



**Kilby St Mary's  
C of E (Aided)  
Primary School**

**Writing Policy**

# Kilby St Mary's Primary School Writing Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

At Kilby St Mary's Primary we view the acquisition of language skills to be of the utmost importance and so the teaching of all aspects of English is given high priority. Writing is integral to our children's whole language experience; it is a crucial part of thinking and learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the teaching of writing at Kilby St Mary's Primary. It states how we deliver the writing elements of the English National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **2. Key Statements about Writing**

The following statements are central to our view of writing development. We believe that:

- Speaking and listening with confidence are significant factors in developing effective writing
- Reading and writing are closely connected and mutually supportive; we read as writers and write as readers
- Writing is a craft and most children learn best through their own writing, rather than through exercises out of context
- Writing is best framed within recognisable text-types or genres
- Writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences
- Writing tasks should be prepared through preliminary talk and teachers should model writing for their pupils when appropriate
- Children should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other children both to compose and to revise their writing
- Writing skills can be improved through reflection
- Children should be closely involved in assessing their own development as writers
- More effective writing is dependent upon increasingly informed grammatical and linguistic choices
- The teacher's response to the child's composition (e.g. praising aspects of the content) is crucial in developing confidence and motivation
- The skills of transcription (i.e. handwriting, punctuation and spelling) must be thoroughly planned for and taught
- ICT can be used as an inspiring stimulus for writing and to enable children to author their own multimedia texts

## **3. Aims of the Teaching of Writing**

In our teaching of writing, we aim for all children to:

- Appreciate that writing is a universal method of communication
- View writing as a process over which they have control
- Enjoy playing with language and write for pleasure
- Write appropriately for specific real or imaginary audiences

- Write for a variety of purposes
- Make judgements about the tone, style, format and vocabulary appropriate to the writing's purpose, audience and genre
- Write clearly, legibly and accurately with attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar
- Recognise that drafting, incorporating significant revision into their writing and proof-reading are integral parts of the writing process
- Achieve independent writing of a high quality

#### **4. Contexts for the Teaching and Learning of Writing**

Writing is taught and learnt in specific meaningful and effective contexts. These include:

- Shared and guided reading
- Complementary sentence and word-level activities
- Modelled and shared writing
- Guided writing
- Independent or paired writing
- Sharing and reflecting on their writing
- Cross-curricular writing tasks e.g. in project work or science

To support children in the acquisition of writing skills we will:

- Provide every opportunity to write
- Promote an awareness of adults writing in a variety of contexts for many purposes
- Provide regular demonstrations of the writing process
- Model, draft and discuss many aspects of writing with children
- Provide opportunities to reflect on the writing process
- Give children time to refine their writing through editing and revising
- Provide children with opportunities to share their writing
- Set individual targets for writing and assist children in reviewing their targets (and setting personal ones where appropriate)
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own writing development and progress
- Surround children with a print-rich environment that they have helped to create
- Reward and celebrate children's efforts and achievements in writing
- Teach ICT skills that support effective and efficient electronic communication

Within this writing environment, the close relationship between writing and reading needs to be exploited. We will provide a wide variety of texts which cater for children's diverse interests and needs, and act as a stimulus to their own writing.

## **5. Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the Early Years, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected in their writing. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing.

A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities. Amongst these are:

- Shared writing
- Role-play (e.g. an office or restaurant)
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Making books
- Writing letters
- Menus

Through engaging in these activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English.

A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of the fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include playdough, cutting, threading and tracing.

## **6. Writing in Key Stage 1**

### **a) Shared Writing**

Through shared writing the teacher demonstrates specific writing skills, sometimes acting as scribe. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing. The teacher may also demonstrate writing in a particular genre. Shared writing will teach children how to:

- Generate imaginative and informative ideas through discussion and questioning, and record these ideas in notes/ plans/ drafts .
- Structure ideas in writing through the use of appropriate language, sentence structure, punctuation, sequencing and lay-out.
- Develop specific word level skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Refine writing to make it clearer and better suited to its audience and purpose .
- Develop technical terms and vocabulary for understanding and discussing writing .

