

How we teach writing at Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School

Intent

At Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School, we believe that a high-quality English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and oracy. We want to inspire our children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening and to use spoken language to communicate and further their learning. We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge base in English, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through EYFS and KS1. It is our intent to provide children with an inspirational English curriculum, structured around high-quality texts that will create a thirst for the development of vocabulary. This in turn will lead to an ability to communicate effectively across all areas of the curriculum, both orally and when writing.

We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children succeed and take pride in their written work, where they can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and writing style for a range of age-appropriate contexts. Developing writing skills are reinforced and practiced across other areas of the curriculum.

Implementation

At Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School, we believe the explicit teaching of vocabulary is a key aspect of Literacy education, which stretches across the curriculum. We have been involved in the Devon vocabulary project 'Closing the Word Gap', which highlighted activities and strategies for the effective teaching of vocabulary. This provides rich language experiences and fosters greater word consciousness and curiosity.

In the Early Years we provide lots of meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the written word and to support them to understand that symbols carry meaning. Through modelling and guided learning, we encourage the children to communicate and express their ideas through writing, showing them how sounds become words on paper, thinking about transcription and composition in Reception. Physical strength and control in the core, upper body, hands and fingers are important for writing to develop ~ we ensure that the children have daily opportunities to build up these muscles.

Our [Reception Curriculum Framework](#) ensures that our children have plenty of opportunities to write for different purposes across the setting. We encourage writing through all curriculum areas and use quality reading texts to model examples of good writing.

English teaching sequences

In KS1, the teaching of writing is closely structured around the DES BookWrites teaching sequences, allowing children to experience real examples of writing. The sequences are based on high-quality children's literature which provide strong models of rich language and replicable structures, along with something worth talking about in terms of the content. Within each sequence there is an exploration of new vocabulary and displays in classrooms focus children's attention on these words and their meaning. Children are encouraged to make appropriate use of vocabulary word cards, and, as they progress, to use dictionaries when writing.

The BookWrites teaching sequences follow a very clear structure with an intended outcome and purpose. Children's 'learning journeys' through the sequence are explicitly shared at the start of every lesson. This helps children to clearly understand and articulate the steps taken to achieve the final outcome. The writing targets for each sequence are shared at the beginning of each unit and referred to repeatedly in lessons, ensuring children are aware of the skills they are learning.

- The purpose of the **elicitation task** is to provide a starting point for the sequence and therefore a baseline measure to compare with the final outcome. It also allows teachers to adjust and personalize the objectives of the sequence for specific classes or groups of children. This will mean that progress across the sequence can be made explicit for pupils.
- **Learning about the text.** This phase of the teaching sequence is about becoming familiar with the text that is being used as a model for writing. We aim to engage the imagination and emotions of the pupils with the text through high quality talk and activities that deepen understanding. Children learn to remember and retell texts orally, through the use of visual text maps and 'Talk for Writing' drama techniques.
- **Practising Writing** involves using the text to explicitly teach **grammar and punctuation** objectives. Children are encouraged to talk about their ideas and thoughts before committing these ideas to paper. Children learn the mantra 'If we can say it out loud, we can write it'. We use the 'Kung Fu' actions and visuals to teach sentence punctuation. Children learn to use the actions, 'marking' the punctuation with the kung fu actions as they orally rehearse their sentences before writing them.
- **Shared writing** this is where the teacher models writing a new text, constructed by the class. Grammar and punctuation, along with spelling and choice of vocabulary are explicitly modelled by the teacher, before children write their own version of the 'shared' text. Proof reading and editing skills are also modelled.
- Each sequence ends with an **independent piece** of writing where children can demonstrate the skills they have learnt. Pupils choose what to write about, based around the text structure. Teachers use scaffolded writing frames where appropriate, to ensure all children have a successful outcome.
- **Evaluation.** At the end of each sequence children evaluate their final piece of writing against the targets for the unit. This helps teachers and children to track progress. Pupils will also be able to discuss the improvements they have made in their own writing and be aware of particular skills they need to work on to improve.

