

Moorside Primary School



Writing Policy

MOORSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES

Our Purpose

Moorside Primary is a school at the heart of our diverse community in the West End of Newcastle.

We pride ourselves in being a caring school community where everyone is welcome.

We strive to deliver an outstanding education for all our children.

We help everyone to become caring and active citizens

We encourage everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our Vision

We want everyone in our school to work together to make us as good as any school can be.

We want to create new opportunities for everyone to succeed.

We want to create a culture which broadens all of our horizons.

We want everyone to be able to tackle the challenges we will face in an ever changing world.

We want all of our children to effectively engage with each other and with our community.

Our values

We all believe that

Our local community deserves a school they can be proud of

We are a caring community where everyone is welcome

We all value, respect and support each other

Our community has the right to be safe and healthy.

Our children should have the chance to enjoy and be enthused by their time in our school

We all work together to make sure that

Everyone always tries their best and take pride in all that they do

Everyone demonstrates good manners at all times

Everyone respects each other and show consideration

Everyone respects and cares for our environment and resources

Everyone celebrates each other's successes and achievements

Introduction

Writing is a complex and multi layered process and at Moorside Primary School we believe that the ability to write with confidence and accuracy is an essential life skill. Good writers are able to effectively communicate ideas, opinions and information and understand how specific characteristics of writing can be used across a wide range of contexts. Writing makes a significant contribution to the development of children as learners and as thinkers.

We aim to equip the children with the necessary skills to become accomplished writers. The purpose of this policy is to promote a consistent approach to ensure that continuity and progression are embedded within the school's provision and practice.

Aims

Our aims at Moorside Primary School are for all children to:

- Write with developing confidence, clarity and purpose.
- Write imaginatively, creatively and expressively.
- Understand how to write in a range of genres (including non-fiction, fiction and poetry), using the appropriate style and features.
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own work, and learn how to self- and peer-assess against the success criteria.
- Apply their knowledge of phonics and spelling.
- Use the writing skills they are taught in a wide variety of contexts.

We endeavour to meet these aims by ensuring that the children are taught and given experiences that:

- Assist them in becoming efficient and effective writers who are able to write for a range of audiences and in a range of styles.
- Support the high expectations of all staff in regard to the standard of writing, taking due account of individual needs and stages of development.
- Help them to use various text styles and formats to gain more knowledge about improving their own writing.
- Provide stimulating and engaging lessons where the necessary skills are taught, developed and applied.

Teaching and Learning

Moorside teaches and celebrates writing in many ways; it is taught daily throughout the school. It is essential that the children are taught to write for a reason and that they understand that their work is purposeful. We ensure that children are able to approach writing tasks with intrigue and interest by providing stimulating materials for them to base their work on. Furthermore, we are consistently promoting a sense of critical appraisal of our own writing and that of others to develop a thoughtful attitude to writing.

In the National Curriculum (2014), writing skills have been divided into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting).
- Composition (articulating and communicating ideas, editing and redrafting processes).

Each of these skills are core to the successful teaching of writing across the curriculum. Across the school we are striving to embed and develop, through our teaching of writing, an attitude of confidence, imagination and perseverance.

Planning is carefully considered across all year groups and is expected to be differentiated to allow all learners to access the learning intentions, either by using group teaching, providing scaffolding materials, providing additional support and guidance where necessary, or by building in sufficient challenge to stretch and guide children. Genres of text are taught considering their purpose and audience and used as 'vehicles' in which writing can be

based. There is an emphasis on making clear links between reading and writing, and these links form a key part of writing sessions taught throughout the school. Children are given the opportunities to rehearse their writing skills regularly in their English lessons and across the wider curriculum where appropriate. The children ultimately have the opportunity to refine their work in order to produce a final, polished piece.

Approaches to Writing

At Moorside, we aim for our children to be able to write confidently, coherently and effectively, with stamina, across a range of genres.

We achieve this by:

- Instilling a love and passion for writing into our children, particularly through 'Whole School Write' opportunities.
- Promoting writing as a form of communication from an early stage.
- Providing high quality models of texts through texts chosen to read and through teacher-led modelled writing.
- Using Talk For Writing strategies to provide children with the vocabulary, structure and confidence to write independently.
- Ensuring opportunities are provided for children to write for a range of meaningful purposes and audiences.
- Teaching children and modelling how to become critical readers of their own writing so that they can improve and re-draft their work.
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation through discrete lessons but also modelling these in context.
- Using cold pieces of writing as a starting point for each genre, this allows teaching to be tailored to each child's need.
- Using effective AfL strategies to teach children specifically to write what they can read.

