

Context

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Do you live in that little house?

- the importance of developing oracy and language from Early Years in equipping children for writing;
- the importance of developing gross and fine motor skills to develop strength, coordination and positional awareness, core strength, stability, balance and spatial awareness, fine motor control and precision;
- the importance of transcription, particularly through the explicit teaching of phonics; and
- the importance of the Reception Year in building the foundations for writing.

Vision

1

Nursery Overview

In nursery, we provide opportunities for emergent writers to express themselves in many different ways, both verbally and physically – through art, role play and other opportunities provided in purposeful play. Children also develop their language and literacy skills through the introduction of rich texts. Rich texts encourage children's love of literature and develop vocabulary, communication and language skills. Books are chosen for their links to our half-termly topics, reflection of diversity and themes such as friendship, kindness and belonging. Fairy tales are included, as are other books with very clear rhymes and language structures.

Depending on each child's level of development, children are encouraged to recognise and begin writing their name. In addition, children are taught a sound of the week, focusing on the environmental sounds of Phase 1 and the letters SATPIN, which form the first set of our phonics scheme, Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS). Essentially, children's gross and fine motor skills are developed through carefully-planned indoor and outdoor provision, again focusing on stages of development. Teacher-focused activities with individuals or small groups underpin this practice. Samples of children's work are recorded in a Special Book.

Handwriting is taught following the letter formation of the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. Children focus on basic letter formation, pencil grip and legibility. Teachers focus on directional language to support this – up, down, round and back using a variety of mediums in their pedagogy.

Expected Outcomes in Nursery

Our Yearly Overview clearly reflects progression and expected outcomes for the end of each term; these expectations have been broken down to the first and second year of nursery. The Medium-term Plan provides additional detail on half-termly themes, core texts, key vocabulary and continuous provision enhancements. The Weekly Plan includes focused activities, both teacher and child-led, for both indoors and outside provision.

Most children at the end of their second year would be expected to make marks to represent writing, including lines and circles; write their name independently; and mark make with some letter shapes.

Reception Overview

Reception is planned to form a seamless journey from nursery. Activities are set to encourage early writers in both teacher-led activities and in a range of purposeful play activities, both in indoor and outdoor provision. As Nursery and Reception share an outside area, the weekly planning reflects a planned outside-focused area that can be accessed at different points of attainment from Nursery to Reception.

Reception children access daily, teacher-taught, whole-class lessons from the same synthetic phonics scheme. Children follow Phase 2 and 3, using rhymes to support their knowledge. In addition, they use actions like 'robot arms' to support their understanding of how words are blended and segmented. To avoid cognitive overload, Summer 2 sounds are taught in Autumn 1 of Year 1. Children in Reception are given transcription opportunities aligned with their phonics learning; letter formation and the writing of words, phrases and sentences are developed through whole-class teaching and focused groups. Continuous provision enhancements include separate areas for phonics, creative writing and other planned writing opportunities, for example in the role play area.

In addition, from the last two weeks of Autumn 1, Reception are taught two whole-class additional literacy lessons from a core, rich book (see Appendix 2). Most of these books are chosen from our Read to Write Scheme, but not necessarily. The planning is heavily adapted to enable access at different levels. Children have one guided writing session with an adult per week. Children develop their oracy skills, and use their knowledge of phonics, high frequency words and vocabulary and language structures from the text to achieve planned outcomes: mark making; writing captions, simple words and phrases; writing sentences with a capital letter and full stop (see Expectations); sequencing and retelling stories. These pieces are recorded weekly in a writing journal.

Essentially, the phonics lessons are taught to enable children to blend and segment, but letter formation is also taught as part of the phonics lessons at certain developmental points. Letter formation, using the Nelson scheme and directional language, is accessed daily through continuous provision and is supported in guided writing sessions. Once all sounds have been taught, an additional whole-class handwriting lesson is taught, concentrating on families of letters as outlined in Appendix A of the July 25 guidelines (see below).

Reception Expected Outcomes

Reception planning mirrors the formats of Nursery planning. In addition, the weekly planning contains more detail on the two additional literacy lessons and planned opportunities linked to writing in continuous provision from the rich text and the phonics lessons.