- Publish and present written texts for others to read and use

### **b) Guided Writing**

Guided writing sessions are used flexibly to provide a bridge between shared and independent work. During these sessions the teacher or TA may scribe for specific children or support children writing independently or in pairs. They may focus on:

- Planning a piece of writing
- Supporting work in progress
- Evaluating and improving writing

### **c) Independent Writing**

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing will be transferred into their own writing.

Since accurate, fluent and independent writing is dependent on a secure grasp of phonics, a high priority is placed throughout EYFS and KS1 on daily systematic phonics teaching (based on the 'Letters and Sounds' programme). This gives children the strong and essential foundation upon which all their future development as writers will be built.

## **7. Writing in Key Stage 2**

### **a) Shared Writing**

Through shared writing the teacher will model the writing process with the children. This may include:

- Demonstrating planning strategies (e.g. brainstorming, concept maps, writing frames)
- Using a familiar text as a starting point for writing
- Teaching the structural characteristics of a particular text type
- Teaching the purpose and use of punctuation
- Playing with language and exploring different language choices
- Modelling higher level sentence constructions (e.g. conjunctions, complex sentences and expanded noun phrases)
- Drafting
- Demonstrating revision strategies (e.g. checking for meaning, reordering to improve structure, rewriting to improve clarity or to enrich language)
- Demonstrating editing strategies (e.g. checking punctuation and spelling, using writing targets).

At times, there may be extended shared writing sessions, exploring the composition process together in some detail. However, it will often be most effective if shared writing is broken up into chunks and interspersed with opportunities for the children to apply the lessons immediately in their own writing. Sometimes modelling just a sentence or two will be sufficient. This approach can maximise learning opportunities, allow teachers to respond to children's misconceptions or difficulties, and avoid the risk of overloading the children.

### **b) Guided Writing**

During guided writing the teacher as 'expert' guides learners at an appropriate level by:

- Giving feedback on previously composed independent writing
- Modelling how to use individual writing targets or comment constructively on another writer's work
- Demonstrating a specific stage in the writing process
- Developing or reinforcing skills taught in shared writing

Teachers will plan guided writing sessions flexibly, where they feel they will best meet the needs of their class. At other times, teachers may instead support children individually during their independent writing.

### **c) Independent Writing**

During independent writing the children compose without direct teacher support. As children move through KS2, they will be expected to write regularly and at increasingly greater length, developing crucial writing stamina alongside other skills. Independent writing, both within Literacy lessons and across the curriculum will involve:

- Using the imagination and expressing ideas
- Applying skills learned in shared writing and guided writing
- Focusing on individual writing targets
- Revising work in the light of feedback from teachers or peers
- Commenting constructively on other children's writing
- Editing and proof-reading to improve transcriptional features
- Preparing work for presentation

## **8. Grammar and Punctuation**

Aspects of grammar and punctuation are best taught in the context of real reading and writing activities, rather than through isolated exercises. This gives children the opportunity to see the relevance of sentence-level work and how real writers make such choices to help them communicate clearly. Sentence-level teaching is most effective when it is short, sharp and frequent, incorporated perhaps as a lesson starter or in the context of shared writing. Word and sentence games encourage children to enjoy

playing with language and to experiment with different constructions that they may then apply in their independent writing.

Accuracy in basic punctuation (capital letters and full stops) is given a high priority throughout the school, until it becomes completely automatic. Explicit teaching may be needed, even for older children, on what a sentence is and how to punctuate it accurately. Teaching approaches may include:

- In year 5/6 using coloured highlighters to draw attention to a range of punctuation that children have correctly incorporated
- asking children to read out a sentence or paragraph with the punctuation verbalised so that others begin to see where it should go
- focused punctuation exercises where full stops and capital letters need to be added
- using a plenary for children to re-read and correct any mistakes using an orange pen.
- Use of pink comments, from the teacher, for the children to respond to in orange.

Until basic punctuation becomes totally secure, children in KS2 will have this included as part of their individual writing targets. Teachers may also want to avoid teaching higher level forms of punctuation until the basics are secure, to allow the children to focus their attention on this crucial skill.

When children become more mature writers and reach the expected level for their year group and beyond, a key focus will need to be on developing their understanding and use of commas. To make comma 'rules' easy to remember, we teach explicitly the key contexts in which they are used:

- in a list
- after an opener
- with a conjunction
- around an embedded clause ('The boy, who was really short, couldn't reach.')
- with an 'ing' clause ('The boy jumped up, trying to reach the top shelf.')

