

English Policy (including writing, spellings and handwriting)

Please also see Reading and Phonics policy

Writing

We aim to foster a love of writing as soon as children enter Wybunbury Delves. Our learning is holistically planned around quality texts as we want our children to show confidence and consider themselves as 'writers'. We aim to develop fluency and legibility and offer a whole language approach so that children can learn to express clarity of thought and be able to manage language appropriately. Teachers set high expectations of children and give writing a high profile in all its forms. Children need experience of a variety of reading materials and writing styles in order to develop confidence and control, appreciate and understand the purpose of writing. This is built into our reading programme.

- Children should be provided with the opportunity to write for real reasons, for different purposes and for a range of audiences.
- The conventions of written standard English must be modelled and children helped to move towards accepted adult forms of writing. This is best done through children's own work and through that of other writers when it is appropriate.
- Children need frequent opportunities to discover the links between the skills of writing, reading, speaking and listening, drama and role play. This will help ensure a range of genre is covered.
- A wide range of resources are used to support pupils and enable them to become independent writers. Dictionaries, thesauruses, common word books, spell checkers, wall displays and prompts will allow the developing writer to concentrate on content.
- The writing process will be monitored to match the appropriate task to the individual through differentiation with the use of continuous assessment as a tool for deciding suitable teaching strategies as a way to develop and sustain progress.

Reception

We believe that communication and language, with opportunities to explore reading and writing underpins the future learning of our children. Within our Reception class, children have access to planned whole class or group writing activities but also many opportunities for child initiated writing activities.

These may include the following:

- Opportunities to develop and experience speaking and listening skills
- Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills through play and mark making activities
- Sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books
- Immersion in a print rich environment with opportunities for oral language and written communication
- Whole class shared text activities
- Computing opportunities on PCs, ipads and Smartboard
- A focus literacy session in the morning with different activities that teach children early communication language and literacy skills, using the Talk 4 Writing approach
- A daily phonics session
- Literacy integrated throughout the Early Years curriculum

Key Stage 1

Clear assessments from the Early Years teacher allows for a smooth transition into Key Stage 1 where children continue to develop their love of writing.

- Explicitly taught and planned English sessions following the guidance and objectives of the statutory English curriculum, using the Talk 4 Writing approach.
- Extended opportunities for discussion of writing, e.g. role play, pair talk, drama and hot seating to prepare children for the writing process.
- Modelled, shared and guided writing examples
- Opportunities for children to write for and share their writing with different audiences.
- Songs, rhymes and games to develop English skills.
- Year 1/Autumn Year 2 RWI phonics daily lessons.
- Year 2 Spring RWI Reading Comprehension programme (1 term).
- Year 2 Summer RWI spellings programme work building on and deepening key skills across different year groups.

- Text level work using a range of genres and texts which will develop comprehension skills and understanding and enjoyment of books, helping to promote a love of writing.
- Computing work that complements and supports work in English, helping children to develop skills learnt through quality first teaching.
- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture and develops children's oral and written communication.

Key Stage 2

- Explicitly taught and planned sessions following the guidance and objectives of the statutory English curriculum, using the Talk 4 Writing approach.
- Experience of a wide range of genres used in reading and writing.
- RWI Spellings programme building on and deepening key skills across different year groups.
- Text level work reading a range of genres to develop comprehension skills and support writing, making cross curricular links where possible to help promote sustained composition.
- Extended independent writing opportunities to apply the skills learnt when writing within different genres
- The opportunity for children to independently draft, edit and refine their own work alongside that of others.
- Extended opportunities for discussion of writing, e.g. role play, pair talk, drama and hot seating to prepare children for the writing process.
- Modelled, shared and guided writing takes place in the classroom.
- Opportunities for children to write for and share their writing with different audiences.
- Computing work that complements and supports work in literacy, helping children to develop skills learnt through quality first teaching.

Equality and Inclusion

All pupils regardless of gender, cultural heritage, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or special needs, will be given the opportunity to experience and acquire skills according to the National Curriculum. We aim to create an environment in which all children learn to respect and value each other and each other's interests.

