



Writing Policy

Reviewed on: October 2024

Review due: October 2026

Signed:

Date:

Introduction

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of writing at Westdale Infant School. The policy should be read in conjunction with the EYFS Statutory Framework and the National Curriculum for English, which details what pupils in different year groups will be taught. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the staff. This policy has been prepared by the CLT in consultation and discussion with all staff and governors of Westdale Infant School. It has been produced for all teaching staff, support staff with classroom responsibilities, school governors, parents, inspection teams, LA advisors and interested others. Copies are available to all school staff and the Governing Body.

“Writers are thieves – they plunder their reading but also their lives. Children who see themselves as writers will become alert to raiding the world, always on the lookout for material that can be used in their writing. They see the world slightly differently. They look more closely, perhaps they experience more deeply and become more adept at giving significance to the particularities and concrete details that illuminate.” - Pie Corbett

Rationale:

We want our children to gain a love of language and become confident speakers, attentive listeners, keen readers and expressive writers. We immerse them in a language rich environment, enabling them to explore, learn and use a wealth of vocabulary with understanding. We believe that writing should be purposeful and meaningful for children, planning rich experiences that provoke creativity and adventurous word choices. We provide children with opportunities for children to reflect on their writing, celebrating their successes and achievements, but also identifying their next learning step. We want children to mirror our own high expectations, leading to a sense of pride when presenting their work.

The skill of writing is essential, as it fosters our ability to explain and refine our ideas to others and ourselves. Writing preserves our ideas and memories. Writing allows us to understand our lives and access the world around us. Writing allows us to entertain others, give them information, share our stories and communicate.

Aims for our pupils:

- To be inspired to write, and to develop a love of writing, enabling them to leave KS1 as creative and confident writers
- To use their personal experiences, their knowledge of books and stories, and their imagination to support and encourage them in their writing.
- To be given the opportunity to write with support and guidance from an adult, but also independently in continuous provision, both inside the classroom and in the outdoor environment.
- To develop a rich and exciting vocabulary that supports them not only in their writing, but also in their day-to-day communication, their storytelling and their play.

At Westdale, we want to encourage children:

- to use their reading to inform their writing and be magpies, loving language and borrowing words and phrases from each other and other authors
- to write legibly and independently
- to recognise their own next steps to improve

- to use writing across the curriculum in a variety of genres
- to develop their interests through a wide range of media.
- to love writing and see themselves as authors.

“Writers love words. If children do not love words, then why should they spend time loitering over reading and writing? A good teacher brings words alive. In some ways, teachers are the guardians of our language – the well-turned phrase, the beautifully constructed argument, the story that will stay in the mind forever” - Pie Corbett

How we teach writing:

The 2014 National Curriculum states:

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. Our school environment is rich with possibilities for communication and writing through structured play activities and independent learning tasks. Mark making and writing is encouraged in both indoor and outdoor environments, and in the different areas of learning. In addition to this, specific writing areas are always available in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One to give the children an opportunity to experiment with writing and writing materials.

At Westdale Infants, we value every mark made by the children. This mark making, gradually evolves to include letters and then words. By valuing their emergent writing, we develop confident ‘writers’. The children very quickly begin to apply their understanding of phonics when they are writing and celebrate the fast progress they make. We strongly believe that before children can become articulate writers, they must be articulate speakers. Therefore, planning should place high emphasis on communication and language activities.

“A child who cannot tell a story will not be able to write one down” – Penny Tassoni (independent educational consultant, 2004)

- **Drawing Club (foundation)**

In Foundation, we use Drawing Club - an approach designed by Greg Bottrill that immerses children into a world full of imagination which aims to excite, engage and capture the imagination of children. It is through drawing club that we open up the magic world of tales and story to children whilst at the same time enriching their language skills, developing their fine motor and share a really special time with them. Drawing Club is based upon the 3M principle. These are making conversation, mark making and mathematics. We use a book, traditional tale or an animation as a portal for the week. Children learn new, exciting vocabulary that we revisit each day of the week. We draw characters on a Monday, settings on a Tuesday and we ‘wonder’ on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

- **Colourful Semantics (Year 1)**

Year 1 use Colourful Semantics, an approach created by Alison Bryan, which is designed to support children develop their understanding of sentence structure and expand the length of their sentences. The structure of a sentence (syntax) is colour coded and then these are linked to their meaning (semantics).