The EYFS statutory framework sets out the early learning goals for the areas of learning, including Literacy and Physical Development. For the early learning goal for Writing, children at the expected level of development need to achieve certain milestones:

- write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;**
- spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; and**

write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework, the early learning goals should not be used as a curriculum but are a framework for assessing a child's development at the end of the Reception Year. The Early Writing Framework clearly states that, while punctuation is not a requirement of the Writing Early Learning Goals, children in Reception should still be taught it. Using capital letters and full stops reinforces children's growing understanding of sentences.

The early learning goal for Fine Motor Skills sets out that children at the expected level of development will be able to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing, using the tripod grip in almost all cases. Sentences and phrases can be transcribed (from dictation) rather than independently composed; sentences and phrases can be simple rather than extended.

Year 1 overview

Daily phonics continues in Year 1, with alternative graphemes taught after the Phonics Screening test in May. In addition to daily phonics lessons, Year 1 children have three taught English lessons a week. Using our Read to Write resource, we plan and adapt our writing around the three core outcomes – composition; grammar, punctuation and vocabulary, and transcription. There are normally two texts per term with two writing outcomes - one fiction and one non-fiction. There are many incidental writes along the way, encouraging our children to enjoy varied writing opportunities. Shared writing and modelled writing are key drivers to ensure that the writing process is externalised and made explicit. Dictation is also used as a model that enables children to deal cognitively with the writing process.

Handwriting is taught daily, both explicitly and as part of taught phonics and shared writing lessons. Year 1 continue to print, using directional language and letters as outlined in the Nelson scheme. Children at this stage are taught to understand the relative size of letters, particularly the t and other ascenders. In addition, handwriting is taught discretely in handwriting families (see Appendix A) as both a whole-class and in small groups. Wide-lined paper is used at this stage. Mid-line guides are also used to help pupils position letters. Pupils are introduced to paper with narrower lines once they can write legibly and easily on wide-lined paper

Year 1 Expected Outcomes

By the end of year 1, most children should be able to write sentences with spaces between words, capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks. Letters should be formed correctly in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. They should use capital letters for names of people, places, days of the week and the I pronoun. Children should be able to sequence sentences into short narratives that makes sense. They should be able to join ideas in a sentence with the conjunction, 'and'.

Inclusion

High expectations, high quality teaching and the need to be ambitious for all children to get the best opportunities are paramount. At St John's, we have invested in pedagogy that enables us to plan for all children, making adaptations as necessary to ensure their progress within writing lessons. Guidance is sought from the SENDco for those children with complex needs. Children may need support with either physical or cognitive needs. If children are not accessing a lesson, arrangements are made for them to achieve outside of the lesson. Flexible

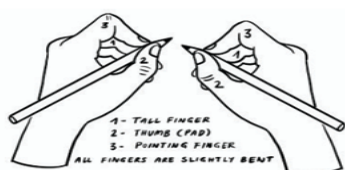
use of our Teaching Assistants (Year 1) allow children extra support where necessary.

Appendix A: Handwriting guidance

Maintaining a correct and comfortable sitting position and pencil grip

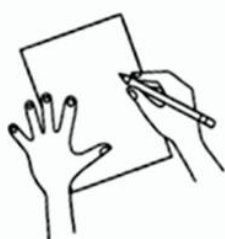
Teachers should encourage pupils to maintain correct finger positioning. Most pupils find the tripod grip the easiest to learn and support grips can help. Teachers should show pupils how to pinch the pencil with the index ('pointing') finger and the thumb, about a finger space from the end (on the coloured part just above the sharpened point); and how to rest the middle finger underneath the pencil to support it. If necessary, a sticker can show pupils where to place their fingers. The way a child grips the pencil will affect the quality, speed and flow of the handwriting. The grip should be relaxed, not pressing too hard on the pencil or the paper.

Finger positioning using the tripod grip:



Paper positioning for left-handers:

Paper positioning for right-handers:



Letter families and relative sizes

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed.

The 'families' are grouped according to where each letter starts, although these families may differ slightly, depending on the handwriting programme used.

Typical families are:

- c o a g q d
- i l t k j
- v w u y f
- r n m h p b
- e s x z

Pupils should be taught to write each 'family' of lower-case letters correctly on the line, and then to write words that include letters from that family.

Appendix B

Nursery Core Texts