St John's CE Primary School Curriculum Strategy 2026-2029

Securing Excellence in Reading, Writing and Mathematics

Our Vision

At St John's CE Primary School, we believe that every child, regardless of background, starting point or need, deserves access to a highly ambitious curriculum that enables them to flourish academically, socially and personally. Our curriculum is rooted in our Christian vision, underpinned by the Four A's, and designed specifically for our context: a school serving a community with high levels of disadvantage, above-average SEND, significant deprivation and attendance challenges.

We know that strong outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are the gateway to future success. Therefore, the next phase of curriculum development will place reading, writing and mathematics at the heart of school improvement whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils.

Our Starting Point

Our strategy is informed by a clear and honest evaluation of school performance.

The IDSR highlights significant historic weaknesses in outcomes, particularly during 2023-24 when attainment was substantially below national averages:

Measure	School	National
Combined Reading, Writing & Maths	42%	61%
Reading	58%	74%
Writing	54%	72%
Maths	50%	73%

Most concerning was the attainment of disadvantaged pupils:

Measure	School Disadvantaged	National Disadvantaged
Combined RWM	10%	46%
Reading	30%	62%
Writing	40%	58%

Maths	30%	59%

The school context demonstrates additional challenges:

- 46.05% of pupils are eligible for FSM, significantly above average.
- SEND Support is 19.74%, above national figures.
- Levels of deprivation are above average.
- Attendance and persistent absence remain key barriers to achievement.

While the most recent outcomes show significant improvement, we recognise that sustainable improvement requires a relentless focus on curriculum quality, attendance, inclusion and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed around three core ambitions:

1. Every Child Will Read Fluently and Confidently

Reading is the gateway to the entire curriculum.

We want every pupil to:

- Decode accurately.
- Read fluently.
- Develop strong vocabulary.
- Read with understanding.
- Develop a love of reading.
- Access increasingly ambitious texts.

Particular emphasis is placed on closing language and vocabulary gaps for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

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2. Every Child Will Become a Successful Writer

Children need to be able to communicate confidently, effectively and independently.

We want pupils to:

- Write confidently across genres.
- Use ambitious vocabulary.

- Master grammar through purposeful application.
- Develop independence and authorial voice.
- Write for real audiences and purposes.

Given the language deficits often experienced by disadvantaged pupils, explicit teaching of vocabulary, sentence construction and composition will remain central to writing instruction.

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3. Every Child Will Develop Secure Mathematical Understanding

Mathematics should be understood, not merely completed.

We want pupils to:

- Recall key facts fluently.
- Understand mathematical concepts deeply.
- Reason mathematically.
- Solve problems independently.
- Explain their thinking confidently.

Improving mathematics outcomes remains an urgent priority given historic weaknesses identified within the IDSR, particularly for disadvantaged and middle prior-attaining pupils.

Strategic Priority One: Reading

Why Reading?

Reading is the single greatest driver of educational equity.

Many pupils enter school with gaps in vocabulary, language exposure and literacy experiences. These gaps are particularly pronounced amongst disadvantaged pupils.

Our Approach

Early Reading

We will continue to use Little Wandle because it provides:

- Consistent phonics instruction.
- Clear progression.

- Regular assessment.
- Early intervention.
- Decodable texts matched to phonic knowledge.

Reading Fluency

We will:

- Deliver daily reading practice.
- Develop fluency through repeated reading.
- Use echo reading and modelled reading.
- Prioritise reading for the lowest 20% of readers.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary development will become the responsibility of every subject.

Teachers will explicitly teach:

- Tier 2 vocabulary.
- Subject-specific vocabulary.
- Oral language structures.
- Academic language.

Reading for Pleasure

We will:

- Strengthen class reading cultures.
- Promote high-quality texts.
- Develop author studies.
- Increase parental engagement in reading.
- Ensure every classroom celebrates books and stories.

Strategic Priority Two: Writing

Why Writing?

Historic outcomes show writing attainment significantly below national figures. Many pupils struggle to apply vocabulary, grammar and composition independently.