Writing is scaffolded at different levels dependant on what the children need. We use varying levels of scaffolding as a classroom teaching technique in which teacher's deliver lessons in distinct segments, providing less and less support as children master new concepts or material.

Teachers follow a recommended teaching sequence for writing of:

- **Guided writing**; a form of group teaching, focusing on children who have similar needs. The children are guided through the part of the writing process that the rest of the children are focused on. The main point about guided work is that the children should be doing most of the thinking and writing. It is a scaffolded bridge from dependence towards independence.
- **Shared writing**, which has two strands, modelling and joint composition. Modelling is where the teacher shows the children how to do something in writing that is new, or difficult, and will help the children make progress. The teacher writes in front of the children on a flip chart, giving a running commentary, revealing the decisions that are being made.
Joint composition, this is similar to modelling, except the children begin to take control, with the teacher scribing their ideas. There is a shift from the teacher as model towards the children doing more of the thinking, composing, explaining and working as writers. Within a genre all children should participate in a guided writing session at a level that is appropriate to them.
- **Independent writing**; formative assessment is taking place all of the time as the class is being taught, with the teacher picking up on what is happening and constantly trying to move the writing forwards, deepening understanding and

engaging the learner. Gradually the teacher steps back so that the children take on more and more responsibility, moving from dependence to independence.

Through constant teaching, these complex writing processes eventually become increasingly well-orchestrated, internalised and automatic, especially where such processes are articulated by both teachers and children.

Once children have completed a piece of writing (not always a finished or extended piece), editing and redrafting should take place. The children should be taught the distinctive difference between the two aspects. Both improve writing, but only redrafting focusses on the elements of writing. Editing is about reinforcing the basics of writing: punctuation, spelling and capitalisation.

The key features of redrafting are:

- Overall content.
- Structure.
- Vocabulary and language.
- Strong vocabulary choices.

Proofreading should take place regularly as well as at the end of the redrafting process and involves children completing some extra, specific steps. It involves checking their own work closely for mistakes in order to improve its accuracy.

It is expected that some form of editing or redrafting is done after every piece of written work that needs an improvement.

Publishing follows editing and redrafting. It is used to motivate children and encourages them to take pride in their work. This will be done over two handwriting sessions and gives children the opportunity to share their final piece of work with a partner, group or member of staff within the classroom. It could also be shared with Parents/Carers, giving them an audience and a purpose for their writing.

Approaches to Handwriting

At Moorside, we have high expectations that children take pride in the presentation of their work across the curriculum, including adopting a handwriting style which is fluent, legible and joined. Handwriting begins in Early Years Foundation Stage, where children are given access to a wide range of writing tools, mediums and opportunities for mark-making and practising fine motor skills.

In Key Stage one and Key Stage two, all classes use the 'Penpals' programme for fifteen minutes daily in discrete handwriting sessions which are differentiated for children within the cohort where necessary.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide appropriate, high quality learning experiences regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Inclusion

We aim to provide high quality teaching which is adapted to suit all children's individual needs and which enables them to reach their potential in both their spoken and written abilities as well as the development of the reading skills. We have regular, thorough monitoring systems to ensure we are catering for each individual's needs.

- Early interventions are put in place for any children identified as making slow progress.
- Children with SEND receive tailored support.
- Effective assessment for learning ensures children of all abilities are identified to receive further challenge and support and suitable learning activities are provided, including opportunities beyond the classroom.

As previously outlined, teaching is delivered through a 'group teach' approach which effectively meets the needs of all learners based on AfL techniques. There will be occasions where children will be working from a more individualised programme, progressing through intentions which more accurately reflect their ability at different speeds. Furthermore, class teachers will work alongside other professionals and the SENCOs to ensure that SEND children are able to make good, sustained progress alongside their peers in the classroom environment.

Assessment and Moderation

In EYFS, children are assessed in an ongoing manner through observations, one to one interactions, group work and whole class teaching. Their attainment is tracked using the school's assessment tracking systems and internal moderation of this information takes place regularly. Additionally, external moderations and judgements take place between schools within our Trust and through local authority network meetings to ensure that the progress and attainment of the children is being measured accurately.

