

Writing Policy

Intent

At Whitchurch Combined School, we intend to deliver an engaging curriculum which will inspire our children to become confident, independent and willing writers. We have a rigorous and well organised English curriculum that provides exciting and meaningful writing opportunities in English lessons and across the wider curriculum, building a range of skills as the children grow as learners, creating a skill-set which we hope will be life-long.

Our writing curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum and provides an outline of the core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

It is our intention that our children are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly through the written word. To this end, we aim to immerse our pupils in a range of high-quality text types which will help them to secure a clear grasp of the purpose for writing – understanding the purpose of each genre; understanding the purpose and impact of structure, grammar and vocabulary and understanding how to create the desired impact on the reader. We encourage our children to read as readers, but also to read as writers.

We aim to challenge and encourage all our children to have high expectations and to take risks with their writing, viewing mistakes as part of the learning process. We teach our children to edit, improve and develop their writing, recognising that first drafts will rarely be perfect. We intend to motivate our pupils to be proud of everything they write and as such we aim to celebrate writing around the school and within the community.

It is our intention to provide the learning opportunities which will allow:

- All children in KS1 to achieve the 'Expected Standard' in Phonics and Writing.
- All children leave Y6 achieving the 'Expected Standard' in Writing as well as in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling.

We strongly believe that by encouraging children to become life-long independent motivated writers, we are providing them with the most powerful cultural capital you can have – an ability to turn your voice (your thoughts, knowledge, opinions, artistry) into powerful writing.

Our curriculum outline clearly identifies the key knowledge that all children need to learn to enable them to become successful in written and oral composition. It ensures all children learn:

- Phonics so that pupils quickly build the knowledge they need to read and write independently. (see separate policy)
- Transcription: unlaboured and fluent handwriting, accurate spelling, accurate and effective application of punctuation.
- Successful composition: articulating ideas and structuring them in writing.
- Knowledge of formality and how to control their writing consciously using standard English.
- Speaking effectively leading to successful oral and / or written presentation.

- An explicit knowledge and understanding of grammar enabling conscious control and choice over their use of language.

We set ourselves these challenging intentions to ensure that there is clear dedication to supporting children to learn the skills of writing. This ensures that we prepare the pupils at Whitchurch Combined School to be life-long writers.

It is also our intention that:

- Writing is taught as a process which does not happen in one lesson.
- Children understand that writing must be coherently planned and sequenced.
- Writing is explored, discussed, drafted, edited, developed then published.
- Children's writing skills build each year with a clear pathway of progression of skills.
- Writing and the associated skills are embedded in the delivery of the wider curriculum, ensuring that children have plenty of opportunities to practice and apply their developing skills and understanding.

By planning a clear pathway of progression of skills, it is our intention that children will leave Whitchurch Combined School being able to:

- Write fluently, coherently and confidently for a variety of purposes across a range of genres.
- Write to entertain, imagine and explore feelings and ideas, to inform and explain, to persuade and to review and comment.
- Write effectively across all curriculum subjects.

They will also:

- understand the value of being able to write meaningfully
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- draw on their exposure to a wide variety of high-quality texts to inspire their writing
- experience real author and poet visits and have the opportunity to write alongside them, learning to imitate and innovate in order to create their own written work.

These intentions are embedded across our English lessons and the wider curriculum. We will provide the means for children to develop a secure knowledge-base in English which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. Rigorous assessment and review will ensure that we are able to provide targeted support so that all children experience success in English; we believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society.

Non-negotiables for Writing

At Whitchurch Combined School, we believe:

- Every child should have the opportunity to write at some level every day – in English lessons or within other curriculum areas, either to practise a taught skill or to develop the ability to write for an increasingly sustained period.
- Children are taught a balance of transcription and composition.
- Children are taught age-appropriate grammar and punctuation to support progress in their writing.
- Children are taught in a way which will ensure they not only have a secure understanding of the basic skills to write confidently for the necessities of life, but also to write for enjoyment, satisfaction and pleasure.
- The purpose and audience of any writing is made explicit to ensure the children know why they are writing, the features required of their writing to make it effective and who will read their writing.
- Children's writing is valued and celebrated across the school.
- The teaching of writing is a priority throughout the school.
- We will promote a love of writing throughout the school.
- We will provide children with access to high quality stimuli including age-appropriate texts from which they can draw inspiration for their own writing.
- We ensure children leave our school being able to write in a way which will help promote positive well-being and self-esteem.

