



Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we share with you our newly updated English Policy, we are pleased to offer further guidance on how you too can best support your child to become accomplished writers. The ability to write with confidence and accuracy is an essential life skill. A lifelong skill that empowers communication, self-expression and critical thinking skills; whilst also encouraging creativity. It forms part of everyday life, from making plans over text or WhatsApp, to writing emails or postcards and even making shopping lists. Becoming a confident and competent writer has a significant contribution to the development of children as learners and as thinkers. As a school, we aim to equip all children with the necessary skills to become skilled writers. We believe in a consistent approach to ensure that continuity and progression are embedded within the school's provision and practice.

### **The National Curriculum: Writing Skills**

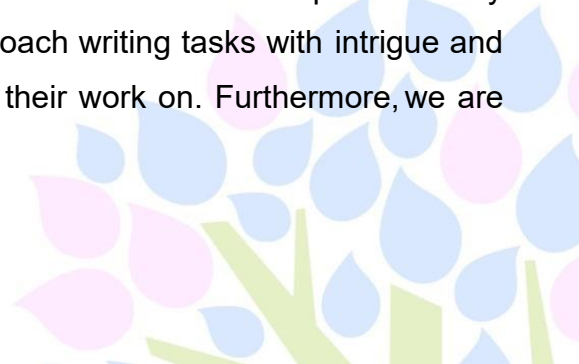
In the National Curriculum (2014), writing skills have been divided into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting).
- Composition (articulating and communicating ideas, editing and redrafting processes).

Each of these skills are core to the successful teaching of writing across the curriculum. Across the school we are striving to embed and develop, through our teaching of writing, an attitude of confidence, imagination and perseverance.

### **Developing writers within the school curriculum**

Our school teaches and celebrates writing in many ways; it is taught daily throughout the school. It is essential that the children are taught to write for a reason and that they understand that their work is purposeful. We continually look to promote cross-curricular writing and writing for pleasure opportunities; giving the children an immersive experience that allows them to produce truly meaningful writing. We ensure that children are able to approach writing tasks with intrigue and interest by providing stimulating materials for them to base their work on. Furthermore, we are



consistently promoting a sense of critical appraisal of our own writing and that of others to develop a thoughtful attitude to writing. ***Our classrooms are a community of writers exploring how and why we write and forming a place where the writer identity of all pupils is fostered, developed and celebrated.***

### **Supporting your child(ren) at home**

Many parents have asked for ways to support their child's development as a writer at home. This is something that we positively encourage as a school and listed below are a number of ideas to guide you. Not only will your support at home help your child to reach their full potential as learners, it is widely recognised that writing for enjoyment has the wonderful ability to boost children's well-being and help them feel connected to the world. To continue to develop their writer confidence, try to remember to focus on and praise the content of any writing that they share, rather than dwelling on mistakes made. The more you can encourage and celebrate their creativity, the more fearless your child will be when writing creatively.

For all ages, it is always an incentive if there is a range of exciting writing materials available – pencils, crayons, felt tips, sparkly pens, writing icings, writing soaps for bath time, coloured papers of different shapes and sizes, whiteboard or even (within the balance of other supplies used) writing on a tablet or keyboard. Many such items can be found in value stores without the need for costly spends.

In addition, why not pick a word of the week. As a family, choose a word to focus on each week. Then everyone can have a go with using it in their writing in increasingly creative ways. The more peculiar the word – the funnier this activity will be!



## **EARLY WRITING ACTIVITIES**

At this age, it is best to turn writing activities into games and to work in short, manageable bursts to hold their attention. Ensuring that they are comfortable with the foundations of writing (forming letters, motor skills and simple sentence structure) is essential, before moving onto the more advanced activities.

- Encourage children to look for print in their environment – road signs, food packets, shops, catalogues etc.
- Try activities to develop fine motor skills e.g. cutting, using playdough, using tweezers, using clothes pegs, tracing.
- Use a chalkboard to write messages to family members on.
- Make labels for things around the house.
- Write a shopping list (real or imaginary!).
- Letter formation – practise forming letters using paint, in sand, playdough or pastry.
- Let your child write their own Christmas/birthday cards to people.
- Use magnetic letters (your child could leave a message on the fridge).
- Encourage and praise early squiggles and marks which show your child is beginning to understand writing.

## **IMPROVING WRITERS**

- Write party invitations.
- Encourage children to write thank you letters after birthdays and Christmas.
- Write postcards when on holiday.
- Write a menu for a family meal or party.
- Email a family member or friend.
- Make a scrap book with labels and captions (possibly about a special event or holiday).
- Write short stories involving the adventures of their favourite toys.
- Write an information leaflet about something they find interesting (e.g. a sport).
- Write a letter to a favourite author.
- Describe a picture in words: Whether a family photo, a picture or a painting on the wall – ask your child to describe it in words or to even write a story based on the image.



- Describe everyday objects. Encourage them to describe everyday objects as creatively as possible.
- Invent and write rules for the house, their bedroom or at the dinner table etc. and put these on a poster.
- Draw, label and explain their own inventions.
- Make up silly sentences and tongue twisters.

### **MORE CONFIDENT WRITERS**

- Write a diary or journal: A great way to get children into the habit of writing whilst also providing an avenue to express their emotions and to make sense of the world.
- Make up a song lyric.
- Write a film review or book review.
- Using the style of their favourite book, write a story for another family member.
- Keep a holiday journal.
- Write instructions for a computer game to help another family member.
- Write a recipe.
- Write instructions for grandparents or another techno-phobic family member that helps them to use a new app or tool on their phone.
- Produce a comic.
- Raise awareness by channelling their passions (RSPCA, WWF, Government) and writing to inform or campaign to others.
- Write to a local newspaper or local MP about a local issue that they feel strongly about.
- Talk to different generations of family and compile a family history.
- Compile a book of jokes.
- Write a poem or play. The motivation can always be to perform their piece once finished!
- Write a story together one paragraph at a time: Think the consequences game, but with writing!
- Look out for writing competitions and enter. (A prize is always an incentive to write!)



### **Building writer motivation**

If your child struggles with motivation and needs further encouragement:

- Always make use of their interests.
- Don't worry too much about spelling mistakes. Mistakes are all part of learning and it is the effort that counts.
- Always remember to praise their efforts by displaying special pieces around the home.
- Review their progress by keeping a portfolio of their writing at home so that you can reflect together at how much their writing has improved over time.



### **Encouraging reluctant writers**

Reluctant writers need a little more encouragement and it is important to get to the root of why they don't enjoy writing. Truly understanding this could help lead to new ways to motivate them.

For further support, your child(ren)'s class teacher(s) would be happy to advise. In addition, you may find the following web page links helpful:

<https://writing4pleasuredotcom.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/wfp-writing-with-children-at-home.pdf>

<https://freedomtoteach.collins.co.uk/how-parents-can-support-their-childs-writing-at-home/>

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/english/primary-writing/>

Thank you for your continued support with your child's learning.