Once again, this is best practised through regular short sentence-building activities (oral and written), and then applied in the children's own independent writing.

## 9. Spelling

Through the carefully planned and progressive teaching of the spelling programme (Read, Write Inc spelling and phonics), we aim:

- To encourage children to become confident and competent spellers
- To teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage
- To help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learnt

Through regular, focused teaching of spelling, children will be taught to:

- Identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
- Recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/ grapheme/ correspondence)
- Blend phonemes into words for reading
- Segment words into phonemes for spelling
- Acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words
- Identify onsets and rimes as an aid to spelling
- Investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules
- Attempt a spelling before checking with the teacher
- Identify mis-spelt words in their own writing, keep individual lists and learn to spell these words
- Develop and use independent spelling strategies
- Use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas for writing scribed by an adult and they may occasionally copy this writing. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record final and medial sounds.

Throughout the whole school, systematic daily phonics teaching takes place to ensure that children develop a secure grounding in phonics knowledge upon which their future progress in spelling will be based. This teaching is based on the 'Read Write Inc phonics (R-Yr1) and spelling programme (Yr2-6) and may be supplement by other small group or 1-1 interventions for children who require additional support.

In KS2, whilst many children will have acquired strong phonics skills, others will need continued, intensive 1-1 phonics support. These interventions are vital to ensuring that all children acquire these crucial building blocks and do not have their writing progress held back.

Much useful teaching of spelling on a one to one basis can take place while children write. At all times, children are encouraged to develop confidence in their increasing ability to spell independently.

In KS1, word books may be used for children to 'have a go' at spelling words of which they are unsure. The teacher responds by ticking a correct word or taking the opportunity to remind the child of a spelling pattern/mnemonic etc. for the particular word.

In KS2, children are encouraged to 'have a go' at spellings they are unsure of so that seeking the correct spelling does not unhelpfully slow down their composition. Teachers may encourage children to underline a word that they have attempted but are unsure of so that they can check it when marking the work. Marking of writing may also identify 2-3 key words that the child needs to learn to spell, targeting particularly words/spelling patterns that have recently been taught. As the child's spelling competence develops, use of a dictionary will become more frequent to check spellings, though it is important that the child can use a dictionary quickly so that fluent writing is not impeded.

Throughout the school, teaching spelling patterns at the same time as practicing handwriting skills provides useful reinforcement.

## **10. Handwriting**

Aims of Handwriting:

- To understand that each letter has only one correct formation and orientation
- To develop a sense of pride, pleasure and enjoyment in their handwriting
- To adopt fluent, legible and joined handwriting
- To adapt lettering styles for different purposes

A variety of aides are available to support handwriting in the early stages. As correct letter formation and joining become established, the teaching focuses on consistency in size, shape and general clarity of writing. As pupils' handwriting skills develop, they are given opportunities to write on narrower lined paper and develop skills in using guidelines with plain paper. Once pupils establish a fluent, cursive style, they are free to personalise their joined writing.

Cross-curricular opportunities are used to provide real purposes for using handwriting skills. The motor skills necessary for handwriting will also be developed in Art, D&T and P.E, as well as in motor skills groups.

Children will need guidance as to the best way to orientate the paper on which they will be writing, particularly if they are left-handed. Left-handed children should sit on the

left or beside another left-handed child when paired. In addition they may benefit from the use of a pencil grip.

Particular attention is paid to handwriting in the final draft of a piece of written work, especially in KS2. All pupils should be using joined writing from Yr 2 onwards.

## **11. Assessment for Learning**

The purpose of assessment for learning is to ensure that children are involved in their own progress and are motivated to improve their work. Assessment for learning takes place through the setting of lesson objectives/targets, through questioning, and through reviewing children's writing, as a class, 1-1 or in written marking. At all stages, children will be encouraged to reflect on their progress and whether they have met set targets. They will be involved in supportive peer assessment as well as in self assessment.

In the Foundation Stage, the child and the teacher read the work together. The teacher may re-write the child's attempts underneath as a form of translation, but would not correct the actual work.

In KS1, much effective marking takes place in the presence of the child so that it is interactive. However, work is also marked for successes and key areas for improvement.