Throughout the rest of the school, children are assessed by their teachers on a termly basis, with class teachers using both formative and summative assessments to inform their judgements. This enables them to monitor closely the progress that the children make and record this accurately using the school's assessment tracking systems.

Children are deemed as working at one of the standards listed below:

- **Greater Depth** – demonstrating a writing ability which exceeds the standards required for their age group;
- **Expected Standard** – in line with where they should be considering their age group;
- **Within Expectations**- in line with where they should be considering their age group however not consistently and sometimes with additional scaffolding.
- **Emerging/Working Towards** – demonstrating a writing ability which does not fulfil all of the standards required for their age group;
- **Below** – where children are unable to access the curriculum content for their age group and are therefore working from intentions covered at a younger age.

In Years Two and Six, children are formally assessed by their class teachers and a judgement is made for an end of Key Stage result for each children. This data is then sent to the Local Authority and is recorded in the same way as SATs tests results.

As part of this process, ongoing moderation is an integral part of our writing assessments using a wide range of materials. We regularly have moderation staff meetings where teachers can have professional discussions over judgements made. Also, moderation with the Trust schools and local authority network meetings supports staff judgements.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed regularly so that changes and developments in our approach, assessments and resources can be accounted for and can occur promptly based on school priorities and developing needs.

Governors alongside the Senior Leadership Team and the Middle Leadership Team monitor the coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- Curriculum walks.
- Book and work scrutiny.
- Children's outcomes data.
- Children's progress tracking.
- Presentations and reports from subject leads and teams.
- Budgeting and Finance information.
- Assessing current provision and responding to developing needs.

Associated documents

This Policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- English Policy
- Read Write Inc Policy
- Reading Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Early Years Policy
- SEND Policy and information report
- Inclusion Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- All individual subject Policies
- Long and Medium Term Planning
- Intent documents

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Date to be implemented | October 2023 |
| Date to be reviewed | September 2025 |

Appendices

Appendix 1 - What does the *National Curriculum* – statutory document say about writing

Appendix 2 – Developmental stages of writing

Appendix 3 – Why writing is important

Appendix 4 – Phoneme frames

Appendix 5 – The journey of sentence writing

Appendix 1

What does the *National Curriculum* – statutory document say about writing

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages one and two are constructed similarly to those for reading, where it has two elements:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective **transcription**: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
Effective **composition** involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Year One

Writing during year one will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

Reading should be taught alongside spelling, so that children understand that they can read back words they have spelt. Children should be shown how to segment spoken words into individual phonemes and then how to represent the phonemes by the appropriate grapheme(s). It is important to recognise that phoneme-grapheme correspondences (which underpin spelling) are more variable than grapheme-phoneme correspondences (which underpin reading). For this reason, children need to do much more word-specific rehearsal for spelling than for reading. At this stage children will be spelling some words in a phonically plausible way, even if sometimes incorrectly. Misspellings of words that children have been taught to spell should be corrected; other misspelt words should be used to teach children about alternative ways of representing those sounds. Writing simple dictated sentences that include words taught so far gives children opportunities to apply and practise their spelling.

At the beginning of year one, not all children will have the spelling and handwriting skills they need to write down everything that they can compose out loud. Children should understand, through demonstration, the skills and processes essential to writing: that is, thinking aloud as they collect ideas, drafting, and re-reading to check their meaning is clear.

Writing – transcription

Statutory requirements

Spelling (see [English Appendix 1](#))

Pupils should be taught to:

- spell:
 - words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught
 - common exception words
 - the days of the week

12

English – key stages 1 and 2

Statutory requirements

- name the letters of the alphabet:
 - naming the letters of the alphabet in order
 - using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound
- add prefixes and suffixes:
 - using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs
 - using the prefix un–
 - using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest]
- apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in [English Appendix 1](#)
- write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far.

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Writing – composition

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- write sentences by:
 - saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - composing a sentence orally before writing it
 - sequencing sentences to form short narratives
 - re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense
- discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils
- read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

Writing – vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop their understanding of the concepts set out in [English Appendix 2](#) by:
 - leaving spaces between words
 - joining words and joining clauses using and
 - beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark
 - using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'
 - learning the grammar for year 1 in English Appendix 2
- use the grammatical terminology in English Appendix 2 in discussing their writing.

