



## **Parent Information Leaflet –Writing**

### **Our Aims**

We want all children to develop a love of writing. In order to achieve, this aim we feel it is important that:

- For writing to be seen as purposeful and enjoyable
- For each child to see themselves as a confident and successful writer
- For each child to achieve the level of writing of which they are capable
- For writing to be developed across a range of meaningful contexts
- For there to be a broad curriculum offering the full spectrum of writing genres
- For each child to develop the necessary writing skills to be a competent writer
- For writing to be seen as an essential life skill.

### **The importance of writing in the curriculum**

Writing is a key life skill, which enables children to express themselves, communicate with others and access other areas of the curriculum. Writing is more than putting words on paper. Your child needs to think about what to write say what they want to write, write it down and re-read their writing. It is a balancing act between having wonderful ideas (creativity), organising their ideas and the ability to put these exciting ideas onto paper (grammar, handwriting and spelling).

### **Talk for writing**

The Pie Corbett Talk for Writing and Storytelling techniques are used throughout the school as a model with which to teach writing. The principle of being able to speak their writing before writing it, is embedded through both fiction and non-fiction writing and involves techniques such as story maps, boxing up ideas into paragraphs as well as literacy games to develop vocabulary. All classes follow the structure of imitation, innovation and independent writing with all units of work to ensure progression.

### **The Foundation Stage**

Writing forms a central part of the Communication, Language and Literacy curriculum. We believe the foundation for writing is built on children's oral work and children are encouraged to express their ideas at every opportunity throughout each of the Early Learning Goals. Staff model use of language and create opportunities for children to develop their talk in every lesson. Daily, weekly and medium term planning clearly demonstrates this focus and include early Talk for Writing techniques and storytelling. In addition to cross-curricular opportunities, specific writing objectives are planned in order to begin giving children the skills they will need as writers.

A wide range of writing materials are always available to children in the classroom and a specific role play area which complements the termly topic is used to provide a real purpose for children's early writing. Children take part in Super Sentence writing each week to develop their knowledge of sentence structures, capital letters and full stops. We recognise both the importance of the teacher acting as scribe on occasions, in order to create stories and the importance of children writing freely as emergent writers.

## **Key Stage 1**

We continue to provide a wide range of planned and incidental opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. We ensure that activities are purposeful and linked to other curriculum areas, which provide contexts for children to apply their skills, endeavouring to ensure real audiences as often as possible. Our learning objectives are taken from the English New Curriculum that we use in conjunction with Talk for writing techniques to support our planning of the teaching sequence; ensuring children develop their writing skills across a wide range of genres.

Through the Talk for Writing techniques, an emphasis is placed on children developing their oral skills as a prerequisite to writing and the use of a wide range of speaking and listening and drama techniques are used to provide children with opportunities to explore and extend their talk as a preparation for writing.

We make clear links with children's reading skills and texts are often used as a basis for developing writing skills, reading and writing objectives being clearly linked in teacher's planning. Children take part in text analysis activities in order to imitate others work before attempting work of their own. Children are also inspired to write for real life situations, writing letters to visitors and instructions for projects they have undertaken. Our diverse curriculum allows good opportunities for Big Writing links using trips, visitors as well as school and national events as an inspiration and reason for writing.

Ranges of techniques are used to teach writing. Teachers plan for modelled writing activities (using the teacher as a model and a scribe for the pupils' ideas), guided writing groups (allowing staff to focus on particular objectives with different ability groups), and writing frameworks which provide structure for the children as they begin to write in a variety of genres as well as plentiful opportunities are given for independent writing. Children are encouraged to have a growth mind set and an "All" and "Challenge" objective is displayed on the board for each activity. The children may choose which activity or target is most suitable for them and work towards it. This often includes grammar success criteria so that the children focus not only on the content of their work in terms of word choice but also the accuracy and use of correct punctuation.

## **Key Stage 2**

We continue to use the English New Curriculum split into upper and lower ks2, links within our long-term plan and use a mixture of Talk for Writing approaches, CLPE texts, features investigations and modelled texts as a basis for planning. This guides us in the variety of genres we need to ensure children have access to and provides a model for the sequence of teaching whilst enabling us to achieve equal coverage across the key stage. All children should cover one fiction and one non-fiction unit per small term.