Who (Subject) – Orange	Doing (Verb) – Yellow	What (Object) – Green	Where (Location) – Blue
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The aim is that children begin by focusing on sentences that contain 2 elements e.g. ‘who’ and ‘doing’ e.g. ‘the boy is running’. Each coloured section does not have to contain only one word but instead these are

split into the information that they contain. As children become more confident they then move up through the stages, adding in more colours as they go. Most begin working at 3-4-part sentences but some children may need more support working on 1-2 word phrases. The different sections are generally added to a child's sentences in the order below, although at the higher (e.g. adjectives onwards) this is less fixed. It is also useful to teach that not all of these need to be included in every sentence e.g. 'the girl is reading in the kitchen' does not contain the object element (although it could use 'the book').

- **Talk for Writing (KS1)**

At Westdale Infant School, we fully appreciate and recognise the relationship between children's reading and writing. Where possible, shared reading and writing is linked so that children can be helped to improve their writing by learning from experienced and talented writers. We use elements of Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' approach across KS1, which focuses on immersion, imitation, innovation and invention of stories, and the children are encouraged to 'magpie' and create a bank of interesting words to use in their own work. Year 1 may focus purely on immersion and imitation, whilst year 2 progress onto innovation and invention.

- **Genres**

By the end of KS1 children at Westdale Infant School will have covered genres such as; captions, lists, labelling, narrative, recounts, familiar settings, fantasy, non-fiction, letters, adverts/posters, fact sheets, poetry explanations, reports, character descriptions, diary accounts, setting, re-telling, rules and persuasive texts.

Cross-Curricular

The children at Westdale see every lesson as a writing lesson and staff have high expectations that children will present all writing to the best of their ability. Children write across the curriculum from historical and geographical accounts to writing about how they might have made something using clay in art. In DT, this could be a recount, reflection or evaluation of their designs. They write up science experiments and information and retell stories or events in R.E. Children use writing in both music and P.E. to make notes or record feedback. They write within computing sessions learning about the keyboard and writing instructions on how to program. They label designs and write evaluations as well as recording their emotions in PSHRE sessions. They also use writing to explain their answers in maths. Continuous Provision also creates endless opportunities and possibilities for children to explore and practice writing skills.

Writing sessions

English is taught at least 4 times a week as well as daily morning starters, phonics and within the wider curriculum. English blocks/units typically run for two weeks. In the first week, the children will be immersed in the text and may focus on orally retelling, defining new vocabulary (visual Widgets), comprehension and story mapping. In the second week, there will usually be a grammar focus, opportunities to apply this and then an extended writing session for the children to imitate, innovate or invent.

Once a half term, children will independently produce their extended 'Best Write', which will be stored in their writing portfolio documenting their progress from the beginning of foundation to the end of Year 2.

Children write in their writing books to show progression but are also given the option to write in other forms to suit, such as mini booklets, large paper and exciting writing frames. This enables children to have choice and take ownership of their learning.

During writing sessions, children are expected to mark make, use letters they know and sound out using phonics independently. They may receive support from a teacher, but children do not copy write unless it is a handwriting or presentation learning objective.

Different forms of writing at Westdale

- **Modelled Writing** – this is where the teacher writes in front of the children without their input. They model the process of writing thinking, talking outloud and editing. Teachers will model segmenting and re-reading. Ladibirds
- **Exemplar Write** – this is where the teacher may have pre written a text as an example. Children may take part in editing this to improve.
- **Guided Writing** - this is where children may receive more support in addition to the class sessions but in a small group with the teacher's support. The teacher may model or support the children to construct sentences orally and in written form. Ultimately children write themselves and do not copy write. Model and scaffold.
- **Collaborative Writing** - this is where children write a text with the teachers support. The teacher will push for sentences and vocabulary for the correct genre. The teacher will not accept first answers and will have high expectations for what the children can produce, encouraging them to use braver and more difficult language and structure. Children will re-read and edit with teacher support. Children will be encouraged to model segmenting. Teacher is the scribe and pick from selection of childrens ideas.
- **Independent writing** – this is where children write by themselves stretching out to spell using phonics or spelling using known techniques. Children are reminded but encouraged to read back, edit and improve depending on age.
- **Supported write-** this is where a teacher/TA works closely with a child to write a piece 1:1. This does not mean the teacher/TA does this for the child. They ask questions to tease out ideas and remind them of previous learning. This is also used to move children on in their learning and teach new skills such as forms of punctuation or a new sentence structure.
- **Copy writing** – Children only copy a teacher's writing if the objective is to do with handwriting e.g. They are copying out a sentence to improve formation, height or orientation, finger spaces.
- **Mag-pieing words/word mats-** children are encouraged to use sound/spelling mats, and 'magpie' or 'pinch' words and sentences they have heard from other text. This may be showcased on the working wall using widget icons alongside the word for vocabulary. All classes have a vocabulary wall display where words are 'pinched' and written up. In Y1 and Y2. F2 topic words on learning journey.