Children should be taught to recognise sentence boundaries in spoken sentences.

Year Two

In writing, children at the beginning of year two should be able to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down. They should be able to spell correctly many of the words covered in year one (see English Appendix 1). They should also be able to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words they have not yet learnt. Finally, they should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning. It is important to recognise that children begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year two. Increasingly, they should learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table. Children's motor skills also need to be sufficiently advanced for them to write down ideas that they may be able to compose orally. In addition, writing is intrinsically harder than reading: children are likely to be able to read and understand more complex writing (in terms of its vocabulary and structure) than they are capable of producing themselves.

Children should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Children should understand, through being shown these, the skills and processes essential to writing: that is, thinking aloud as they collect ideas, drafting, and re-reading to check their meaning is clear.

The ***purpose of phonics*** is to quickly develop children's' word recognition and spelling. This involves:

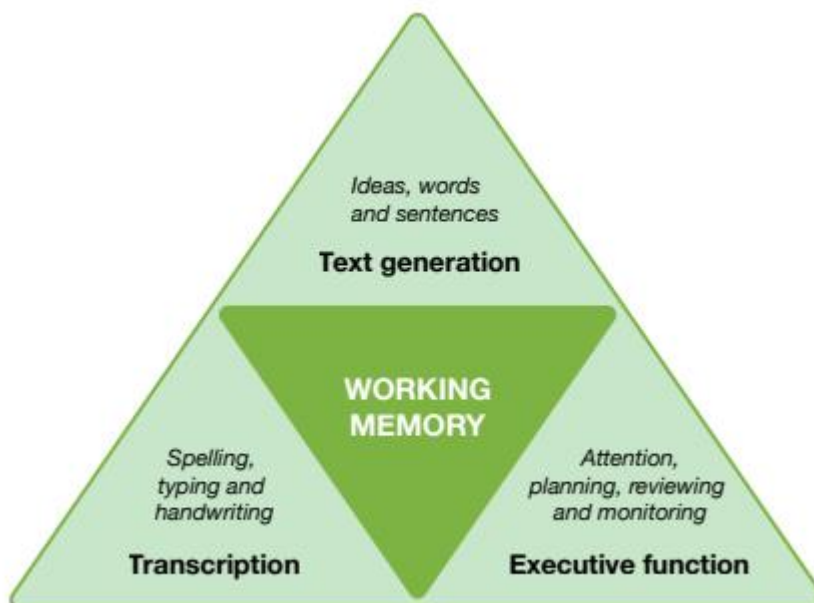
- developing a child's phonemic awareness, which is their ability to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes (the smallest unit of spoken language)
- to teach them the relationship between phonemes and the graphemes (a letter or combination of letters used to represent a phoneme) that represent them

RWI – teaching the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or 'blending' the sound spelling patterns. It is necessary to teach these skills explicitly, but children should also have the opportunity to apply and practise these skills outside of phonics sessions during other reading and writing activities. Any practise could include children writing their own sentences using the letter-sound combinations taught. The goal is to improve the fluency (speed) as well as accuracy to the point that it becomes automatic and does not require conscious effort.

Why is it important to see writing as a process, not a single event?

- providing children with a range of writing activities that support the organisation and development of their ideas is a positive way to engage children in writing tasks
- understanding writing as an iterative process, developing understanding about how to improve their work, is key to developing as writers
- teachers looking for opportunities in texts they are reading, or topics the children are enjoying, often find highly engaging contexts, which can provide real purpose and audience for children's work
- providing children with genuine purpose and audience for their writing can be highly effective in terms of motivation to write

Writing is a more challenging skill than reading.



A child's capacity to plan and monitoring their writing depends on whether they have enough cognitive resources available. The **Simple View of Writing** highlights the key groups of skills that work together as children write:

- text generation—which involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put those thoughts into words and sentences;
- transcription skills—which enable the writer to move oral language into written language; and
- executive functions—such as working memory, self-regulation, planning, problem-solving, and monitoring their writing.

The model places working memory in the centre, emphasising how it plays a role in enabling each of these skills to operate. Working memory is the cognitive process used when people hold information in mind and manipulate it. When writing, for example, working memory enables a sentence to be held in mind while each word is recalled or segmented and the letters are recorded on the page. Working memory has a limited capacity, therefore when children are in the early stages of writing development, they are not able to apply all the skills within The Simple View of Writing to produce high quality writing.

