



Weare Academy First School

How we teach Writing

Statement of Intent:

At Weare Academy First School, we strive to help our pupils see themselves as writers, who are well-equipped with the basic skills they need to become lifelong learners. Our approach to English, as a broader subject, is based on the guidelines set out in Early Years Foundation Stage and the new 2014 National Curriculum.

We aim to ensure that all pupils develop a genuine love of language and the written word, through a text-based approach which links closely to the way we teach reading. Careful links are made across the curriculum to ensure that pupils English learning is relevant and meaningful. Therefore, where possible, we link our reading, writing and the topic we are covering in History and Geography. This is why we have one writing book used not just in English but across the curriculum.

We aim to teach writing through the following strands:

- Writing transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Writing composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
- Writing (vocabulary, grammar and punctuation)
- Spoken language
- Reading (word reading and comprehension)

We aim to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of how widely writing is used in everyday life and how important and useful the skills are that they are learning through:

- Writing for a purpose
- Seeing themselves as real writers
- Taking ownership of their writing
- Seeing writing as an interesting and enjoyable process
- Acquiring the ability to organise and plan their written work



Implementation:

Our Approach to Writing

We use the Talk 4 Writing approach, which we carefully adapt to meet the needs of all our pupils to create an effective way of teaching English Writing skills that can be applied to all areas of writing across all year groups. We focus on the process of preparation, imitation, innovation and invention in our teaching. The core texts are used as models and stimuli for both fiction and non-fiction writing. Each one is carefully selected to ensure it is progressive, of a high quality and pitched at the correct level for pupils.

A Cold Write is completed by pupils, before introducing the text, which provides formative assessment which informs us the specific areas of writing we need to develop and teach our pupils in the following unit of writing.

The core text (book) or model text (based on the core text) is read and analysed. Language, sentence and layout features of the genre of writing are identified and discussed.

A toolkit specific to the genre is co-constructed during and after this process. These are displayed prominently in the classroom and accessible to all pupils on our English Working Wall.

Imitate

Our pupils are provided with a 'hook' activity, speaking and listening and drama activities so they can rehearse using the key language and sentence features of the text orally. These activities are also designed to deepen their understanding of the text. The use of 'talk scaffolds' (lists of words, phrases and sentence starters relating to the writing they are learning about) support their work and embed new vocabulary and sentence structures.

Teachers then 'shared write' creating story maps, story boards with the pupils, taking ideas and modelling key teaching points. Within this process, there are opportunities for pupils to rehearse key points, correct misconceptions, and work in pairs and groups to retell the 'story'. Prompts for reference like word mats, list of high quality words, phrases and sentence starters relating to the writing they are imitating are available for the so the pupils are given independent opportunities to apply their learning.

Teachers work with small groups or individuals to move the learning on further or to address misconceptions. A process of self, peer and/or teacher assessment is used to support editing and redrafting.

Innovate

Once our pupils are more secure with a genre of writing, and familiar with a story (or section of a story) they begin to innovate. A similar teaching process to 'Imitation' is used, but elements of the original core text are changed. For example, the characters, setting or a key event may be altered, the story may be retold from a different viewpoint, additions may be made and new events or characters introduced.

Invent

We also feel it is important to give pupils time to experiment with their own ideas, drawing upon their learning from reading, life experiences and other subjects. Some lessons therefore provide opportunities for pupils to apply learnt writing skills more freely. For instance, if they have been learning to write in a journalistic style, they are given a more open task to write a newspaper article. These also provide good opportunities for teachers to assess the child's writing when less support is given.

Writing outcomes are regularly published, often alongside art work, in order to celebrate the pupils' work. These are displayed in class books or around the school.

Teaching of Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar (SPAG):

This is embedded in our Talk 4 Writing approach as both discreet and integrated SPAG teaching. Each Year group (Year 1 to Year 4) use the Jolly Phonics Systematic Synthetic follow on Grammar and Spelling books for each year group. The two National Curriculum English documents: English Appendix 1 Spelling and English Appendix 2 Vocabulary, Grammar and punctuation is used as a guideline for each year group.

Handwriting:

We believe it is important to support pupils to develop neat, well-formed and consistent handwriting. The development of an efficient, legible style assists pupils in all forms of written recording. We want to help pupils with layout, presentation and the way they organise themselves on paper. Handwriting and good presentation has a high-focus and status in our school.

Handwriting is taught through daily phonics, discreet handwriting sessions and modelled by teachers in all aspects of work.

The teaching of handwriting skills starts in the pre-school where activities are provided to develop the gross and fine motor skills needed later when letter writing begins. Mark making is highly valued and a wide range of tools and contexts encourages pupils to experiment with and explore.

In Reception these pre-writing skills are continued but also include regular handwriting sessions which is further developed in KS1 and KS2.

We introduce cursive letter formation in Year 1. This is continued in Year 2 where most pupils will use joined up cursive handwriting by the end of the Summer Term and continue in Year 3.

In Year 4, pupils will earn a 'Pen License' when they demonstrate a neat, consistent and legible style.

Those who need support in developing their motor skills are identified and intervention within the year groups support pupils with letter formation.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision for them:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Spelling

Spelling is taught daily in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 as part of phonics lessons using the Jolly Phonics Systematic Synthetics Phonics programme. This continues to be taught four times a week in Key Stage 2.

