, address misconceptions, and provide immediate feedback.

Key Features of Writing at St. Andrew's Junior School

Our writing curriculum is built on a foundation of key components that support the development of confident, capable writers. These include spelling, grammar, punctuation, independent writing, speaking and listening, handwriting, and moderation. Each element is carefully planned and implemented to ensure progression, consistency, and high standards across the school.

Grammar

Understanding grammar is a vital part of improving children's writing. Within writing lessons, grammar concepts are explicitly modelled and explained. Pupils practise grammar features in context, linked to the genre or text being studied. National Curriculum grammar objectives are embedded in the Long-Term Plan to ensure alignment with texts and cyclical repetition throughout the academic year.

Punctuation

The 'I am a Clever Writer' approach integrates punctuation instruction through the modelling of specific skills (e.g., commas in lists, punctuation after fronted adverbials). These skills are revisited throughout the year. Teachers may use targeted support materials to reinforce punctuation concepts where appropriate to the genre or text.

Independent Writing

In Lower Key Stage 2, pupils complete a 'Star Write' at the end of each focus text. This extended piece of independent writing follows a sequence of skill-building and embedding lessons, including exploration of a WAGOLL and teacher modelling.

In Upper Key Stage 2, pupils also complete a 'Star Write' at the end of each unit. They plan their writing to incorporate genre-specific features and grammar objectives. Teachers model editing techniques, and pupils revise their work using purple pen before assessment.

Teachers assess independent writing using the 'I am a Clever Writer' checklists, which are aligned with year group National Curriculum expectations. Assessment is conducted promptly and shared with pupils to highlight successes and identify next steps. Feedback informs future planning and target setting.

Provision for SEND pupils in Writing

At St. Andrew's Junior School, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), have access to a high-quality writing curriculum that supports their individual learning needs. We recognise that some children may require additional support to develop their writing skills and we implement a range of strategies to ensure they can achieve success and make progress.

The 'I am a Clever Writer' approach, implements many of the strategies listed below, supporting SEND and other children in writing through:

Cognitive and Processing Support

- Chunking tasks into smaller, manageable steps to reduce cognitive load.
- Visuals and writing checklists to support memory and sequencing.
- Use of graphic organisers (e.g. story maps and pictures) to help structure ideas.

Language and Communication Support

- Oral rehearsal before writing to help children formulate and organise their thoughts ('Think, Say, Write' process)
- Sentence starters and writing frames to scaffold sentence construction.
- Pre-teaching vocabulary and using word banks to support language development.

Motor Skills and Presentation Support

- Alternative writing tools (e.g. pencil grips, sloped desks, or typing devices).
- Use of assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software.
- Extra time for writing tasks and reduced expectations for volume where appropriate.

Instructional Support

- Modelling writing using shared and guided writing.
- Frequent check-ins and live marking to provide immediate feedback and encouragement.
- Peer support or adult scribing when needed to help capture ideas.

Motivation and Engagement

- Celebrating small successes and progress through praise and visual rewards.
- Personalised targets that are achievable and meaningful.

Monitoring and Adaption

- Regular assessment and review of progress to adapt strategies.
- Collaboration with the SENDCo to ensure strategies align with individual support plans.
- Use of intervention groups for targeted support in phonics, spelling, grammar, composition or handwriting.

Speaking and Listening

At St. Andrew's Junior School, we provide a wide range of opportunities for speaking and listening. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in front of varied audiences and within different contexts. While sometimes taught discretely, speaking and listening are often integrated across the curriculum.

Examples of speaking and listening opportunities include:

- Reciting songs and poems
- Storytelling
- Describing events, observations, and experiences
- Giving reasons for actions
- Explaining ideas and opinions in discussion and responding to others
- Planning, predicting, and investigating in small groups
- Presenting to different audiences
- Reading aloud
- Imaginative play and role play
- Drama and hot seating
- Collective Worship
- Circle time

Handwriting

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that influences the quality of work across the curriculum. Research shows that handwriting supports brain connectivity, memory, and emotional processing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils should produce fluent, legible, and increasingly speedy joined-up handwriting, and understand different handwriting styles for different purposes.

In Lower Key Stage 2, emphasis is placed on correct letter formation, size, and shape, along with focused practice on joining letters. Pupils use 10mm lined books to support neat cursive writing, progressing to 8mm lined books in Years 5 and 6. Pencil is used in Years 3 and 4, with pens introduced in Upper Key Stage 2.

Consistency in handwriting instruction is maintained across year groups through regular staff modelling and monitoring.

We aim to help pupils enjoy handwriting and take pride in their presentation. Each class uses a 'Golden Frame' to display examples of excellent or significantly improved handwriting.

Children in Lower Key Stage 2 learn a cursive style using the Twinkl Cursive Handwriting Programme and apply it across subjects. In Upper Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to write in cursive automatically, allowing them to focus on content. They are taught to choose appropriate handwriting styles for different tasks, such as quick notes, final versions, or capital letters.

Moderation

Internal moderation takes place termly. Staff within each year group bring samples of assessed independent writing to discuss and ensure consistency in judgments. Samples are reviewed by the Subject Leader, who monitors writing standards across the school. Findings from moderation inform future planning and staff development, supporting consistency and high expectations.