Handwriting

Practice should be extensive—a large amount of regular practice is required for children to achieve fluency in these skills. Achieving the necessary quantity of practice requires children to be motivated and fully engaged in improving their writing. Ensure practice is purposeful by targeting letters which are frequently formed inaccurately.


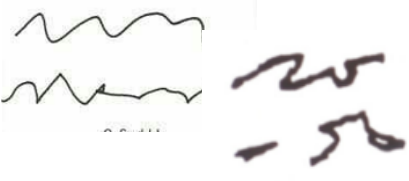


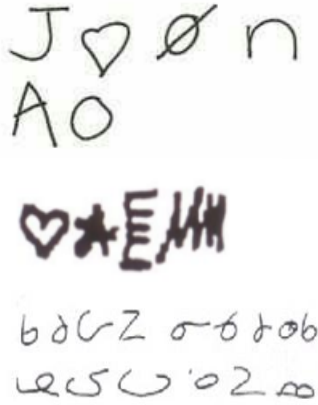

Practice should be supported by effective feedback—teachers can support children to practise effectively by providing opportunities for effective feedback. Feedback should:


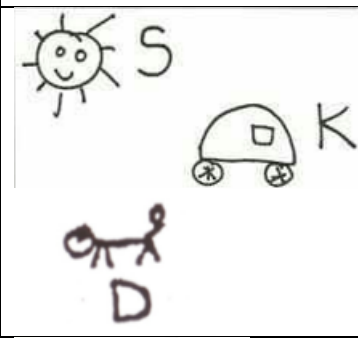



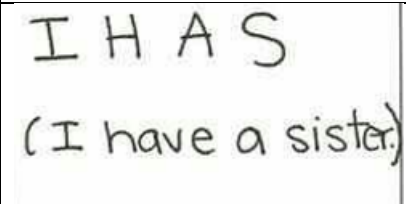
- be specific, accurate, and clear (for example: 'It was good because you joined up your letters correctly' rather than 'Your handwriting is getting neater');
- compare what a child is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (for example: 'I can see you focused on making sure you crossed your "t"s, as you remembered more often than last time');
- encourage and support further effort;
- be given sparingly so that it is meaningful; and
- provide specific guidance on how to improve rather than just telling children when they are incorrect (for example: 'Next time, you should make sure that all of your "t"s are crossed. This is where you put the cross').

It is important that children can form the letters of the alphabet correctly. This means knowing the correct starting point for each letter and following the correct movement pathways. Errors in letter formation are often the source of handwriting difficulties in children, but are not always obvious to a reader after the event of writing. Observations of the child's process of letter formation need to be undertaken so that incorrect patterns do not become embedded, leading to difficulties with fluency later on. Ten letters seem more susceptible to formation errors and may require additional attention: i, j, a, d, g, r, n, m, h, and z.


Appendix 2

Developmental stages of writing

| Developmental stages | | What the child might do | What it may look like | What to model and teach next |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| 1 A/B/C | Random scribbling | Create marks starting any place on the page |  | Mark making left to right |
| 2 A/B/C | Controlled scribbling | Marks made progress from left to right Resembles writing |  | Circular shapes going anti-clockwise where appropriate |
| 3 A/B/C | Circular scribbling | Creates circles or ovals |  | Drawing simple images to convey a meaning verbally and share |
| 4 | Drawing | Pictures tell a story or convey a message |  | Holding a pencil correctly Good posture Listening to children carefully talk about images they have drawn |
| 5 | Mock letters | Can be personal or conventional symbols or attempts at letters with extra/incomplete lines or markings |  | The first letter of their name as a capital |
| 6 Ditty | Letter string | Conventional letters formed moving left to right and progressively downward No separation or correlation with words or sounds |  | Continuing learning letter formation Good posture Pencil grip Supporting hand |