Phonics and Spelling

We follow the Little Wandle systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Our Nursery children learn phonemic awareness and oral blending in a fun and practical way each day, through the Little Wandle '[Foundation for phonics: Tuning into Sounds](#)' resource.

Phonics teaching takes place daily across Reception and Year 1. We aim for total fidelity to the Little Wandle SSP programme in terms of organization, routine and progression of taught GPCs and tricky words.

As children's decoding reading skills progress, they learn to use these skills to help them encode words, segmenting spoken words when spelling, using learnt graphemes to represent phonemes.

Little Wandle phonics sessions include weekly practice of writing decodable words, tricky words and dictated sentences. In Year 1, extra spelling sessions where children write dictated sentences reinforcing taught GPCs happen each week.

Children are taught to use GPC charts matched to their current phonic levels when writing independently. These are always available for children to refer to, encouraging them to use their segmenting and word building skills. Children also have access to tricky word charts, appropriate for the phonics phase they are working within.

In Year 2 we follow the Little Wandle Spelling program. This builds on children's knowledge of the alphabetic code and teaches them how to spell with confidence. The programme provides a seamless link from the core Little Wandle programme to teaching spelling in Year 2.

Year 2 Autumn 1 Phase 5 Review

The five-week Phase 5 review ensures the children have secured the trickier parts of Phase 5 and can apply this alphabetic knowledge both to read and spell.

Year 2 Autumn 2 Bridge to Spelling

The bridge to spelling teaches the children how to 'think about spelling'. Over five weeks of daily lessons, the children complete the alphabetic code and learn the underpinning concepts of spelling.

Year 2 Spring and Summer

The Spelling units follow the familiar structure of Little Wandle phonics lessons, supporting children to make links to their phonics learning. Little Wandle Spelling teaches children to consider etymology, morphology and grammar when spelling new words. The programme provides full coverage of National Curriculum spelling requirements.

Handwriting

At present, we use the Penpals for Handwriting scheme to teach correct letter formation across Reception and KS1.

In Reception, Autumn term 1, children are initially taught the letter formation mantras that match the progression of letters learnt in Little Wandle phonics sessions.

In Reception Spring 1, Penpals handwriting lessons are taught as discrete sessions outside of the phonics and English lessons. Children learn 'families' of letters that reinforce correct letter formation.

In KS1 handwriting is taught each week outside of the main English lessons. In Year 1 towards the end of Autumn 2, children are introduced to cursive joins in a structured and supported way. Children that require extra support with letter formation and fine motor skills are supported by TAs in a small group.

Our intent is for all children to be joining fluently by the end of Year 2.

Handwriting pens are introduced during handwriting lessons in Year 2 when children are forming and joining letters correctly.

Assessment

Targets and outcomes for every English writing unit are made explicit to children throughout the teaching sequences. Personalised targets and visual marking codes are regularly written into English books and across the curriculum, ensuring children are aware of particular skills they need to focus on.

Evaluation of the 'independent write, by child and teacher, encourages children to reflect on their successes and to think about what they need to work on to get better.

Each term, teachers assess independent writing tasks against NC objectives and attainment is recorded on the whole school assessment platform, Insight. This enables teachers to monitor and track progress and to ensure extra writing interventions can support children who need it.

Moderation of writing is completed through use of DFE and Devon exemplar materials and across the Federation to reach a final teacher assessment judgement.

Our end of KS1 writing assessments have been rigorously externally moderated by DES advisors and Lead Teachers.

Intended impact

By the time pupils move onto Year 3 they will have...

- developed a rich, age-appropriate vocabulary through which to express their ideas, opinions and knowledge; they make exciting and adventurous vocabulary choices in their writing.
- become confident in writing for a range of different purposes and audiences and show pride in their writing, both in English and across the curriculum.
- developed a secure understanding of KS1 grammar and punctuation.
- be able to apply the spelling patterns and rules taught to become accurate, independent spellers.
- developed a neat, legible, consistent, style of cursive handwriting.
- Pupils of all abilities will be able to succeed in English lessons, as work will be appropriately differentiated and scaffolded.

It is our intent that pupils will achieve progress that is at least in line with age-related expectations and national averages in writing.