This can be achieved by employing the following strategies:

- Mixing groups in terms of gender and ability.
- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Structuring activities so all are fully involved. For instance, all children must have a 'job/role' within an activity to ensure everyone takes part and is involved.
- Responding to the diverse learning needs of pupils.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups.
- Considering the needs of children with physical or learning difficulties and taking the necessary steps (by enlisting extra help, adapting equipment or differentiating tasks) to ensure they have equal access to the curriculum.
- Giving all the children an opportunity to share their work. For instance, allowing time at the end of a lesson for the whole class to perform a role play, share their ideas or work with the class.
- Recognising the need to extend and provide a greater challenge for more able pupils.

Organisation

The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing need to be considered when planning and assessing work. It is the purpose to which they are put which provides the real learning process. Assessment will need to extend beyond the English curriculum into other areas if it is to really evaluate and reflect the pupil's ability. Class teachers aim to offer experiences which will provide a balanced selection of activities aimed at developing spoken and written skills. The writing experiences we offer pupils will aim to extend and develop the skills they already have and introduce new ones appropriately. A wealth of resources within school can be used to create a positive environment and support the pupils in their development.

Assessment (including Covid19 catch up)

Assessment of writing is continuous and progress is tracked using Target Tracker. Termly in house moderation sessions, as well as cluster moderation sessions, take place amongst teaching staff to ensure judgements are robust and are standardised across the school and our cluster schools. Children were assessed upon returning to school in September 2020. Whole class targets were then set and then individual catch up interventions put in place, including 1:1 handwriting and Colourful Semantics intervention.

Spelling

We aim to develop our pupils' ability to become confident writers, with the self esteem necessary to believe in themselves as competent authors. Whilst we would avoid giving the message that accurate spelling is more important than content and continue to encourage pupils to take risks with the written word, our aims would not be fulfilled if children do not also achieve control over spelling. If children have failed to communicate in writing because the piece is hampered by poor spelling, this must be addressed. Glaring mistakes can distract attention from the content of the work and perhaps make it unreadable. One of our primary aims is to enable pupils to achieve a basic level of competency which will allow them to take their place in the world.

Spellings is taught progressively, using the RWI spellings programme Year 2 summer term – Year 6. Formal daily phonics lessons begin autumn term in Reception to Year 1. Learning to spell is a cumulative process; materials gradually build up children's spelling vocabulary by introducing new words and giving continual practise of words already introduced. Year groups work on Common Exception Words for their own year groups.

Handwriting

Aims

- The development of neat, well-formed writing should be encouraged for all pupils.
- To promote legible, aesthetically pleasing and consistent style of handwriting throughout the school.
- To encourage children to gain satisfaction from a neatly presented piece of work.

Guidelines

- The process should begin in the early stages of writing with the correct formation of letters of the alphabet.
- Handwriting is a skill that needs to be formally taught and practised regularly.
- Letter formation should be based on the agreed handwriting script set out in RWI guidance. This is to coincide with the texts children are exposed to whilst learning to read.
- The unlooped k will be taught rather than looped. Tail letters are not looped when joining.
- From Year 2 upwards, when children are ready, they should be encouraged to join their handwriting.
- All children will be expected to use a joined script by the end of KS2.
- Accuracy, speed and flow are essential aspects of handwriting skills and need to be practised.
- Support will be given to children as and when required. Support may take the form of underwriting, even in Key Stage 2 if deemed necessary.

Classroom Strategies

- Discussion – with the whole class, putting forward positive suggestions as to how children can help themselves to more efficient, legible handwriting.
- Posture– To achieve the best handwriting, it is important to be sitting in the most comfortable position with the table and chair at the correct height.
- Pen-grip – The writing pencil or pen should be lightly supported and not gripped tightly. It should be possible to remove the pen from the child's grip without lifting their hand at the same time. Children in reception are given handwriting pencils to promote the correct pencil grip. These are available for children from other year groups if necessary.
- Example– The teacher should ensure that their own handwriting on the IWB, displays, worksheets, notices etc should be clear and legible and conforms to school policy.
- Criticism– Ensure that any criticism made of a child's handwriting is positive and constructive, with comments indicating how improvements can be made.
- 'Writing Repeater' on www.ictgames.co.uk is used in classes in handwriting lessons to model the correct formation of letters. During the first few weeks of a new term, the teacher should carry out an assessment of those pupils experiencing serious difficulty.