| Developmental stages | | What the child might do | What it may look like | What to model and teach next |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 7 Ditty | Separated attempts at words | Groups of letters with space in between to resemble words |  | Modelling sentence-like structures Hear and identify initial sounds using complete phoneme frames Labelling pictures with initial sounds |
| 8 Ditty | Picture labelling | A picture's beginning sound is matched to a letter |  | Copying print Ensuring modelled print and labels in correct font Treasure/scavenger hunt for words to copy (labelling words so it is in context) |
| 9 Red | Awareness of environmental print | Environmental print copied |  | Full first name practise through copying Correct letter formation |
| 10 Red | Copies print | Name copied |  | Initial sounds identified and secured with possible two word phrases |
| 11 Red | Transitional stage spelling or invented spelling | First letter of a word is used to represent the word |  | Continue with a phrase focusing on initial sounds without phoneme frame Listen to oral segmenting and identify end sound |
| 12 Red | Uses first letter of word in group of words | First letter of a word is used to represent the words |  | Using phoneme frames identify ending letters orally and visually Using visuals a means of context so words are not in isolation |

| Developmental stages | | What the child might do | What it may look like | What to model and teach next |
|----------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 13 | Uses beginning letter and ending letter to represent a word | Labels drawings and pictures with beginning and end sounds | <p>A hand-drawn bear with the label 'Br' next to it. Below the bear is a hand-drawn cat with the label 'C.T' below it.</p> | Continue with a phrase focusing on initial and ending sounds without phoneme frame Listen to oral segmenting and identify medial sound Using phoneme frames identify medial letters orally and visually Using visuals a means of context so words are not in isolation |
| 14 | Hears a medial sound | Writes beginning, medial and ending letters medial sound being consonant | <p>Hand-drawn wavy lines above the word 'GRS'.</p> | Develop accuracy in spelling for 3 to 4 sound words using phoneme frames in context |
| 15 | Medial vowel in correct position | Incorrect vowel written | <p>Hand-drawn wavy lines above the word 'GRES'.</p> | Groups of words to create a phrase linked to first person or description that are not abstract |
| 16 | Beginning , medial and ending letters | Writing groups of letters with some inaccuracies to represent words | <p>Hand-drawn text: 'I see the sci', 'I LIK TO PIK FLRS'.</p> | Groups of words to create a phrase linked to first person or description that may be more abstract Subject/verb agreement |
| 17 | Phrase writing/sentence-like form | Plausible phonic attempts with some spacing | <p>Hand-drawn text: 'My nis dres', drawing of a girl, 'Rabit in The Sun'.</p> | Subject/verb agreement |

| Developmental stages | | What the child might do | What it may look like | What to model and teach next |
|----------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 18 | Whole sentence writing develops | May use punctuation Known words spelled correctly or words using known sounds/letters | <p>This pumKn is min</p>  | Grammatically accurate sentence editing |
| 19 | Grammatically accurate sentence writing | Construction of words into sentence formation writing is legible and uses punctuation | | |

Appendix 3

Why writing is important

Writing is an important lifelong skill. Children need to learn to write so they can communicate and express themselves.

Formal writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing). Before this point adults can provide lots of meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the written word and to support them to understand that symbols carry meaning.

Research shows that for writing to develop, you should provide young children with opportunities to build their physical strength and control in the core, upper body, hands and fingers.

Writing develops alongside all learning areas, especially communication and language, reading and mathematics. When you read texts, you show that print carries meaning. When you write, you explain what decisions you are making in your mind, so children understand how they share thoughts, ideas and feelings. As you model writing you support children to:

- understand language patterns
- develop their thinking skills
- solve problems
- make sense of their experiences

Listening to children talking and modelling how to write down the words they say helps children to see how sounds become words on paper. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

What this means in practice

Children learn that you can communicate through writing, and that marks have meaning, by watching you write. You could write labels in front of them, while you explain, the direction of print, or what the word is. Use these labels for everyday objects the children are interested in. For example, cars, pram or bike park.

To support transcription, give children opportunities to develop finger strength. In the early stages children need lots of fun, play activities. Provide lots of activities to work at a large scale using brushes on boards outside, before they move on to using chunky crayons, chalk or pencils. For example, to develop finger strength in preparation for writing, show them activities like manipulating Playdoh, completing puzzles or threading activities.

Help children develop fine motor skills to grasp, hold, and strengthen fingers and thumbs by scrunching paper and using pick-up tools. For example, use big tweezers to pick up plastic shapes. Give them opportunities to develop core strength and 'muscle isolation', a crucial first step towards writing. Activities like reaching across the body to put on socks and shoes help children to use their right, or left, body side without the other side moving at the same time. Also, encourage activities like climbing, throwing and catching. Children move through stages in their mark making. Gradually muscle control becomes more defined until they develop an ability to use straight lines and curves to form symbols.