Implementation

At Whitchurch Combined School, writing in some form is taught daily across the whole school. Each class studies a different high-quality text, lasting from a few weeks to a whole term depending on text type, length and year group. (See Reading Spine). We passionately believe that reading and writing are inextricably linked therefore studying a range of rich and varied texts in both reading and writing sessions encourages children to make links and become empathetic and ambitious writers

Yearly Overviews, medium and short term planning and the use of progression maps ensure that a variety of genres are progressively taught and built upon across the year and throughout the school.

Writing is not just a key focus in English lessons, but also across the wider curriculum, especially in topic lessons. Children are given the opportunity to transfer and build upon their knowledge of a genre studied during English lessons and apply this learning to a topic focus.

Through the writing process, children at Whitchurch Combined School are taught the essential skills to becoming confident, life-long writers. Each unit of work may take between 2 – 4 weeks or even longer depending on the age groups and the text type.

Although teachers adapt the process to suit the needs of their learners, and the process at Key Stage 1 may be far simpler, a typical unit could be as follows:

- Initial Stimulus - To excite the children's imagination and create enthusiasm about the writing. Whilst this will often be an event in the studied text, it may also be a real-life event, an artefact, an image or painting or even lyrics from a song.
- Establishing the purpose, audience and the genre which will be written.
- Exploration of the genre Using their inquiry skills to explore high-quality examples of the genre: identifying layout, word choice, punctuation, text structure and language features – all to be recorded on the working wall, by the children wherever possible.
- Opportunities to participate in drama & spoken language activities to embed the children's understanding and support the generation of their own ideas.
- Generating their own ideas – drawing on any previous stimuli including any drama activities; supported by group work or adult intervention as appropriate.
- Planning - this could be as a story board, a spider-gram, a writing frame, or any other format. which enables the children to organize and structure their ideas.
- Drafting – using their plan to support the writing process.
- Proof-reading – checking for spelling, punctuation grammar and sentence structure at an age-appropriate level. Checking for clarity and cohesion,
- Editing - this may be supported by peer-editing, editing stations, guided writing with an adult or any other process which will support the children in editing their work.
- Improving – checking their own work against their plan and any examples from the working wall; adding any additional information, developing a scene in a story, etc. This may be informed by teacher feedback or guided groups.
- Publishing – writing the text in their 'Best' writing books (or any other appropriate form in which the final piece is to be presented).

At an appropriate point, teachers will slot in lessons to include at least one grammar / punctuation skill particularly relevant to the text type (see Grammar and Punctuation)

This whole process is evident through the teachers' planning, the working wall, and the children's books.

Within each unit of work, sequenced lessons ensure that prior learning is checked and built upon and National Curriculum objectives are taught, including grammar and punctuation skills as well as transcription and composition. These are delivered through a combination of approaches and opportunities and might include:

As listed above in the Writing Process, and:

- Handwriting practice.
- Spelling games and practice.
- Modelled Writing, Shared Writing, Paired Writing, Guided Writing, Independent writing
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar games and lessons.
- Performing.

Modelled Writing

The teacher talks aloud the thought processes as a writer. They model strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model writing skills such as punctuation, rehearsal, proof reading, editing, word selection, sentence construction and paragraphing. They will also model how to use the working wall and plans to support the writing process.

Shared Writing

This is a collaborative approach in which the children contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to write. The teacher models and teaches specific writing skills and there is the opportunity for discussion to choose the most effective or suitable ideas.

Paired Writing

The children work in pairs to provide the next sentence of the text. This may follow from the modelled or the shared writing process.

Guided Writing

The children are grouped by writing ability. The teacher or other adult works with the group on a carefully selected task appropriate to that group's needs. This will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process rather than writing a complete piece.

Independent Writing

Children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text type in their own writing. They are encouraged to plan, draft, write, edit and assess their work, applying the skills they have learnt throughout the unit of work on that particular genre.

The teaching of writing varies across the age range in school.

In Reception, emergent writing is encouraged through the use of different writing materials, including felt tipped pens, crayons, chalk, sand, magnetic letters, big brushes, water, paint and computers, as well as writing in the role-play areas, such as postcards, menus, invitations, labels etc... Alongside this, children take part in activities to encourage and develop gross and fine motor skills necessary to write in a legible script.