Whilst focussing on developing key skills, teachers' planning also aims to make links across the curriculum and uses topic themes, as well as educational visits and special events to provide real contexts for writing for real audiences.

**We believe that where children see a purpose, they will be motivated and the quality of their writing will be enhanced.**

## **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

In order to maintain rigour and accuracy within children's writing and satisfy the demands of the new curriculum, children also have a specific focussed half hour lesson twice a week on grammar skills in KS2. Children are involved in a Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) lesson each week to aid the development of spelling, grammar and punctuation which also feeds into English sessions. In KS1, grammar is taught through the English lesson and within phonics sessions once children are confident with their phonic sounds.

## **The Teaching and Learning of Writing**

Children are involved in a daily hour-long English lesson. Teachers plan for this using the objectives and teaching sequence in the new National Curriculum. These lessons may focus on developing particular skills, or applying skills learnt. They may include reading or writing activities or both. In addition to these lessons, writing is used to communicate in other subject areas and teachers plan specific objectives in order to maximise the potential of this.

The New English Curriculum links with the school's long term plan which teachers use to fit with their termly topics. Teachers plan to use open questioning to encourage children to think and explain. All lessons have clear learning objectives and an All and Challenge activity or success criteria which are communicated to the children both orally and in writing. Children are allowed to choose or can be guided to the correct activity for themselves. When approaching tasks, children have a clear view of the success criteria, often writing these themselves, as they get older and use these to assess their own and other's work.

Teachers plan to offer a range of opportunities and outcomes to appeal to different learning styles and pupils are encouraged to make suggestions in order to extend their learning. We recognise that children need to be given opportunities to write for a sustained amount of time to develop both speed and flow through their writing, and need to give time to evaluate, edit and polish their work before staff assess it. All children within school use purple polishing pens to edit and improve their work and some may then re-write it to give a final polished piece. This independent writing (in their portfolio books for KS2) is closely marked, giving a key skill or moving on advice. This is used as an assessment piece for children to assess their progress with their KPI's and is used to set targets for next steps.

Targets are set for groups or individuals within each class on a termly (6-week) basis. Alongside this, pupils are encouraged to set their own writing targets to address areas of personal weakness and move towards the next step. Teacher feedback supports this target setting process, particularly in the early stages, but as children move through school they are encouraged to take responsibility for being reflective and setting their own goals in conjunction with the teacher marking in their portfolio books.

## **How can I help my child with writing at home?**



In helping your child to learn to write well at home, remember that your goal is to make writing easier and more enjoyable.

- **Good writers are often good readers.** By becoming a good reader your child will be exposed to vocabulary that is more varied, sentence structure and styles, which will make the job of writing much easier.
- **Provide a place:** It is important for a child to have a good place to write - a desk or table with a smooth, flat surface and good lighting.
- **Have the materials:** Provide plenty of paper - lined and unlined - and things to write with, including pencils, pens, and crayons.
- **Allow time:** Help your child spend time thinking about a writing project or exercise. Good writers do a great deal of thinking!
- **Spend time learning the weekly spellings.** Being confident with spelling can really help confidence with writing. Some children obviously find this easy and some more difficult. It is worth spending the time each week to learn them properly. Doing 10 at once is very difficult. A few each day has much more impact and the knowledge is retained more easily.
- **Respond:** Do respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Make it clear that you are interested in the true function of writing, which is to convey ideas. This means focusing on "what" the child has written (their ideas), not "how" it was written (spelling and handwriting). It's usually wise to ignore minor errors, particularly at the stage when your child is just getting ideas together. In school, we do not correct every spelling error as this is not the main focus of the writing task.
- **Praise:** Take a positive approach and say something good about your child's writing. Is it accurate? Descriptive? Thoughtful? Interesting? Does it say something?
- **Write together:** Encourage your child to help you with letters, even routine ones, such as ordering from an advert! It is important that your child can see that writing is important to adults.