Generally, 0 to 2 year olds enjoy sensory activities, establishing fun and fascination with shapes, marks, letters and numbers. Share books, repeating words, phrases and rhymes.

Play finger games like 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Concentrate on activities that could lead to writing, like making marks with large toys, or with fingers in sand.

Generally, 2 to 3 year olds like retelling favourite stories and events. Capture these through drawing lines, dots and circles. Promote physical development, communication and understanding. If children use a particular dominant hand, encourage them. This age group should learn 'mark-making'.

Generally, 3 to 4 year olds start behaving like writers, making wavy lines and distinct separate marks. If children show an interest and want to write, it is crucial that they should develop hand and finger strength to hold a chunky crayon or pencil comfortably and with control. Eventually they may be able to make attempts to write some very familiar letters, for example from their name.

Preschool children are not expected to achieve conventional spelling patterns, it is the attempt that counts, and the realisation that marks have meaning.

If children show an interest in writing letters, you can support them to be ready for the next stage of their learning by encouraging them to hold a pencil correctly and form the letter starting in the right place and moving in the right direction. This will support them to develop good habits for the future. Support children's composition by reading stories, talking to children, re-phrasing what they have said and modelling correct sentence structure. This will support children to share their ideas and help them to develop an understanding of how sentences are formed.

Summary

- Writing is a lifelong skill, allowing children to share thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- Children need hand-eye coordination and finger strength before learning to write.
- Younger children should learn basic mark-making and older children to make plausible attempts at capturing some sounds they hear in words.
- Writing builds on children's understanding of language and how print works.
- You should model writing and explain your thinking and decision making to help children understand what happens as you write and then they can begin to copy you.

Next steps

- Think about the opportunities you give children to develop muscle strength.
- Motivate children to make plausible attempts to behave like a writer, and to draw freely making marks that have meaning.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities using a range of tools and media.
- Plan small muscle coordination for hands and fingers, through things like using scissors, learning to sew, eating with cutlery, using small painting brushes or drawing pencils and crayons.

Appendix 4

Phoneme frames

A phoneme frame is one of the best resources to use to get children beginning to read and write words. They are a simple idea, but an extremely effective one. What is a phoneme frame?



A phoneme frame is a rectangular grid with several squares side by side. It is used for reading and writing simple words in early phonics. They are used for splitting up the phonemes (sounds) of words, one phoneme per box. For example, the word 'dog' would be written 'd-o-g', with one phoneme per three boxes.

Probably the most common phoneme frame you will see has three boxes in a line. These phoneme frames are ideal for splitting up the sounds in CVC words – ('consonant vowel consonant' words). Examples could be 'dog', 'pig' and 'van'.

You also get phoneme frames that have 2 boxes for words such as 'it' and 'at' (VC – vowel consonant words). You also get some with four boxes, or even five or more. In theory, a phoneme frame could be as long as was required to fit in a word in the English language.

The big idea of a phoneme frame is to add structure to building words. In particular, they provide:

- A really visual structure for children to 'see' how words are made of sounds
- A simple physical structure to help children build words on using things like magnetic letters, or letter tiles
- A practical way to explore the initial, middle and end sounds in words
- They are simple to use
- They are versatile, and you can use them with children that are at different phonic stages.

They are great for all children, but particularly those that are visual learners, and also those that are kinaesthetic and engage in building and making words. The phoneme frames really help children to segment words without missing out any sounds.

Phoneme frames are best to be introduced in an adult-led context, although there is later on a lot of scope for using them in a range of ways and in independent contexts. Possible activities:

- Build the word – children try to copy a word and sound it out
- Give them a word and they build/write it in the frame

- Give them a word, and give them two letters in the frame. Can they work out the other phoneme. This could be initial, middle or end sounds.
- Create lots of words that start with the same phoneme

Before children learn to write words, they need to orally segment. Segmenting is simply the skill of separating words up into their component sounds. For example, 'pig' becomes 'p-i-g'. 'Dog' becomes 'd-o-g'.

There are many issues that might occur when you teach segmenting. Here are some, and what you can do about it:

- *Children guessing!* This will happen to some degree with all children when they start.
- *Saying the last/middle sound wrong.* This is very common.