Visualiser/smartboard technology is used as a teaching tool in all classes to enable children to progress, to promote conversations and celebrate writing.

Handwriting

At Westdale, we follow this sequence to teach letter formation using 'families of letters: e.g. start with the easiest first (long letters): l, t, i, u, j, y. Then go onto the next easiest letters (curly letters): c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s. Then the 'bouncing ball' letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d. And finally the 'zig zag letters: v, w, x, k, z.

Children begin preparing for handwriting in foundation by practising fine (the ability to control small movement in their arm, hands and fingers) and gross motor skills (the ability to control their whole body). Children use a pen for writing from F2 to make mark making easier. They also work on visual and spatial control. This continues through KS1 and children practise this at the start of each session. There is also a

huge emphasis on developing control within patterns e.g. lines, loops, spirals and circles to prepare for letter formation.

In foundation, when children first encounter the alphabet, teachers model correct letter formation and support children in forming letters from the right start points – with a rhyme and visual - the priority is lettering formation refine orientation.

In Year 1, teachers continue to model this and introduce the idea of letter heights (ascenders/descenders) and their position in relation to the lines they write on. They will cover how to form uppercase capital letters correctly in addition to lower case letters.

They then move onto joining in Year 2 where they learn things like horizontal joins, diagonal and break letters. Children have at least three short practise sessions at the beginning of the day during a morning starter, but handwriting is constantly picked up for feedback in class. Children who need extra support will receive fine and gross motor sessions.

Oral feedback and a chance to respond is given in handwriting and all writing sessions. Children also have a chance to offer peer support to improve. During all writing sessions and across the curriculum you should see children practising handwriting to make sure they are forming letters in the correct direction, working on the orientation, size and eventually joins.

Spelling

Children are taught to read the common and high frequency words relevant to their year group. They are assessed on this ability termly and practise these skills regularly in daily phonics and English sessions. This includes tricky “Tess” words; those words that cannot be easily sounded out.

Spellings are sent home in the form of a weekly phonic newsletter – shared on Class Dojo. These details spellings linked to phonic coverage, high frequency words and Tricky Tess Words to consolidate the week’s learning taught in class. We do not perform weekly spelling tests. Spelling is embedded into morning starters, phonics and all writing sessions in English through modelling and referring to working wall displays / mats. The progression of spellings is monitored in books as this is where children will show their independence and deeper learning. Spelling corrections are practised at the bottom of work and is evident in books.



Tricky Tess

Planning, Assessment, Marking, Moderation and Monitoring (also see the Feedback Policy)

Learning is interleaved in such a way that maximises long term memory acquisition, with genres and learning objectives being revisited within sequences of learning and year on year.

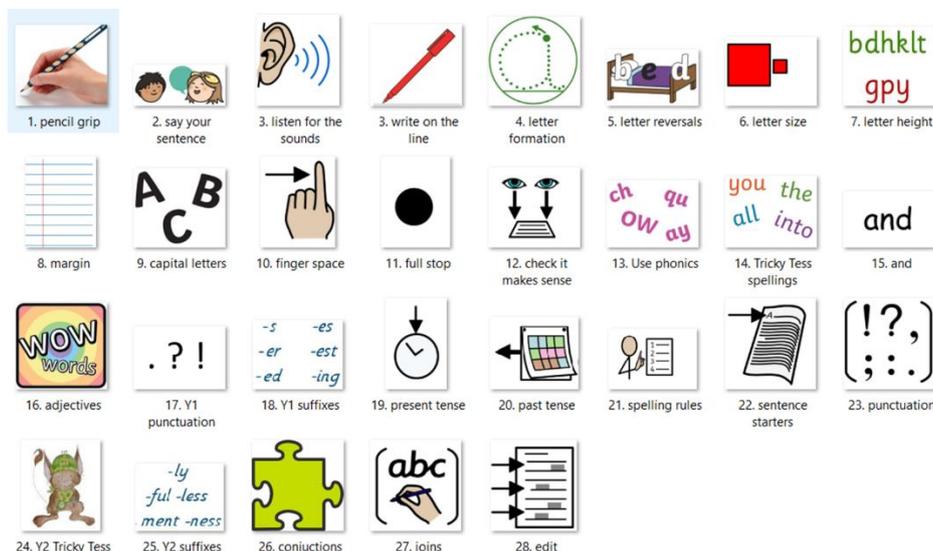
Writing is **assessed** by teachers and staff in school through our own school termly expectation grids. In the Autumn term all staff have a review meeting with the previous class teacher to check progress. Writing assessments are recorded twice a year (EAZMAG, spring and summer and monitored through pupil progress meetings with teachers. All teachers use formative and summative assessment constantly to measure progress. Writing is assessed against the early years profile and development matters - EYFS national curriculum standards and KS1. Westdale moderate between year groups, as a whole staff, with the family of schools and **receive statutory moderations**. No more marking – national.

