



# Oakham Church of England Primary & The Parks School

## Writing Pathway



### Introduction

At Oakham C of E Primary School, writing is a crucial part of our curriculum. All children from Foundation Stage to Year 6 are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. This document is our Writing Pathway. It outlines our writing statement of intent and the methodical nature of our teaching and learning offer to ensure that all of our children have the best opportunity to reach their potential in writing.

### Statement of Intent

We want our children to develop a love for writing and see writing as a craft. We would like children to become skilled and proficient in the fluency of writing, encapsulating both grammar and sentence construction to then have the capacity in their writer's toolkit to 'take risks' and to develop a passion and flair for writing. We want the children to see themselves as authors. We recognise that children need to develop their oracy skills to have the ideas and the confidence to become great writers.

We want children to acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to spell new words by effectively applying the spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time in primary school. We want them to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences. We believe that all children should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their writing, in part by developing a good, joined, handwriting style by the time they move to secondary school. We believe that all good writers refine and edit their writing over time, so we want children to develop independence in being able to identify their own areas for improvement in all pieces of writing, editing their work effectively during and after the writing process. We do not put ceilings on what pupils can achieve in writing and we do not hold pre-conceptions about any children's ability to make progress.

We understand the children will move through the pathway at different rates and therefore the **purpose** of this pathway is to ensure that there is ample fluidity to ensure that children are in the right place at the right time for their age and stage of literary development.

### Implementation

#### EYFS

##### Physical development in EYFS

The development of fine and gross motor skills is critical for the act of writing. Children develop their fine motor and gross motor control to enable the manipulation and dexterity of their fingers. The children receive daily sessions initially called 'Funky Fingers,' in term one with the **purpose** of these sessions intended to strengthen their developing muscles. It also encourages communication and language, promotes characteristics of effective learning and enables children to become more independent.

##### Communication and Language

Communication and language sit at the heart of writing. Building language and supporting communication feeds into the writing that the children do, even at the very earliest stages of their mark-making.

Within 'Phase One' of Letters and Sounds, teachers will model how to play around with language, using alliteration, nursery rhymes, and listening activities to build the phonological awareness that is so vital as a basis for learning phonics.

The more vocabulary our children have, the better placed they will be to become fluent writers. Teachers will use every opportunity to introduce children to new words when they are ready for them, by modelling new ways of describing the world in their interactions. Children are provided with plentiful opportunities for emerging writing through play. We build on their interests to real life contexts for children to engage in writing. In early writing children are praised for ascribing meaning to their marks. Teachers model their writing to the children so that they understand that we write from left to right and that clusters of letters make a word and that groups of words together make a sentence. Writing is celebrated at each and every age and stage of development. By the second term children in EYFS are provided with a picture stimulus in the morning and encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to communicate meaning. There is a concerted focus on 'fabulous formation' to ensure that when children have an appropriate pencil grip they are then able to form letters correctly. By the third term, the children are expected to write a complete sentence using their knowledge of CVC and CCVC words when provided with a picture stimulus during their daily early morning writing session.

### **Letter-Join**

As a school we are using the scheme Letter-Join. We have selected this to ensure a consistent approach across all year groups.

- In EYFS, the children learn how to copy patterns and learn the printed letter shape. They learn how to form numbers correctly using the correct orientation.
- In Year 1, the children learn the pre-cursive formation of letter shapes. The children learn capital letters, printed letter, numbers, punctuation and other symbols. They learn to write using the correct orientation and size.
- In Year 2, the purpose is to increase the fluency and speed in children's handwriting through regular practise. Children begin to make joins between letters.
- In Year 3, the purpose of handwriting is to improve legibility, consistency and quality.
- In Year 4, to apply size appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum.
- In Year 5, to combine fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum.
- In Year 6, to develop a personal handwriting style and write with automaticity.

### **Left Handed Children**

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

- 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.
- Children who show difficulties with handwriting may use handwriting guides in their books. We use the printed handwriting paper from the Letter-Join to support this.
- Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher. Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

### **Grammar**

The importance of grammar has a high profile within school, as displayed on the Punctuation Pants in every classroom. Within each classroom the Punctuation Pants are visibly displayed at the front of the classroom and includes the grammatical requirements for that year group and the preceding years. The children are encouraged to refer to these as learning aids when writing.

- From Year 1, children are taught grammatical objectives that are interwoven into our Sentence Stacking approach.
- At the beginning of Year 2, children are taught discrete grammar sessions to specifically cover the grammatical objectives within the framework. The children receive 4 x 25 minute grammar sessions per week.
- In Year 3 and 4, the children receive 2 x 30 minute grammar sessions. This is in addition to the grammar that is interwoven in the literacy lessons.
- In Year 5 and 6, the children receive 2 x 30 minute grammar sessions. This is in addition to the grammar that is interwoven in the literacy lessons.

