

Great and Little Shelford CE (A) Primary School
CURRICULUM POLICY FOR WRITING
Ratified – February 2017 Next review – September 2018

The Importance of Writing

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and, through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised. A high quality education in English will not only enable pupils to participate full within their communities and beyond, but will also foster a love of language, a curiosity about and a deeper and richer understanding of the world, and a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in the creation of a text.

Aims:

Based on the National Curriculum for English, Great and Little Shelford Primary School aims:

- To promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the written word.
- To recognise the importance of developing a love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment, and how this influences writing.
- To acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for writing.
- To write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- To use the spoken word and discussion in order to learn and to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas in speech as a precursor to writing.
- To establish consistent practice, progression and continuity in the teaching and learning of writing and SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) throughout the school.
- To equip children with strategies that will enable them to become fluent and confident writers.

Attainment targets

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study for Writing.

Implementation

All teachers are responsible for the planning and teaching of Writing as outlined in the Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum 2014.

Subject Content:

Foundation Stage

The Early Learning Goals for writing come from both literacy and physical development.

They are:

- Writing - pupils use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.
- Moving and handling - pupils show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. Children in the Foundation Stage at Great and Little Shelford Primary School are taught to use cursive handwriting. This is developed further in Year 1 and then beyond.

Key Stage 1

The programmes of study for writing are built around the importance of:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting) and
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing.

Pupils continue to learn the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and develop an understanding of the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. In Years 1-6, pupils participate in daily spelling classes following the school's "stage not age" approach under the Assertive Mentoring programme (see the Curriculum Policy for Phonics and Reading).

Grammar and Punctuation are taught throughout the writing programme. In addition, pupils in Years 1-6 have discrete weekly grammar lessons where they will be taught aspects of grammar and punctuation, or complete "Grammar Hammers" through the Assertive Mentoring programme. Pupils are taught to understand and use the correct terminology and language when discussing grammar and punctuation.

Using their developing spelling and grammar and punctuation, pupils are taught to compose texts in a variety of genres and for different purposes (for example, traditional stories from other cultures, postcards and instructions). Pupils are taught to form and articulate ideas, and to organise them coherently for the reader. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to write independently as part of the programmes of study. "Big Writes" also take place regularly throughout the year and these enable pupils to write independently as an outcome of study or as a stand-alone task. "Star Writers" are selected from each class for the award of certificates in Celebration Assemblies.

Handwriting is taught and children are encouraged to form letters correctly and to join letters fluently and legibly. In Year 1 in 2016/17, pupils have continued to follow a programme teaching cursive handwriting, which had been introduced in the Foundation Stage in 2015/16. This programme will continue to be followed, and introduced in older classes, as this cohort of children moves through the school.

Key Stage 2 (lower – Years 3 and 4)

Pupils are taught to build on their learning from Key Stage 1. Transcription and Composition remain fundamental to writing and pupils are expected to develop a more rigorous approach to planning, revising and evaluating their writing.

Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation. Teaching consolidates pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology. Teaching pupils to develop as writers involves teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence.

Pupils are taught to expand the range of their writing and to use more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures. Pupils are taught to understand how writing can be different from speech.

Joined handwriting should become the norm and pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say. By the end of Year 4, some pupils may have developed a fluent, consistent and legible handwriting which will enable them to be awarded a Pen Licence by their teacher.

Pupils' spelling of common words should be correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt. Pupils should spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling, such as morphology and etymology. Most pupils will not need further direct teaching of word reading skills, but targeted support will be provided for some pupils. Pupils continue to learn spellings in daily classes. They are also taught to use an increasingly sophisticated range of resources including age-appropriate dictionaries and thesauri.

Pupils will develop an understanding of figurative language in poetry and other texts, and will use this in their own writing.

An increasing range of grammar and punctuation are taught, building on and extending the teaching from Key Stage 1. Pupils have weekly grammar lessons where features of grammar and punctuation are taught and "Grammar Hammers" continue. Pupils are taught to understand and use the correct terminology and language when discussing grammar and punctuation.

Pupils are taught to compose texts in a wider range of genres and for different purposes. Pupils continue to have frequent opportunities to write independently, including the regular "Big Writes".

Key Stage 2 (upper – Years 5 and 6)

Teaching builds on pupils' learning in lower Key Stage 2.

Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly, using a fluent, legible handwriting. By the beginning of Year 6, it is expected that most pupils will have earned their Pen Licence.

Pupils are taught to ensure that the increasing range of grammar and punctuation should be broadly accurate. For example, by the end of Year 6 pupils should use punctuation including colons, semi-colons and ellipses.

Pupils' spelling of most words taught so far should be accurate and they should be able to spell words that they have not yet been taught by using what they have learnt about how spelling works in English. Daily spelling classes continue and pupils are encouraged to use these to broaden their working vocabulary.

As established independent readers, pupils will be encouraged to use vocabulary and ideas from their reading to embellish and extend their own independent writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, will support their increasing facility as writers.

As in years 3 and 4, pupils should be taught to enhance the effectiveness of their writing as well as their competence. By the end of year 6, pupils' writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7, across all subjects and not just in English. They should be able to reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Teachers will prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that they can consciously control sentence structure in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are.

Information and Communication Technology

This is used to support learning in writing when and where appropriate.

Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to ensuring access and inclusion for all its pupils and believes that every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their potential. We achieve this by ensuring that the planning and delivery of teaching and learning meets the needs of all pupils: boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities and children from all social and cultural backgrounds, different ethnic groups and diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Continuing Professional Development:

In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children, teachers and teaching assistants have relevant training to support their pedagogical knowledge relating to the teaching and learning of writing. This may take the form of courses, support from subject leaders or senior leaders or paired teaching opportunities with colleagues.

Assessment of progress:

In Key Stage 1 and 2, "Grammar Hammers" and weekly spell checks (appropriate to the stage that a pupil is at) are used to assess progress in these areas. Half termly grammar checks are also used. Ongoing teacher assessment takes place for independent writing based on tasks

set by teachers in the programme of study or as “Big Writes”. Teachers add data to Target Tracker regularly each term to track the progress that pupils are making and to identify the need for interventions for individuals or wider groups.

Resources:

Each class maintains their own resources including dictionaries, thesauri and texts used in the teaching of writing. Classroom displays and learning walls support pupils’ learning in all aspects of writing. In addition, printed resources are available for pupils’ use and kept in desk caddies or elsewhere in the classrooms.