Our Approach

We will continue to use The Write Stuff as a framework because it provides:

- Explicit modelling.
- Clear progression.
- Consistency across classrooms.
- Vocabulary development.
- Structured support for disadvantaged learners.

However:

We do not confuse curriculum coverage with curriculum impact.

Success will be measured by the quality and independence of pupils' writing rather than completion of a programme.

Key Development Areas

- Increased extended writing opportunities.
- Stronger editing and redrafting.
- Explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Greater writing independence.
- Consistent teacher modelling.
- Improved sentence-level accuracy.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Children will write regularly in:

- History
- Geography
- RE
- Science
- Personal Development

to ensure transfer of skills and increased stamina.

Strategic Priority Three: Mathematics

Why Mathematics?

The IDSR identifies mathematics as the weakest area within progress measures, particularly amongst disadvantaged pupils and middle prior attainers.

Our Approach

We use White Rose Maths because it provides:

- Clear progression.
- Consistent representations.
- Conceptual understanding.
- Reasoning opportunities.
- Problem-solving development.

Mathematics Improvement Priorities

Fluency

Children will develop automatic recall of:

- Number bonds
- Times tables
- Key calculation facts
- Mathematical vocabulary

Reasoning

Lessons will prioritise:

- Mathematical discussion.
- Explanation.
- Oracy.
- Justification of answers.

Intervention

We will identify gaps rapidly and provide:

- Same-day intervention.
- Precision teaching.
- Pre-teaching.

- Small-group support.

Particular attention will be given to disadvantaged pupils whose outcomes in mathematics have historically been substantially below national averages.

Disadvantage Strategy

With almost half of pupils eligible for FSM, tackling disadvantage is not an additional strategy; it is our curriculum strategy.

Every curriculum decision will be viewed through the lens:

"Will this improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?"

Key Commitments

We will:

- Prioritise vocabulary.
- Teach explicitly rather than assume.
- Provide rich cultural experiences.
- Build background knowledge systematically.
- Ensure consistent classroom routines.
- Remove barriers to participation.
- Track disadvantaged attainment separately.
- Prioritise disadvantaged pupils for interventions.

Curriculum Equity

Our curriculum will provide:

- Representation.
- Cultural capital.
- High aspirations.
- Access to ambitious knowledge.

We refuse to lower expectations because of disadvantage. Instead, we will provide the support necessary for pupils to achieve ambitious outcomes.

SEND and Inclusion

Given above-average SEND levels, inclusion is central to curriculum design.

We believe:

The destination remains the same; the route may look different.

Teachers will:

- Adapt instruction.
- Scaffold learning.
- Use explicit modelling.
- Reduce cognitive overload.
- Use visual supports.
- Maintain ambitious expectations.

We will not reduce curriculum ambition for pupils with SEND.

Attendance and Curriculum

Attendance remains a significant barrier to achievement. Persistent absence and overall absence remain above national figures.

Therefore:

- Curriculum engagement will support attendance improvement.
- Reading interventions will prioritise persistently absent pupils.
- Knowledge organisers will support missed learning.
- Catch-up systems will minimise curriculum gaps.
- Belonging and attendance strategies will operate alongside curriculum improvement.

Success Measures by 2029

We will evaluate impact through:

Reading

- Phonics outcomes above national.
- Reading attainment consistently above national.
- Increased reading fluency.

- Improved reading engagement.

Writing

- Sustained improvement in writing attainment.
- Increased independence.
- Stronger vocabulary application.
- Improved extended writing outcomes.

Mathematics

- Improved attainment and progress.
- Reduced gaps for disadvantaged pupils.
- Stronger reasoning outcomes.
- Increased fluency.

Disadvantage

- Narrowed attainment gaps.
- Increased attendance.
- Increased enrichment participation.
- Improved pupil voice measures.

Overall

Every pupil leaving St John's will be:

- A confident reader.
- A capable writer.
- A secure mathematician.
- A resilient learner.
- Prepared for secondary school and future success