As children grow in confidence, they are given many opportunities to write independently and to apply the skills they have learnt and practised in modelled, shared and guided writing. Wherever possible, writing is made meaningful by being planned for a specific purpose or in response to a particular stimulus or experience. (See separate EYFS policy)

In Key Stage 1 pupils become increasingly competent as writers. They write a range of text types (narrative and non-fiction) but their degree of control over these forms varies according to the complexity of the task. Purposes, audiences and appropriate forms are identified and, through shared and guided writing, the pupils have opportunities to plan, develop and review their writing. They write stories of different types based on known texts, focusing on particular elements, eg:

building character profiles, ascribing appropriate dialogue to particular characters, creating recognisable settings. Poetry, rhyme and language play provide models for the pupils' own writing through adaptation, mimicry or substitution. Some of the organisational and linguistic features of non-fiction texts are evident in the pupils' own writing of recounts, reports, instructions and explanations.

At Key Stage 2 pupils experience writing in different forms for a variety of audiences. They write for different purposes: to entertain, imagine and explore feelings and ideas, to inform and explain, to persuade and to review and comment.

They use the writing process outlined above and are also encouraged to discuss and evaluate their own writing and that of others. There is an emphasis on using real models for writing, eg:

newspaper reports, advertisements, websites. The links between reading and writing in fiction and non-fiction continue to be made explicit. Pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge of texts they have studied to construct their own writing.

Grammar and Punctuation

It is essential children understand how grammar and punctuation function within the craft of writing and it is therefore important that relevant grammar and punctuation are taught and practised as an integral part of each unit.

Teachers focus on one or two skills that the children will need to apply. These are detailed in ***Grammar and Punctuation Progression in Skills*** (see separate document) as well as in ***Progression in Genres*** (see separate document)

As well as learning how a particular element of grammar works, it is vital that children understand its purpose and its desired impact on the reader. eg: *I will use full stops so the reader knows when to take a breath.*

OR

I will use contrasting conjunctions as this will help add detail for the reader in relation to an opposite viewpoint.

This is displayed on the working wall along with examples for children to refer to. These working wall guides may stay up for as long as they are required, even beyond a unit of work, as children may need to refer to these when applying the skills to other writing independently.

During lessons incorporating grammar and punctuation, children will complete sentences in their books to show their understanding of the skill being taught, in the context of the writing genre.

eg: For a unit of work on explanation texts about the water cycle, where the grammar skill is relative clauses, the children should produce sentences during the session that apply this skill...

Precipitation, which could be rain, snow, sleet or hail, falls from clouds into rivers.

The sun, which generates all the natural warmth on Earth, heats the rivers and the water begins to evaporate again.

Cross-Curricular Writing

We firmly believe that writing should not be confined to English lessons alone. Therefore, we provide ample opportunities for writing across the curriculum, especially writing that links to our topic. Genres of writing covered in topic lessons are those in which the skills have been previously taught in English lessons. For example, if a unit on 'Instruction Writing' has been taught in English lessons, then 'Instructions' may be the genre that is explored in cross-curricular writing.

Phonics

At Whitchurch Combined School, we follow Lesley Clarke's Letters and Sounds phonics scheme which is a government validated synthetic phonics programme. Based on the scheme, we have identified key milestones within each of the phonics phases that we would expect our children who are working at the expected standard to achieve. These milestones are identified in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and are expected to be achieved by set points throughout their phonics journey.

(see phonics policy for further details)

Spelling

We believe that secure strategies for spelling are a vital part of the writing process and essential for effective communication and academic success. Spelling is a skill which allows our children to effectively show their understanding in all curriculum subjects.

(See Spelling policy and related appendices for further details)

Handwriting

It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. In Reception at Whitchurch Combined School, the children are taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct position and develop a legible handwriting style, based on the Lesley Clarke scheme. In KS1, we build on children's handwriting skills, developing both a child's Key Strengths (Gross & Fine Motor Skills) and Key Abilities (Knowledge).

Handwriting of all adults in the school should reflect the high expectations that we have of our children, including when marking children's work, writing on the board and on displays around the school.

A "Pen License" may be earned by children (most likely from Year 3) whose handwriting is joined and legible, and where the child's general standards of presentation are very good.