In KS2, some discussion will take place with the child about their writing and effective sentences/paragraphs may be shared and discussed in plenaries. However, work will usually be marked without the child present. The marking of children's writing will be targeted and focussed. The teacher will:

- Mark work specifically to the stated learning objective(s)
- Make specific comments at the foot of the text (where appropriate) to praise and/or to target future areas for improvement (next steps) in line with the school marking policy

Opportunities for children to focus on marking feedback may occur at the beginning of the following session or during a small group teaching session.

Positive reinforcement is conducted through the use of stars, golden time, stickers, stamps, individual comments, oral praise or inviting the child to share writing during weekly 'Good Work Assembly'. Other appropriate rewards are at the teacher's discretion.

To ensure consistency across the school, phases meet regularly to discuss common approaches to the marking of writing.

## **12. Assessment and Record Keeping**

To ensure that our writing assessments are reliable and consistent across the school, we provide regular opportunities for teachers to discuss, standardise and moderate their judgements with other colleagues. This gives them the opportunity to clarify the interpretation of particular assessment criteria, share good practice in gathering evidence, and identify needs for further professional development. In addition to these regular meetings, we also hold more periodic whole-staff writing moderation meetings to ensure our judgements are consistent across phases.

Staff have, opportunities for moderating with colleagues in other schools through attending courses, subject leader network meetings, or moderation meetings and writing conferences.

Standards of achievement in writing by all our children are constantly monitored and reviewed by class teachers in conjunction with LSAs, the Literacy Leaders, SENCo, and Headteacher. Further detail of our assessment procedures can be found in our Assessment Policy.

## **13. Literacy and Information Communication Technology**

ICT is used as an integral part of our literacy teaching and learning. We believe that:

- A balanced writing curriculum will include opportunities for children to read and write ICT as well as written texts. Progression in this area is built into the ICT schemes of work
- The IWB provides a range of opportunities for stimulating literacy teaching and learning
- The use of ICT can stimulate reluctant readers and writers
- Word processing is a valuable tool to enable children to redraft, revise and present their work
- Computer activities can provide excellent opportunities for discussion and reflection

## **14. Differentiation**

We offer every child access to the English curriculum at the appropriate level. Differentiation in writing can occur by outcome (the quality of the piece produced), by task or by support (either from an adult or through resources, such as sentence prompts or writing frames). Children's individual writing targets also provide a key source of differentiation, allowing children to focus on their own key next steps as developing writers.

We ensure that children who experience difficulties with any aspect of writing are identified quickly and additional support provided. If necessary, they will be placed on

the SEN register and an IEP will be written containing specific targets. Support strategies and materials are introduced according to individual needs across the school.

## **15. Equal Opportunities**

At Kilby St Mary's Primary, we celebrate diversity through recognising our children's skills and knowledge and by the study of material from a variety of cultures. Texts used will represent all cultures in a positive light and will show both genders in a range of roles.

The interests of both boys and girls will be taken into account when selecting materials to support the development of writing. Language games, explicit feedback and clear target setting can all help boys in particular to make good progress in writing. Many bilingual children bring to their writing a great depth of appreciation of language and an ability to use it flexibly and creatively. This will be encouraged, supported and celebrated.

We recognise that children for whom English is an additional language may have specific and important needs that must be addressed, including access to bilingual resources. The development of vocabulary, as well as sentence structure, is of enormous importance, and visual support for developing understanding is essential. Our language support staff may work 1-1 or in a very small group with EAL children on particular aspect of writing development (e.g. tenses).

## **16. Parent Partnership**

Many children come to school with an understanding of some of the purposes of writing and with experience of drawing, colouring and mark-making as a precursor to legible writing. These experiences are valued by the school, and parents are encouraged to exploit their children's interest by including them in activities such as writing shopping lists and post cards. Guidance about correct letter formation is given to parents of children in Foundation Stage.

Later, parents are encouraged to participate in their children's writing development through homework activities. These include learning spellings and writing words in meaningful sentences/stories, but also some extended writing tasks.

## **17. Conclusion**

Writing is an essential life skill, both for children's future progress in school and for their ability to fulfil their ambitions and potential in adult life. We aim that children leaving Kilby C of E Primary should have received a firm foundation in the essentials of writing. They will have gone on to develop fluency and individual style whenever possible, together with enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction in their achievements as writers.

