

St Margaret's Academy - Writing Policy

School vision and values

Vision

At St. Margaret's Academy, we are passionate about ensuring all children become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. Our high-quality English curriculum underpins learning across all other subject areas and is the foundation for a life-long love of learning. We believe the English curriculum drives forward a strong motivation and desire for our pupils to have their voices heard and make a difference; our aim is to equip them with the necessary skills to do so effectively. We want ourselves and the children in our care to be successful, resilient and inquisitive learners who are happy and well-equipped to participate positively in the community and wider society.

Values

Our school values (kindness, respect, responsibility and aspiration) are an essential point of reference on all of our journeys. British values (democracy, rule of law, liberty and respect) play an equally important role. These values are woven into all of our learning and references to responsible and aspirational writing are modelled by teachers.

Definition of Writing

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed by effectively using transcription and composition skills. (NC 2014).

Headline rationale for Writing

We have continued to develop our teaching of writing to meet the needs of our pupils. Children come to our school with a lower level of language development and there is a high proportion of Free School Meals and Pupil Premium. We recognise the importance of developing English for children's attainment in later life. We believe in the explicit teaching of written skills as many of our children arrive without exposure to these areas of literacy. We also believe in making sure experiences in writing are enjoyable and purposeful for our catchment, whether this is through drama, oracy, vivid imagery or imagination.

Intent in Writing:

Our writing curriculum is designed using a text-based approach to help pupils acquire the necessary knowledge of grammatical structures and text types in an engaging and accessible way. This also helps to provide pupils with the desire to write and apply their knowledge and skills. The texts are carefully selected on the basis of their literary merit and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge. They also relate to our school values and the wider curriculum for each year group. We aim to develop pupils into confident, positive and enthusiastic writers. The intent for writing in primary school is to equip children with the skills to become confident, fluent, and creative writers who can effectively communicate for a variety of purposes and audiences. This involves developing both transcription skills (spelling and handwriting) and composition skills (articulating ideas and structuring them in writing). It also includes fostering an understanding of the social functions of writing and a passion for language and writing. As writers, children will learn to craft texts for a variety of audiences and purposes and develop their authorial voice with an increasing knowledge of vocabulary and grammar which will equip them for the future.

To ensure children get off to the best start and have the best chance of later success in writing, there is a focus on building strong foundations through oral composition and through developing handwriting and spelling at Early Years.

Implementation

At St. Margaret's Academy, we aim to integrate the above objectives throughout all areas of our curriculum, ensuring children have the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. To support the development of these essential skills and understanding, we offer an exciting and ambitious English curriculum that includes meaningful and purposeful writing experiences. From Year 2 to Year 6, we follow the *Pathways to Write* scheme, which provides a structured progression of writing skills centred around high-quality texts and language development. This mastery-based approach helps pupils build vocabulary, reading, and writing skills through well-crafted units of work. The scheme also meticulously covers the elements of The Writing Framework 2025.

Key features of *Pathways to Write* include:

- Lessons inspired by engaging, vocabulary-rich texts
- A strong focus on developing vocabulary, reading, and writing
- Creative links to other areas of the curriculum
- Opportunities to challenge and extend more able writers
- Comprehensive, skills-progressive units in each year group (Year 2-6)

EYFS and Year 1

Children in EYFS and Year 1, are given daily opportunities to practise writing recognisable letters, apply their knowledge of RWI progression to spell words, and compose simple phrases and sentences. Our early writing curriculum takes an engaging approach through the use of 'Drawing Club'. Each week, children explore a new text, including traditional tales, high-quality picture books, and captivating cartoon stories. These rich texts expose children to a wide vocabulary, helping to develop their spoken language. They are encouraged to write about their drawings at a developmentally appropriate level, with teachers supporting their oracy skills through high-quality interactions throughout the learning process. Following this scheme to Year 1, is a natural transition that will enable all children to continue their skills, build on them and prepare them for Pathways towards the latter stages of the year.

