



SHOBNALL PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING



"Writing is just painting with words."

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INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the teaching, organisation and management of writing taught and learnt at Shobnall Primary & Nursery School.

The document has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and its implementation is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the writing subject leader.

The main purposes of this document are:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

VISION

“At Shobnall Primary & Nursery School, we aspire for children to write with purpose, use imaginative description, organise writing appropriately, spell correctly and punctuate accurately.”

PRINCIPLES

Our children will have the ability to write fluently and with interesting detail on a number of topics throughout the curriculum.	We encourage our children to have a vivid imagination which makes readers engage with and enjoy their writing.
We promote a highly developed vocabulary and an excellent knowledge of writing techniques to extend details or descriptions.	We believe our pupils should have well-organised and structured writing, which includes a variety of sentence structures.
We encourage excellent transcription skills that ensure writing is well presented and punctuated, spelled correctly and neat.	We motivate our children to have a love of writing and an appreciation of its educational, cultural and entertainment values.

THEORY UNDERPINNING OUR PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLES

Writing is a very challenging skill to learn and there is less evidence about the most effective ways to teach writing than there is about reading. Nevertheless, access to effective writing instruction is important, as writing enables pupils to communicate, express their ideas and views, as well as opening up opportunities for success in school across the curriculum. Encouraging children to manage and monitor aspects of their writing is a key step.

A number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer.³⁶

Prewriting activities—engaging children in activities prior to writing that help them think of, and organise, their ideas. This can involve tasks that encourage them to remember what they already know, find out about a topic they are not familiar with, or arrange their ideas visually (for example, by using a planning tool or graphic organiser) before writing.³⁷ (See Box 3.)

Drafting, revising, and editing—helping pupils to get their ideas written down as a first draft which they can then edit and revise. (See Box 4.)

Sharing—instructing pupils to share, read, and edit each other's work.

Children need to be introduced to, then practise, planning, drafting, revising, and editing with feedback from the teacher and from their peers. The aim is for them to increase the fluency of these skills and techniques so that they become automatic. The teacher should provide appropriate support that models the process of writing which is gradually reduced over time so the child is ultimately capable of completing the activity independently.

Pupils also need to learn about text structure, and how texts in different genres are formed. Studies show young children benefit from explicit teaching about the structure of narrative and information texts.³⁸ Providing pupils with models of simple structures for different types of text can support this.

Modelling is also important as pupils progress from constructing simple sentences to being able to combine sentences with more complex grammatical structures. Teachers could model these processes, for example, by explicitly demonstrating how to combine several related, simple sentences to make more complex ones. Teachers should encourage pupils to do this on their own as they write.³⁹

Working memory and writing

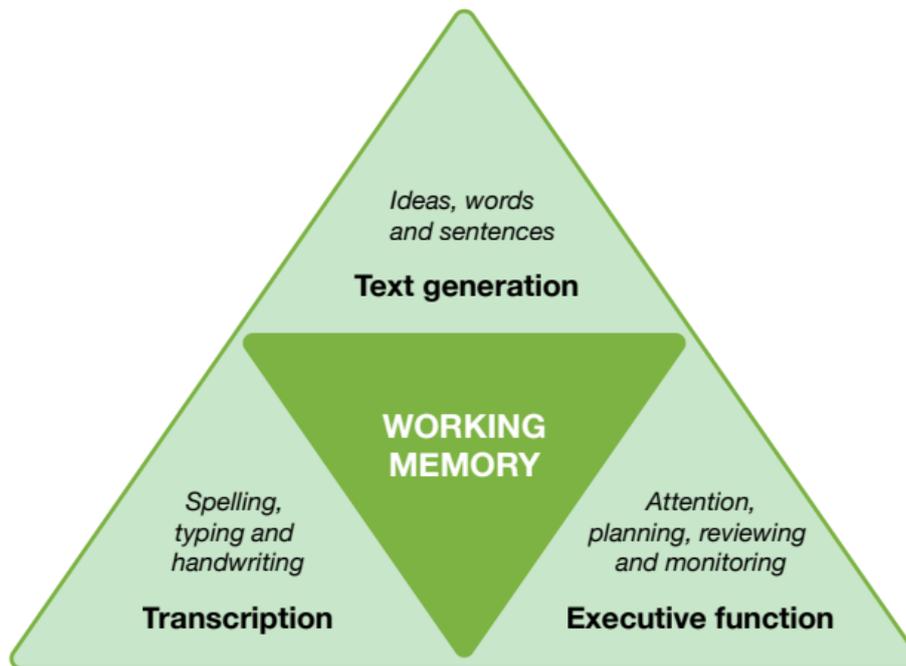
A child's capacity to plan and monitoring their writing depends on whether they have enough cognitive resources available. The Simple View of Writing (Berninger et al, 2002) (Figure 1) highlights the key groups of skills that work together as children write:

- text generation—which involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put those thoughts into words and sentences;
- transcription skills—which enable the writer to move oral language into written language; and
- executive functions—such as working memory, self-regulation, planning, problem-solving, and monitoring their writing.