### **Spelling**

In our school we use a web-based program called Spellingframe that links directly to the spelling rules and words taken from the national curriculum; it is a brilliant tool to help support children learning how to spell at school and at home. Spellingframe provides a fun and exciting way for children to engage with their spellings and has been found to have a positive impact on their ability to learn and apply their spellings. Teachers select lists of words for children to learn at an age appropriate level. With each list of words, children will be able to choose to practise the set of words, take a test or play a game with those words. If they choose to practise, they will see and hear the word broken down into syllables and then they will be given a series of activities/games to help them to memorise the spelling. The activities/games develop increasing independence. When children choose to be tested, they receive instant feedback. If they make a mistake, they are shown the correct spelling and given a series of activities to help them to remember the word.

### **Common Exception Words (CEWs)**

As children learn to read within a structured phonics programme and the phoneme (spoken unit of sound) and the grapheme (the written symbol that represents the sound) correspondences are explained, the English curriculum has set out various spelling rules (and exception words) that need to be learnt by children in each year of their primary education. English has a complex spelling system. We recognise the importance placed upon CEWs in our English curriculum. These words are the words where the usual spelling rule doesn't apply; such as the CEW 'because.' Resources

such as CEW mats are accessible to remind children about the spellings and commonly picked up within marking.

In EYFS the children learn to write red words as ‘the tricky words that cannot be sounded out.’ The teachers assess the children’s ability to read and write these words and interventions are set up for children who are not in line to meet the expected standard.

In KS1 and lower KS2 the CEWs are divided into five groups. Children work through each set of CEWs before moving onto the next set. Children are tested twice on a termly basis and provided with a certificate for learning a set of CEWs. If children are not proficient in their year group’s word set they will continue to learn the previous set. Since March 2021, we have introduced a Spelling app called ‘Sir Linkalot’ that enables children to learn how to spell a range of common exception words. It focuses on ‘tricky’ words that are not phonetically decodable and that do not follow spelling patterns. This has been shared with parents to encourage children to practise and consolidate their learning at home.

Children work systematically through the ‘tricky word bundles,’ Children are tested regularly in school and move progressively through the word bundles as they achieve 100% correct spellings.

### **Oracy - Talk for Writing**

We have adopted Pie Corbett’s Talk for Writing approach to complement the Sentence Stacking. We have done this because we recognise that reading and writing act as dual strands within literacy, building on the vital skills of speaking and listening to allow us to communicate and explore ideas. Talk for Writing is an engaging teaching framework that allows children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it, and then writing their own version.

Stories play a crucial role in the development of thinking and writing, because they help children internalise the underlying rules and structures. Through listening to and sharing stories, children pick up on the patterns of story language – “Once upon a time ...”, “And they lived happily ever after ...”, “He huffed and he puffed”.

In EYFS, [Pie Corbett’s ‘Talk for Writing’ approach](#) is used as a foundational building block for writing to model the creative process when exploring stories. The approach involves mapping stories by using diagrams and pictures, retelling stories together as a group, and then changing and innovating aspects of the original story to develop it.

In Year 1 and Year 2 there is a real emphasis on engaging with the text, getting to know it through oral rehearsal and story mapping. In order to understand the structure and sequence of a text children are given the opportunity to ‘box it up.’ Children rehearse sentences orally and use scaffolded story maps to then innovate.

In Year 3 and Year 4 a model text is shared, boxed up and the children retell their stories. Using reading skills of deduction and inference children use visual images to retell their stories verbally. Children continue to story map and using the main plot points they innovate independently.

In Year 5 and Year 6 a model text is shared, boxed up and the children retell their stories. Using reading skills of deduction and inference children use visual images to retell their stories verbally. Children continue to story map and using the main plot points they innovate independently. The progression is evident through a more

complex text choice and a broader range of purposes for writing that generate formal debate.

### **Sentence Stacking**

Our curriculum ensures that all children have plenty of opportunities to write for different purposes. We encourage writing through all curriculum areas and use quality reading texts to model examples of good writing. Writing is taught through a number of different strategies. We believe that children need lots of rich speaking and drama activities to give them the imagination and the experiences that will equip them to become good writers. This links into our blended approach with Talk for Writing.