Skills and progression

- **Isolating phonemes (Ages 5-7)**
This skill involves isolating where in a word a specific sound resides. For example, in the word 'bug' where is the /g/ sound located—at the beginning, middle or end? The most difficulty and last kind of isolation to be learned is identifying phonemes in the middle of words. Remember that this exercise is done orally, not using letters on paper and is harder for young children than it sounds.
- **Deleting phonemes (Ages 6-7)**
If we remove the last sound from the word 'cart', what word are we left with? If a child understands that the word 'car' is left over then they can delete phonemes.
- **Substituting phonemes (Ages 6-7)**
This skill involves being able to replace one sound in a word with another and recognising the new meaning. For example, if we replace the /m/ sound in the word stem with the /p/ sound, what new word do we have?

Segmenting at the sentence level

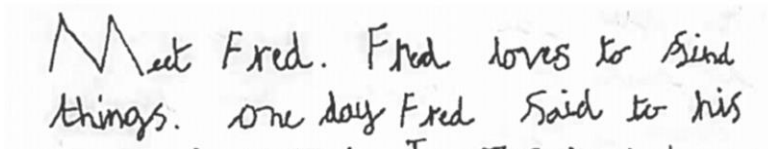
- Children count the number of words in a given sentence. Touch each word as they count, notice the spaces between words. This teaches children that words work together to make up a sentence. We need words to work together to make what we read and what we say make sense.
- Write a variety of sentences on a piece of paper. Then, cut each word apart and work together to put the sentences back together. Not only does this strengthen understanding of the power of a word, it's also an engaging way to work on semantics (the meaning of a word). All these words need to go in a specific order so that they make sense.

Appendix 5

The journey of sentence writing

From this . . .

. . . to this



What must a child be able to do to write a sentence?

What order would a child be typically taught these steps?

Motor skills are fundamental.

- movements and actions of the muscles
- typically categorised into:
 - **gross motor** (larger body parts and movements)
 - **fine motor** (smaller body parts, movements and actions)
- both motor skills **work together** to provide coordination

What is a sentence?

- Taken from the National Curriculum glossary
- *'A sentence is a group of words which are grammatically connected to each other but not to any words outside the sentence.'*

What should a sentence include?

- a group of words that make sense on their own
- begin with a capital letter and end with a punctuation mark
- a subject (unless it is a command) and a verb

Why do we need to clarify this?

- we cannot expect children to make progress if we do not know and understand what we are teaching

What does a sentence visually look like?

- they can be short or long
- there are no correct number of words it should be
- the length of the sentence depends on what you want to say and the effect you want to achieve

All aspects of sentence writing are different, needing different strategies and next steps

| Spelling | Handwriting | Content | Technicality |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Segmenting words to spell | Formation of lower case letters | Ordering words correctly-grammatically accurate | Writing a complete sentence |
| Knowing letter sounds | Formation of capital letters | Thinking of own content | Use of punctuation |
| Know phoneme to grapheme correspondence | | | Spaces between words |

- help them generate sentences
- model what a sentence looks like
- begin with a capital, asking what we need and why
- end with a punctuation mark, asking what we need and why
- remind of use of finger spaces

Possible implications

- **put ideas** into their heads
- help them generate **grammatically accurate** sentences
- **model** what a sentence looks like without narrative/reasons
- begin with a capital, asking what we need and why **as rote**
- end with a punctuation mark, asking what we need and why **as rote**
- remind of use of **finger spaces**

What was the purpose of this understanding?

- every class will have a child over the year that is at the beginning of this journey, we all need to be skilled in this area regardless of year group
- to secure a consistent understanding in the progression of skills in early writing
- to ensure children are completing purposeful learning activities that meet their needs, allowing them to succeed and make progress
- to ensure marking and feedback is appropriate and relevant

Points to note

- the sequential steps are not always straight forward in a linear progression – this is a guide, it is not an assessment process, we have a criteria for this purpose
- skills will only become embedded if children are given the opportunities to consolidate their learning in a number of ways with a degree of independence
- without realising we can over scaffold and model, doing it for them

Talk for Writing strategy

- it is not always appropriate for all children to be expected to write a retell or innovation
- there has been a shift in focus in secure fit from the content to the technical accuracy
- less is more, children should be taught to secure a limited number of sentences before writing greater amounts