(See Handwriting script)

English Working Wall

The working wall is used to support the daily English lesson and is built upon as a unit of study develops. There is also a vocabulary part of the wall where words are added that are taken from the shared text.

Enrichment Experiences

Throughout their time in Whitchurch, pupils will have access to a range of enrichment experiences to promote a love of English. These include:

- Pantomime productions
- Participation in the school nativity and end of Year 5 / Year 6 productions
- Watch a play in a theatre
- Book week activities
- Oral story tellers during book week
- Visiting authors and poets
- Reading picnics
- Read-a-thon fund raising activities
- Dressing up as book characters
- Writing competitions
- Handwriting competitions.

S.E.N. and Inclusion

Writing forms part of the school curriculum which aims to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Writing activities are planned to take account of the targets set for children in their SEN support plans.

- Teachers provide help with communication and English through:
- Using differentiated texts that children can read and understand
- Using IT and other technological aids
- Providing support from teaching assistants
- Providing phonetic dictionaries and word banks
- Using appropriate intervention programmes to match individual needs.
- Children with SEN start with a simplified writing process of planning, drafting and publishing.
- Publishing is undertaken by an adult helper on the child's behalf if appropriate.
- They are encouraged to plan using storytelling, drawing, talk and picture book making.
- Over time, they are moved towards conventional planning, drafting, revising and publishing
- They regularly write alongside an adult who is also writing.
- They receive a greater frequency of check-in feedback during lessons.
- They are given writing frames, sometimes partially completed with cues, to scaffold the planning and writing process.
- They have increased opportunities for paired writing.

Assessment of Writing

Pupils' developing abilities as writers are assessed through ongoing formative assessment. This process occurs through daily interactions with learners, marking, verbal feedback, modelled examples and suggestions to develop work. Ongoing formative assessment enables teachers and pupils to decide on next steps for improvement.

Teachers also track pupils' progress against the curriculum writing statements over a range of different genres. These are milestones which have been agreed for each year group and match the progression in skills outlined in the document ***Progression in Skills for Writing*** (see separate document) regular assessment enables teachers to identify trends for individuals and groups, and thereby tailor planning accordingly.

As for all core subjects, class assessment data for Writing is captured every term on Sonar (the school assessment management system). Sonar is used to track and record progress against each of the writing objectives and inform an overall judgment.

In addition to pupils' English books, cross curricular and 'Best' writing books are also used to assess pupils' overall attainment in writing, with each child's progress being monitored each term.

Years 2 and 6 writing is standardised by the class teacher initially and then with other practitioners to qualify judgements. The Year 2 and 6 teachers also attend an LA arranged conference where judgements are scrutinised by LA advisers.

Year 6 writing is standardised by the Year 6 teacher, initially independently and then with other Year 6 practitioners on at least three occasions. The Year 6 teacher also attends an LA arranged conference where judgements are scrutinised by LA advisers.

Both Year 2 and Year 6 writing may be moderated by a Local Authority writing moderator towards the end of the academic year.

IMPACT

We measure the impact of our approach to teaching writing in the following ways:

Outcomes

- Percentage of children achieving the ELG in Writing.
- Percentage of children achieving the expected standard in Writing at the end of Year 2.
- Percentage of children achieving the expected standard in Writing at the end of Year 6.
- Increasing percentages of children achieving the expected standard in Writing across KS1 & KS2.
- High progress measures from a child's initial writing ability.

We would expect our pupils to leave Year 6 showing the following skills:

- Know more and remember more, making links between texts and genres experienced.
- Discuss similarities and differences between texts.

- Have a thirst for reading a range of genres and participate in discussions about books.
- Read books to enhance their knowledge and understanding of all subjects in the curriculum and communicate this to a wider audience.
- Read fluently and effortlessly, with understanding at an age appropriate interest level in readiness for secondary school.
- Display high levels of comprehension and vocabulary development.
- Display high levels of engagement in the books they read.
- Read for pleasure and enjoyment.

Pupil Voice

Through discussion and feedback, children talk enthusiastically about writing and understand the importance of being able to write accurately to enable them to communicate effectively. Almost all children enjoy writing and know their next steps in learning. Children are keen to share their work and point out examples of where they feel they have produced a really good piece of writing and why it is good. Almost all children know what to do if they feel stuck before asking the teacher and they all understand the importance of the need to be resilient in writing.