The model places working memory in the centre, emphasising how it plays a role in enabling each of these skills to operate. Working memory is the cognitive process used when people hold information in mind and manipulate it. When writing, for example, working memory enables a sentence to be held in mind while each word is recalled or segmented and the letters are recorded on the page. Working memory has a limited capacity, therefore when children are in the early stages of writing development, they are not able to apply all the skills within The Simple View of Writing to produce high quality writing (Berninger et al, 2002).

To support children with writing composition in the classroom, teachers need to consider appropriate scaffolds as highlighted by a range of strategies. It is unlikely that children apply approaches like planning, editing, and reviewing spontaneously without explicit teaching and encouragement (Graham et al, 2012). Planning is usually the first composition strategy to emerge followed by 'in the moment' monitoring, which prompts some editing to take place. Approaches like considering the audience/ reader appear much later (Breadmore et al, 2019). However, children may only be able to apply these strategies when spelling and handwriting require less of the child's working memory capacity (McCutchen, 2000). Key Stage 1, therefore, is a good time to develop fluency and automatic transcriptions skills to allow children to generate high quality text.

Figure 1:



INTENT

Secure English skills are essential for progress across the curriculum and to prepare pupils effectively for adult life. We have a responsibility to develop pupils' competence in English to ensure that pupils become competent users of language, and can access the curriculum effectively and achieve their potential.

We provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, which takes account of National Curriculum requirements and recognises the individual developmental needs of our children. Furthermore, the individual experiences and cultures that the children bring to school are celebrated and key in engaging and inspiring them to become curious learners. The environments that we provide are 'language rich', ensuring that a plethora of vocabulary is taught across all subjects.

Cultural capital gives our pupils the vital background knowledge required to be informed and thoughtful members of our community who understand and believe in British values.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our curriculum design is based on evidence from cognitive science; three main principles underpin it:

- Learning is most effective with spaced repetition.
- Interleaving helps pupils to discriminate between topics and aids long-term retention.
- Retrieval of previously learned content is frequent and regular, which increases both storage and retrieval strength.

In addition to the three principles, we also understand that learning is invisible in the short term and that sustained mastery takes time.

Our content is subject specific. We make intra-curricular links to strengthen schema. Continuous provision, in the form of daily routines, replaces the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum and, in other cases, provides retrieval practice for previously learned content.

The expectations for the delivery of English are outlined in Appendix 1.

Writing for Pleasure

We are keen to develop writing for pleasure at Shobnall Primary and Nursery School. We use a variety of stimuli to engage pupils and capture their imaginations, including free-choice, Literacy Shed videos and Pobble. Pobble offers a variety of high-quality, engaging, ready-made writing resources, which have been mapped out for each year group on the long term plan. These lessons involve cross-curricular links to other subjects.

Spellings

Spelling and word knowledge are key components in the process of learning to read and write. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. From Year 1 to Year 6, pupils use Spelling Shed. The Spelling Shed scheme aligns with the English National Curriculum and makes the acquisition of these key skills fun and engaging for pupils. As well as spelling, there are various components across the platform with teaching resources and activities for vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

IMPACT

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

In EYFS, there is ongoing capturing of WOW moments and writing is assessed through the early learning goals based on literacy development. Children at the expected level of development will:

- 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;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

From Year 1 to Year 6, assessment for learning is used daily, assessing understanding and addressing any misconceptions as and when they arise. Assessments can take various forms including: talking to pupils and asking questions, discussing pupils' work with them, marking work against the learning objectives and pupils' self-evaluation of their work and their peers' work.

In term of summative assessments, extended pieces of writing are assessed using the schools' writing assessment grids once per half term. These pieces of writing should alternate between fiction and non-fiction. This information should support teacher assessment to monitor progress throughout the year and form individual targets for each child to work on. The result of any end-of-year assessments will be passed to the relevant members of staff, such as pupils' future teachers, in order to demonstrate where pupils are at a given point. Regular opportunities for internal and external moderation will ensure that these judgments are accurate.

