

Castleton&Glaisdale Federation

Writing Policy Statement

June 2015

Introduction

Writing is a developmental process which makes a significant contribution to the development of children as thinkers and learners. Children learn to write in order to be able to communicate meaning for a wide range of purposes and to a wide range of audiences. They need to learn to match the style of their writing to meet these needs. Children need to be able to structure their writing so that it is coherent and they must understand that correct spelling, punctuation and grammar help to make the meaning of their writing clear to the reader. They need to develop as wide a vocabulary as possible so that they are able to express their ideas in writing and can engage the interest of the reader. Children need to become confident, independent writers who can write in a range of forms, in response to a range of stimuli.

A child's ability to communicate in writing affects performance in most other areas of the curriculum.

Statutory requirements

The Communication, Language and Literacy section of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum details the early learning goals and stepping stones to be addressed during the Foundation Stage. It also details standards of achievements which can be met during this early phase.

The National Curriculum details the programmes of study which children should be taught in English at Key Stage 1 and 2. The Scheme of Work for English details the teaching and learning in each year group. Teachers are expected to ensure that work in speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated.

Writing in the National Curriculum focuses on composition, and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. (See Appendix 1)

Rationale for Teaching Writing

Teaching children to understand the power of writing is an important part of their learning. If children are equipped with the correct writing tools they will be able to use them effectively within a literate world.

Providing a rich and stimulating writing environment, with displayed and celebrated examples of children's work and opportunities for writing linked to activities across the curriculum, is essential to encouraging and modelling good quality writing.

Equally important is the provision of wide experiences and opportunities for reading as the primary source of knowledge about how written language looks and sounds, and as examples of how to improve their own writing.

The rich oral experience of speaking and listening opportunities and drama is essential as a preparation for writing.

Writing is a complex skill that will not develop without teaching and practice. All teachers strive to assist children in becoming efficient and effective writers who are able to write appropriately and communicate effectively within a range of contexts. Providing opportunities for extended writing in a variety of purposeful contexts, supporting improvement and maintaining high expectation of core skills, i.e. spelling grammar, punctuation, are all used to develop positive attitudes to the writing process including planning and redrafting.

Most importantly, teachers aim to foster a confidence and competence in, and a love of, writing that children can carry forward into adult life. To this end, teachers plan and deliver writing through an “exciting writing” model of teaching and learning which provides multiple cross-curricula opportunities for extending and enhancing children’s learning. (See Appendix 9- exciting writing)

Overall, in writing, children should:

- learn to be efficient and effective writers who are able to write appropriately for a variety of audiences
- acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within a range of contexts
- become aware of and appreciate the writer’s craft

The Use of ICT in Writing

Computers have a vital role to play in enhancing and developing writing skills and offer an alternative and new dimension for children’s written expression. They enable children to present work in an attractive and professional manner and to write in “real life” contexts, such as newspaper production, both of which provide a boost of confidence to children with poor handwriting skills.

At all times, children are encouraged to think about the purpose of the piece of writing, what audience it is for and how this will influence the final presentation of their writing, e.g. choice of font, justification, use of bullet points etc. Opportunities for drafting and redrafting enhance children’s appreciation of the writing process.

Teachers recognise and develop the powerful tool we have in word processing and desktop publishing packages in an appropriate and effective manner for all children. The use of the interactive whiteboard and multi-media resources are viewed as a valuable tool in stimulating children’s interest in writing and are used effectively to achieve this.

Cross-curricular writing opportunities

Teachers aim to provide cross-curricular opportunities for writing wherever possible by providing real purposes and audiences for writing in all subjects. Any context for writing may be utilised by teachers but the range of skills necessary must be taught systematically.

Teaching approaches and organisation

Planning for writing forms an integral part of the overall English planning. It cannot, however, stand-alone and needs to work hand in hand with the whole curriculum. Teachers ensure this in their long term planning, which addresses yearly coverage of work, their medium term plans, for each year group, and their short term plans which address outcomes and expected achievement. The English Scheme of Work followed by our schools give a clear outline of the progression to be followed in writing. (See Appendix 2)

From the earliest stages of the Foundation Stage children are encouraged to make marks and 'have a go' at writing, e.g. in the home corner or writing area. Children are shown how to develop their ideas through adults modelling writing and acting as scribes.

At the very early stages teachers use a three pronged approach to developing children's writing skills.

Independent writing:

Children attempt to write their own story. This may consist of scribbles, letter-like forms, actual letters, invented spellings, conventional words, or a combination of these. Children are encouraged to read back what they have written

Scribing

The teacher acts as a scribe for children so that they learn that writing can be speech written down

Copying

Children create a short piece of writing using a bank of word cards selected and ordered correctly before being written onto paper

Teaching is planned in order to provide for the full range of attainment in every class. In most cases the learning objective will be explained to the whole class, with activities and questions differentiated to cater for different learning styles and abilities. This is done through targeted questioning, writing frames, scaffolding and collaborative grouping. Writing sessions aim to be as interactive and challenging as possible with investigations, problem-solving, role-play and language play utilised to stimulate children's interest in how language works.