Feedback is given is verbally at the point of learning. Children are expected to respond this feedback within the session. Teachers are not expected to mark work in written form – but use the child friendly writing

SNIPS to assess against. Teachers are trusted to have their own method that suits their class – if it is in line with the marking policy.

Monitoring takes the form of work scrutiny, classrooms observations, data analysis and learning walks and staff/pupil voice.

Child-friendly writing target icons are displayed in the classroom and referred to during modelled writing and lessons. Names/photographs are used beneath each icon to support the child in knowing their next step and area of focus to improve (targets changes usually twice a half term after a 'Best Write').



Child friendly writing target SNIPS are also used on PowerPoint slides and on the Learning Objective sticker in English books. They help to remind children of the success criteria and things to consider. The teacher uses their pink/green pen to assess in the moment- using them as an opportunity to share in the moment feedback with the child. Year 2 children may begin to self-assess against a checklist grid to build independence and fine-tune editing skills.

Environment

All classrooms have a phonics display that includes both prior and new sounds and HFW/ Tricky Tess words. They also have an English display that will display the front cover of the book, vocabulary widgets, modelled examples, story boards and examples of children's work. All classrooms have an enticing reading area with a selection of high-quality books to engage readers. Ladybird visualisers are used to model and share writing.

Equal Opportunities

Our school ensures that all children cover the statutory content within the National Curriculum for their programme of study. Children are given suitable resources, and the learning environment is set up to enable children to access the learning required therefore ensuring progression. All staff have high expectations for all pupils.

Parental involvement

Parents are encouraged to develop writing through weekly Phonic Newsletters, which lists spelling words and suggest simple sentences to write. Parents are invited to year group meeting at different stages of the year, where staff will talk about and show evidence of writing expectations. Dojo message round up.

Pupil Voice

Children are given a voice to discuss their opinion of writing and schemes within school via pupil voice sessions. They have an input into school policies. This is through House Captains, School Parliament and pupil voice sessions.

Work is celebrated in magical moments assembly and also WAGOLL displays.

Vulnerable Groups (including SEN and Pupil Premium)

All children have full access to the development of writing skills through quality first teaching. Any bespoke support required takes place as the teacher form of extra intervention.

Children should not be removed from quality first teaching with their class teacher for interventions, this should be at an additional time (e.g. assemblies). Children's emotional support and nurture will be prioritised over academic interventions – the wellbeing of the child needs to be address so they can be in the Green Zone (see Zone of Regulations) and be ready to learn. Staff use impact and intervention grids as well as pupil premium case studies to show progress of any interventions. It is also reflected on during data discussions. Some children have a bespoke curriculum with targets delivered through learning sandwiches – drawn up collaboration with specialist agencies. This ensures they have the right support at the right time and personal progress.

SEND

Switch on writing / Colourful semantics – vulnerable groups receive an intervention called 'switch on writing' where they work in small groups or one to one to improve their ability to say sentences out loud, improve memory, use phonics, improve spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are also encouraged to read back to make sense and edit. Some children benefit from structure of this intervention.

As a systematic intervention to support children with sentence structure and composition.



Block system- Some children may benefit from writing words in a box.

Rapid Learner: Children who excel have opportunities to challenge themselves in CP - allows children to practice and embed - a flare for writing.