Spelling rules and patterns are investigated, taught and practised as well as Common Exception Words (words which are exceptions to a specific rule or pattern).

Alongside spellings, all pupils from Year 1 onwards undertake dictated sentences as part of learning spelling.

Lists of spelling words are sent home each week for pupils to learn. These include spelling words for that week's focus and two Common Exception words. Every Friday there is a spelling test which also includes a dictated sentence.

In addition to this, all pupils have Jolly Phonics sound mats. Word mats support writing linked to the genre or unit of work. Year 2, 3 and 4 have 'personal dictionaries', in these they collect words, which they have asked how to spell which they can refer to in their independent writing.

In Year 1, 2 Spelling and phonics groups are streamed to provide for all pupils and spelling provision is differentiated in Year 3 and Year 4. If the need for interventions is identified these are planned with the teacher, SLT and SENDCO.

Our Writing Books and Talk 4 Writing Policy clearly sets out how we teach writing in a consistent and progressive way starting at Reception through to Year Four. Please refer to this document on the *Curriculum page – English – Writing*

How we help those who find Writing difficult:

Most pupils will access different levels of support during their time at school, we believe that early, objective specific led interventions, allow them to continue to make progress in their learning. When children encounter difficulties in writing, there are multiple 'graduated responses' that we employ which help ensure progress is made.

of these include:

- Quality First Teaching – small group or individual support
- Pre-topic word mats – to build confidence and expose to topic language.
- Handwriting pencil grips
- Specific objectives to support learning
- Additional support and time to complete work
- Consideration of classroom layout and proximity to the teacher/screen
- Coloured overlays to help with reading and decoding / green printed card to support dyslexic children

If after review and assessment of the intervention progress has not been made, then the class teacher and SENDCO would work together to identify the next layer of support needed.

How can Parents/Carers help with their child's writing?

As parents and carers you are in the best position to encourage our pupils' natural interest in all aspects of writing.

You can support your child with their writing and English work by getting alongside them, showing enthusiasm and exploring their interests with them.

Be active in their learning. Make use of the resources you have available to you. This could look different for different ages of children.

Here are some ideas:

- Read regularly to your child. Reading will help to stimulate their imagination and improve their vocabulary. The characters they'll meet in books can also be a springboard for their own ideas.
- Visit the local library and share a love of books / authors/ styles.
- Mark making in sand / mud
- Writing shopping lists together
- Write instructions to complete a simple task
- Buy a notebook for taking notes or writing down idea
- When you are on holiday encourage them to draw or write a diary
- Encourage your child to be creative and always praise them for their efforts

How we celebrate Writing at Weare:

We celebrate writing in a number of different ways - here are a few:

- English/Topic displays in every classroom to celebrate the children's learning.
- 'Blink Visits' where other schools in the academy visit us to see how we teach English and celebrate the work undertaken
- Whole School displays
- Opportunities to publish work for different purposes, such as a persuasive poster to Save the Great Barrier Reef
- Our Whole School Merit Badge service is a specific occasion when a particular piece of writing can be celebrated by our head teacher
- Reading our writing tasks to our peers and across year groups. For example, Year 4 reading their own stories to Reception pupils.



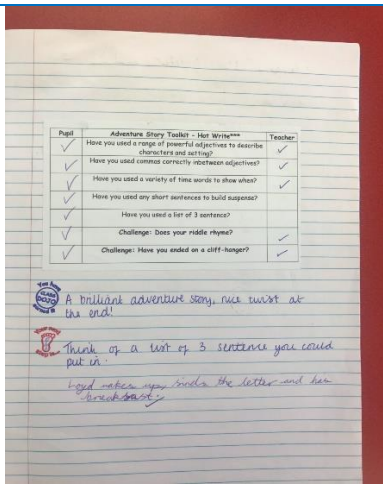
Reception October – We are writers!



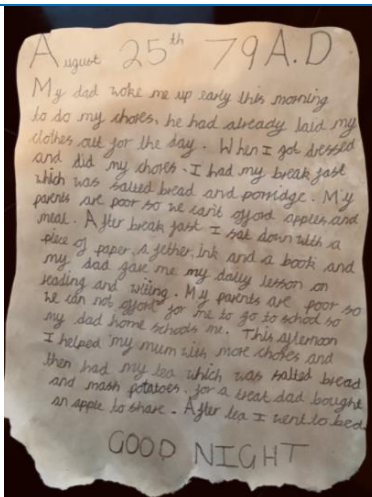
Year 1 – Writing Hook for The Tiger Who Came to Tea



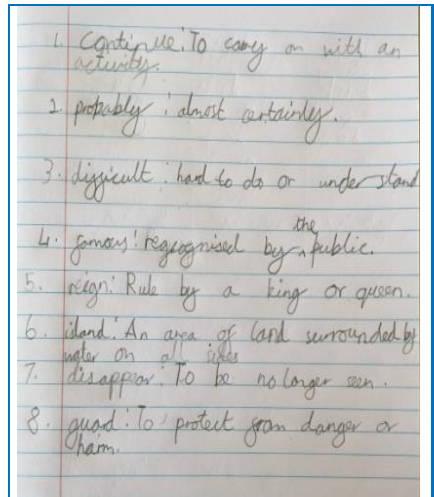
Year 2 - Beegu- teacher led whole class imitate write story map



Year 3 - Invent Write Toolkit



Year 4 - Invent write – A diary entry of a Roman Child



Year 4 - Dictionary work