We have adopted “The Write Stuff” by Jane Considine to bring clarity to the mechanics of writing. “The Write Stuff” follows a method called “Sentence Stacking” which refers to the fact that sentences are stacked together and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing. Prior to the sequence of taught lessons, children are immersed into the text through a variety of activities that are designed to provide a hook. This may include: role play, collaborative creativity or multi-sensory activities. An individual lesson is based on a sentence model, broken in to three chunks:

1. Initiate section – a stimulus to capture the children’s imagination and set up a sentence.
2. Model section – the teacher close models a sentence that outlines clear writing features and techniques.
3. Enable section – the children write their sentence, following the model.

“The Write Stuff” also reinforces grammar through the use of:

- The **FANTASTICs** which are an acronym that summarise the ideas of writing and is used as a visual aid to support children with their writing.
- The **BOOMTASTIC** which helps children capture 10 ways of adding drama and poetic devices to writing.

In Year 1, children use high quality texts as a focus for their writing. Initially the children focus on narratives building on their EYFS oracy, later being exposed to non-fiction texts. The children are provided with an ‘ideas side’ which provides a clear scaffold and the visual images from the Fantastics and Boomtastics. The children are expected to write ‘two chunks’ as the focus is the quality of the writing on the page and not the quantity. Children have the opportunity to ‘deepen the moment’ (DTM) within their writing. The purpose of this is to extend their writing by enriching it through various literary devices. In Year 1 explicit guidance and modelled examples are provided.

In Year 2, children continue to use high quality texts as a stimulus for their writing. More emphasis is placed on the quality and broadening of their vocabulary and the way in which they can manipulate a sentence for effect. The children have a less structured ‘ideas side’ and they greater autonomy within their writing. In Year 2, children are encouraged to ‘deepen the moment’ with guidance but more freedom to manipulate their writing for effect.

In Year 3 and Year 4 there is no structure to the ‘ideas page.’ Children generate their ideas through discussions. They have three chunks and periodically this is a provided chunk which provides textual cohesion combined with a handwriting focus. At the beginning of Year 3, children are provided with suggestions to DTM and by the time

they reach Year 4 most children are able to naturally DTM as it becomes part of the fluency of their writing style.

In Year 5 and Year 6, most children are able to DTM as they apply their knowledge of language and grammatical structures with automaticity. By this point, children have established a clear style of writing which has been sustained over a longer piece and across a variety of genres. Most children have a very clear understanding of audience and are able to manipulate language for effect.

In Year 6, by the summer term, the children apply their skills independently in readiness for Key Stage 3. Opportunities are provided to write for a variety of purposes with more autonomy to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills.

### **The Purpose of Writing**

We have streamlined the purposes for writing so that children become fully immersed into the genre. We have broken this down into year groups. These are the purpose for writing:

1. Narration (narrative writing): Narration is story telling.
2. Description (descriptive writing): Think of description as painting a picture with words.
3. Exposition (expository writing): Exposition is writing that explains or informs.
4. Persuasion (persuasive writing): Persuasive writing seeks to convince the reader of a particular position or opinion.

In Years 1 and 2, the children focus on 'writing to entertain' (stories, poetry and characters in-role) and 'writing to inform' (recounts, instructions and letters).

In Years 3 and 4, the children focus on 'writing to entertain' (stories, poetry and characters settings) and 'writing to inform' (explanations, recounts, newspaper articles, biography, instructions and letters) and 'writing to persuade' (advertising, letters, speeches and posters).

In In Years 5 and 6, the children focus on 'writing to entertain' (stories, descriptions, poetry and characters settings) and 'writing to inform' (explanations, recounts, newspaper articles, biography, instructions and letters) 'writing to persuade' (advertising, letters, speeches and campaigns) and 'writing to discuss' ( balanced argument, newspaper articles and a review).

### **Impact**

#### **Assessment and Moderation**

In order to ensure that we are maintaining high standards of writing we have regular moderation. At a school level we moderate within teams across school and then across different local schools. In addition we attend Local Authority moderation sessions that are across all key stages and delivered on a termly basis to support teachers in making judgements. We use the Teacher Assessment Framework and exemplification materials to ensure that we have consistency in professional judgements. Within school we have a wealth of moderating experience and we have members of staff who have previously been or are currently Local Authority moderators across the Key Stages.

The impact and measure of this is to ensure that children at Oakham C of E Primary School are equipped with skills and knowledge that will enable them to be ready for

the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and for life as a literate adult in the wider world. We want the children to have thoroughly enjoyed learning about writing, therefore encouraging them to undertake new life experiences now and in the future. We want our children to be able to express themselves throughout their lives in a range of contexts and for different purposes.