Teachers employ a range of techniques to promote children's writing skills including:

Shared writing which provides opportunities to:

- Teach different aspects of the writing process with teachers modelling how to plan, draft, edit and proof read writing
- Allow teachers to work with the whole class, to model, explore and discuss choices writers make when writing
- Make links between reading and writing by investigating how authors use language to achieve particular effects
- Scaffold aspects of writing
- Use different techniques such as teacher demonstration, teacher scribing, supported composition

Independent writing must flow from shared writing whatever the form and take the child on to the next step of becoming an independent writer. It provides opportunities to:

- Work individually or collaboratively in pairs/groups where children generate ideas, discuss, plan and edit work in order to share and improve the quality of what they are writing.

Guided writing, which is used with groups of children when appropriate, provides opportunities to:

- Support children in planning and drafting their own work
- revise and edit work in progress
- provide differentiated support for particular groups

Extended writing which provides opportunities for:

- Children to apply learned skills to a sustained piece of constructive writing

An important aspect of the writing process is correction and improvement and, as such, proof reading techniques are taught to children in both Key Stages. Children are taught how to effectively proof read and then encouraged to proof read their work independently rather than relying on teacher support. The aim is for children to view proof reading not only as a means of checking written work but of improving it. Children are made aware that checking their work for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes (for which automatic use should be made of dictionaries and word banks) is a vital part of the writing process. These aspects of improving children's writing are addressed through daily focused teacher marking of written work and a daily direct response Time session during which children address a given target to improve their writing and undertake the correction of spelling and grammar errors with in it. (See Appendix 5-DRT).

Assessment and recording

Formative assessment of writing is on-going to ensure lesson objectives are being achieved and progress is being made. It is essential to identify what children have learned and can do, and what their next steps in learning should be. Conferencing is the most effective method of formative assessment used by teachers and is undertaken individually, (discussing individual children's writing with them as they are working) or with small groups during the writing task. After each writing task children are made aware of their next steps in learning. The use of Process Success Criteria is evident in the children's attitude and work, and enables children to self assess individually and with others, in line with the overall learning intention of that lesson.

Completed pieces of writing are marked against the targets/ criteria set for the task and are intended to improve children's writing as is in line with the school's marking policy. Detailed scrutiny of every aspect of every piece of writing produced by children is avoided. (See Appendix 6, marking policy)

Samples of children's work are assessed each term against the key learning objectives for each year group. Samples are kept as evidence of progress in the writing of fiction and non-fiction.

Summative assessment is carried out annually in the form of standardised tests. During the second half of the summer term children in Years 2 and 6 sit their national SATs in order to gain a level in writing. These include a standardised SPAG test (Spelling, punctuation and grammar). (See Appendix 7) Years 3, 4 and 5 undertake optional SATs tests in order to gain a level and Year 1 complete a teacher set written task which is marked and levelled against National Curriculum attainment targets.

The summative assessments are analysed in order to set quantitative targets for the national curriculum level children are expected to achieve by the end of the following school year and are recorded on individual tracking grids. At the end of each Key Stage, these targets are shared with the next class teacher to ensure continuity and progress, and with parents.

Summative assessment for early years children takes the form of individual Foundation Stage profiles completed at the end school year prior to entering Key Stage 1. The profile consists of an overall score obtained from scores in the following areas: language for communication; language for thinking; linking letters and sounds; reading; writing and handwriting.

Expectations for children's achievement in writing

Teachers set high expectations in regard to the standard of children's writing, taking due account of each child's stage of development. All children are encouraged to achieve the highest possible

standard of writing according to their stage of development and level of ability. These expectations are made explicit in a variety of ways:

- Use of positive feedback (oral or written)
- Awarding of stickers
- Reading children's writing to the class
- Children reading their own writing to the class
- Displaying children's writing around the school

The National Curriculum provides progressive, step by step guidelines as to the expected achievement of children in writing from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6. These are referred to by teachers both during the planning stages and the assessment stages of teaching.

See Appendix 8, progression in vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the writing curriculum regardless of race, gender, class, religion or ability. Teachers ensure that they provide access to a wide range of themes and stimuli to reflect and support different interests.

Personalised and differentiated learning is used for identified individual, or groups of, vulnerable children. Their specific needs are taken into consideration during each step of the planning process and addressed through varied, stimulating teaching styles and activities in order to narrow the gaps between vulnerable children's writing and that of the other children in the cohort.

Children with specific writing or language difficulties are offered support and may follow an individual educational programme which identifies their needs and plans for their future development at the appropriate level, with differentiation occurring by outcome and/or task. This programme is planned in consultation with the SENCO and addresses appropriate short and long term strategies for supporting children. These may involve specific targets for writing or withdrawal from whole class sessions to work individually or in small groups on a prescribed intervention programme.

The Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the literacy governor and the full governing body on the progress of writing provision in the school. The writing policy is reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

The Role of the Co-Ordinator

The Literacy subject co-ordinator is responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning in writing.

This involves:

- Monitoring and evaluating progress and standards of attainment in both key stages
- Producing an action plan identifying targets for the year
- Developing and reviewing the writing policy statement
- Developing guidelines for the teaching of writing
- Providing support and advice for colleagues

- Attending English courses to update knowledge of writing best practice and cascading this information to staff
- Reporting to the governors on the development of writing within the school
- Ordering and organising resources for writing
- Ensuring the provision of a quality learning environment

Literacy Co-ordinators: Jane Douglas, Hayley Webster, Rachel Grace

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