

Writing Vision and Curriculum Overview

Intent

1. Aims and objectives

“All I need is a sheet of paper and something to write with, and then I can turn the world upside down.” Friedrich Nietzsche

“Read a thousand books and your words will flow like a river.” Virginia Woolf

1.1 We believe that writing is a key form of communication which is vital to all aspects of life. We write for so many different purposes - to inform, to entertain, to persuade and to express our emotions and we endeavour to give our children the skills in order to engage in all of them. We want our children to have a positive experience with writing, so that they can confidently tackle the writing tasks that they will face not just in school, but in the rest of their lives.

Being able to write purposefully and confidently opens many doors of opportunity. Through writing, our children can hold a mirror up to their customs and cultures, they can create the world that they want to live in and they can stand up against injustice and campaign for equality and peace. We want our children to have all of these possibilities and more and we believe that our writing curriculum prepares them for this.

We realise that reading and writing are inextricably linked. We encourage our children to read as writers so that their eyes are opened to the wonders of language and vocabulary in the books that they read.

1.2 By the end of Reception our aims, in line with the Early Learning Goals, are that all pupils:

- Use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.
- Can write some irregular common words
- Can write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others with some words being spelt correctly and others being phonetically plausible.

1.3 Our aims, in line with the National Curriculum for writing in KS1 and KS2, are that all pupils:

- Acquire a wider vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.

- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

The programme of study for writing has two sections:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

Implementation

2. Writing Curriculum Overview

2.1 Early Years

In the Early Years, the teaching of writing follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Because of the fundamental importance of writing in everyday life, we are driven by the need to help each child develop their writing skills to the best of their capability, thus enabling them to have a firm foundation and be ready for the next stage in their learning.

Before children can begin to communicate in writing, they need to explore communication through speaking and so developing the children's oracy skills are a key part of developing their writing. In formal and informal situations, we create and encourage opportunities for meaningful conversation, discussion and talk around learning. We strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

Children take part in activities to develop their fine and gross motor skills and recognition of patterns, for example, forming letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. We aim to develop muscles in the upper arm, elbow and wrist before moving on to the small fine motor movements. Children move from activities such as mopping with paint, drawing under tables on paper and collecting items using tweezers to learning how to correctly hold a pencil. Once they can do this, they learn how to form recognisable letters.

Our teaching of phonics is a key part of the children's writing development. We are committed to providing a consistent, systematic and synthetic approach to phonics which provides children with skills enabling them to access reading and writing and

to tackle unfamiliar words. Children are taught the 44 phonemes and how to segment and blend words in order to support their writing. They learn to write phonetically plausible sentences and check their writing makes sense by reading it back.

Shared writing takes place during whole class teaching, where ideas are shared and discussed. The sessions are well-paced and interactive, e.g. the teacher employs intentional errors, the use of pupil whiteboards for the quick composition of ideas and formative assessment. These ideas are recorded and refined by the teacher, with them modelling the skills needed to be a writer. The children then have the opportunity to practise and extend their own writing independently, or in a guided group.

Small guided writing groups are established when the children are ready. In the session, ideas are shared and discussed and then recorded by the teacher who models the skills needed to write successfully. This modelling process is repeated as many times as is necessary. Children then evidence their progress, supported where needed, using the guidance they have been given to inform their own writing.

In this early stage of writing development, we aim create enduring and positive attitudes to writing. The children are part of a 'community of writers' where all the children, whatever their starting points, have close adult-child interaction to support them as writers and to give positive and frequent feedback on their achievements. We create an environment where children are willing to take risks with their writing and have a 'have a go' attitude. We are careful not to overload the children with instruction for correction which may deter them from writing.

In order to encourage the children's willingness and desire to write, we aim to find ways of engaging and collaborating with children in creating interesting and purposeful opportunities to write in both inside and outside settings. Wherever possible, writing is linked to the termly class topic and, therefore, the wider curriculum. We celebrate children's writing at every stage through our writing exhibits, our super writing wall and through our learning journeys.

2.2 Key Stage 1 and 2

In Key Stage 1, the children continue to develop their handwriting and engage in regular lessons to make sure that the skills are embedded. The handwriting style that we have adopted is based on a semi-cursive style, similar to that of the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, with a few adjustments. All teachers follow the same planning and use the same language to ensure consistency across the school. Early in KS1, the children use books with handwriting lines in order to aid their formation of letters, however, it is the aim that the children will quickly move onto using books with standard lines. The children recap and secure their formation of individual letters both lowercase and upper case. Having secured this skill, the children move onto lessons involving joining pairs of letters and then three letter joins. With this foundation, the children are able to begin to join their handwriting consistently. At the beginning of each year as the children progress through the school, we have a big emphasis on handwriting

involving daily lessons which moves to lesson 2-3 times a week. This often incorporates practising common letter strings and words from the national spelling lists.

Long term plans for writing in across Key Stage 1 and 2, set out the range of text types and purposes that the children will explore throughout the year. The plan ensures that learning from the previous year is revised before moving onto new content and also that within the year text types are repeated so that there are opportunities for the children to build on their knowledge. As in the Early Years, there is an emphasis on writing for a purpose and teachers seek out opportunities to make writing meaningful for the children e.g. writing to our local M.P. or authors whose books the class have explored. The children are always so inspired when they receive responses to their writing.

Teachers plan using 1 and 2 week writing cycles enabling a consistence of approach across the school. In Year 1, the emphasis is on securing the children's ability to construct simple and accurate sentences around an image and once this is secure, they move onto the 1 week cycle. Within the cycle, there is also the possibility of including shared and guided writing.

We teach Alan Peat's sentence types across Key Stage 1 and 2 and specific sentence types are allotted to each year linked to the grammar requirements for each year group. As the sentences are taught, the grammar within them is explored which enables the revision of word classes and a deeper understanding of the structure of the sentences.

We use the Pixl spelling diagnostic materials and the 'No Nonsense' Spelling programme in Key Stage 1 and 2 and have 2-3 short spelling lessons per week. Children are taught about different methods and strategies for learning spellings and explore the different rules in interactive, engaging and fun ways. There is the expectation that the children will apply the skills that they are learning across the curriculum.

The educationalist, James Britton said, "*Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.*" Talk is at the heart of all the learning that we do and as such it is an important part of our curriculum across the Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2. It is an area that we are currently developing with the introduction of sentence stems to scaffold the ways in which the children share their ideas and respectfully challenge the ideas of others. The stems will be displayed and in the classroom and the expectation will be that once they are introduced, they are used across the curriculum.

Vocabulary development occurs both implicitly and explicitly. As the children hear high quality books being read to them, they are immersed in rich vocabulary and sophisticated sentence structures which they can then 'magpie' and explore in their own writing. Explicit vocabulary instruction takes many forms. Vocabulary development is an integral part of the writing cycle. Children explore tier 2 language by investigating synonyms andonyms, exploring the language in the model text and by using resources such as the book Descriptosaurus. We also use the Vocabulary Ninja resources for exploring new vocabulary. In spelling lessons, we explore common roots and prefixes and suffixes and aim to create an environment where the children

are avid collectors of words and language and are excited about how they can manipulate them.