Composition

We believe that it is important that children understand the purpose of what they are writing and who they are writing for. For this reason, children discuss the roles of writer and reader throughout their units of work. Writing depends on articulating and structuring ideas, which the national curriculum refers to as composition. We believe the best way to teach pupils to write, is by teaching them to master sentences. Sentence-level teaching, which focuses on pupils' understanding about how to construct sentences, should be a key component of any writing curriculum. The children are taught to write for different purposes increasingly across the school and learn to write different genres within these purposes. Children consider what makes a text more effective for a reader and this is key to their written work.

Pathways to Write utilises new and exciting writing stimuli each day, ranging from short letter writing to information posters and short videos. Each unit of work teaches a range of new grammatical tools and writing styles. The teacher and the children work as a team to create a scaffolded and aspirational piece of work for the children to aim towards, setting our expectations high. The scheme introduces the children to rich and advanced vocabulary. All children, including SEN, are exposed to rich, varied vocabulary through class discussion. To further extend the children to attain Greater Depth, we provide opportunities for children to shape their writing through greater elements of choice and also adapt learning for children who are working below or not within their key stage. We have high expectations that all children of all abilities are catered

Progression of skills

Progression of skills for each year group can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UgpGdcvDJILHZoXvGyAvUYXfHzrV_k-G/view?usp=drive_link

Writing across the curriculum

Children will use their writing skills learnt from Pathways to Write and carry these across to all subjects and to write for a variety of purposes. All children should be given opportunities to write about what they have learned in other subjects. This gives pupils a strong knowledge pool from which

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle and will be used as a tool to adjust teaching to meet the needs of each pupil. As a school, we will use the phases of the writing process as a scaffold for any independent pieces. The year objectives are referenced during conferencing with the child. As part of any moderation, we will be using the Babcock assessment grids.

- End of unit tasks are conferenced and marked using year objectives sheet and glued into writing books after their final piece, as a point of reference. Any next steps will be discussed during conferencing as well.
- The teacher collates strengths and weaknesses and uses this to inform their gaps.
- There will be opportunities for pupils to edit their writing during the learning sequence and greater independence in editing writing will be evident as the year progresses.
- At the end of the sequence, pupils complete a final outcome task with opportunities for choice and greater independence for higher attaining pupils.

Spelling

Spelling, along with handwriting, is part of transcription and our goal is to make sure pupils can spell accurately, so that it becomes automatic. While children are learning to read and write in reception and year 1 (and above, if necessary), the teaching of spelling should follow the progression of the school's phonic programme. We will follow RWI Spelling which compliments our Phonics scheme and allows children to understand the orthography, etymology and morphology of words. During writing sessions, Pathways to Spell will support the statutory spelling words of each year group..

Handwriting

The importance of handwriting in developing pupils' writing cannot be overstated. Fluent handwriting is a significant predictor of positive writing outcomes. As teachers, we will model handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception following RWI Handwriting. Teachers should expect consistently high standards, making sure pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently throughout primary school to develop and maintain fluency and legibility. As the children move up into KS2, 'Penpals' will support the correct sequencing to aid joining of letters.

Vocabulary

Children at our school are not always exposed to the high levels of vocabulary and that makes a significant difference to their academic achievement. For this reason, we seek to provide vocabulary rich environments in school with high expectations of children's word choice. The promotion and use of accurate and rich cross-curricular vocabulary across the school is planned. Teachers intend to expose all children to a high level of vocabulary through regularly revisiting ambitious texts and writer talk is encouraged. Effective composition requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary. As teachers, we will support this by using the three tier vocabulary triangle.

Grammar and punctuation

Grammar instruction is most effective when taught in the context of a writing task but with an explicit focus on the rules being learned so that pupils can make informed choices about their writing. Pupils should be taught not only how to apply their grammatical knowledge to their writing, but also the effect grammar creates. Pathways to Write has extensive coverage for each year group and daily opportunities to explore correct grammar choices and effective use of punctuation.