Pupils attainment and progress in writing is measured against the objectives set in the national curriculum and recorded by teachers using Classroom Monitor to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN WRITING

Effective teaching ensures that pupils retain knowledge they have learned in the long term. This is supported by opportunities to revisit and practise with prior knowledge. Pupils are more likely to retain knowledge when they have engaged analytically with the content they study. Teachers can support learning through clear exposition, which takes into account what pupils already know and understand.

Using the EEF's guidance reports on improving literacy in KS1 and KS2, we ensure our lessons:

- **Develop pupils' language capability to support their writing** – purposeful speaking and listening activities support the development of pupils' language capability and provides a foundation for thinking and communication. Pupils are to regularly articulate their ideas verbally before they start writing.
- **Teach writing composition strategies through modelling and supported practice**
 - Pupils' writing can be improved by teaching them to successfully plan and monitor their writing. Producing quality writing is a process not a single event. Teaching a number of different strategies is likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include: pre-writing activities; structuring text; sentence combination; summarising; drafting, editing and revising; and sharing.
 - Purpose and audience are central to effective writing. Pupils need to have a reason to write and someone to write for. Writing can be thought of as a process made up of seven components: planning; drafting; sharing; evaluating; revising; editing; and publishing.
- **Promote fluent written transcription skills by encouraging extensive and effective practice and explicitly teaching spelling** – transcription refers to the physical processes of handwriting or typing, and spelling. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated. If children have to concentrate to ensure their transcription is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing. A large amount of practice, supported by effective feedback, is required to develop fluency. Achieving the necessary quantity of practice requires that children are motivated and fully engaged in the process of improving their writing. Spellings are explicitly taught. Teaching focuses on specific spellings that are relevant to the topic or genre being studied also.

SUPPORTING PUPILS IN WRITING, INCLUDING PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND)

We recognise that in all classes children have a wide range of ability in writing, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

Ensuring that all pupils encounter the same content is particularly important. This suggests that significantly reducing content or complexity for some pupils might in fact limit their access to content or limit their ability to learn. It is likely that pupils will benefit most from support that combines extra attention to securing the most generative knowledge, while ensuring that all pupils are able to learn in a rich context and through meaningful examples. This can be achieved by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
- grouping children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support children individually or in groups.

PROMOTING KEY SKILLS IN WRITING

Through our teaching of writing, we provide opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills.

- **Composition and effect** – composition refers to the way a writer structures a piece of writing and ensuring that the audience and purpose is being considered.
- **Structure and organisation** – this refers to how ideas are presented, including writing in paragraphs and using subheadings when necessary.
- **Grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary** – Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. Pupils are taught to use a range of grammatical features and to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English.
- **Punctuation** – Punctuation is taught in a logical sequence that builds in line with the grammatical features.
- **Drafting, editing and proof-reading** – Producing quality writing is a process not a single event. Teaching a number of different strategies is likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include: pre-writing activities; structuring text; sentence combination; summarising; drafting, editing and revising; and sharing.
- **Spelling and handwriting** – transcription refers to the physical processes of handwriting or typing, and spelling. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated. If children have to concentrate to ensure their transcription is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing. A large amount of practice, supported by effective feedback, is required to develop fluency.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading and writing. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

KEY STAGES 1 & 2

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and

context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than 1 meaning.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

PLANNING AND RESOURCES

We use the National Curriculum scheme of work as the basis for our planning in writing. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge, and we plan progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school.

There are sufficient resources for teaching all writing units in the school.

CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Staff are encouraged to develop cross-curricular links with writing and other subjects to provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum for pupils.

Writing contributes significantly to our teaching across the curriculum. Children are exposed to a range of writing opportunities linking to other areas of our curriculum, including history, geography and science.

Children are exposed to new vocabulary in all other subjects, including technical language.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

In our teaching of writing, we also contribute to the development of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by looking at the establishment of multicultural Britain and the moral implications of the actions of historical figures. Children are therefore provided with many opportunities to discuss moral questions.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

In EYFS, there is ongoing capturing of WOW moments and writing is assessed through the early learning goals based on literacy development. Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;

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- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
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Pupils attainment and progress in writing is measured against the objectives set in the national curriculum and recorded by teachers using Classroom Monitor to inform parents and future teaching and learning activities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning writing. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, teachers should be aware of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken prior to activities, to ensure that they are safe and appropriate for all pupils. Further information can be found in the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

We seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to them and respecting them;
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns, with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the subject leader:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in writing and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- to develop, implement and review an action plan for writing;
- to monitor writing throughout the school;
- to encourage staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils;

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APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING**

- to develop valid activities, appropriate for children at different stages of development, which enable pupils to progress in the subject.

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in writing is the responsibility of the writing subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.