

Writing Policy

Rationale

'Children should learn to communicate meaning through enjoyable writing activities, whereby they express themselves in writing both imaginatively and factually and including digital resources' (NI Curriculum).

Writing is an essential tool in the learning process. Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills we can equip our children to use writing across the range of curricular activities in which they are involved.

Aims

- To develop the ability to write effectively in various forms according to the purpose and audience.
- To help children to write to express their emotions, convey their thoughts and feeling and present evidence of research.
- To develop experiences and to equip the children to use writing across the range of curricular activities.
- To promote conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

Classroom Environment

Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School strives to provide a stimulating environment where children are inspired to write through a wide variety of resources and methods. Children will have the opportunity to see the teacher writing and sharing the process leading to the final outcome.

In the writing area within the foundation stage classrooms and through structured play activities, pupils are encouraged to, "have a go" and experiment with different styles and different audiences. This area has a variety of coloured paper, crayons, chalk, card etc. and also contains a range of text on display so that pupils have the opportunity to "copy" e.g., menus, invitations, birthday cards, shopping lists, recipes etc. writing is similarly advocated within the role play area.

Dictionaries are available for the pupils in all key stages, with thesauri in key stage two classrooms. Each classroom is, in fact, a "writing rich" environment, where children are encouraged to write for themselves, experiment with writing and are provided with opportunities to discuss their writing with their teacher and each other. Classrooms are well resourced with experimental or emergent writing areas containing materials such as magnetic letters and reference materials such as word books, dictionaries, word banks of key words, word walls and the use of word processors, interactive whiteboards and I -pads for all children.

Children's writing is displayed regularly and linked to topics across the curriculum. Big books or anthologies of children's work are compiled for others to read. This work is displayed and used in library areas to emphasise the worth placed on pupils writing.

Throughout the classrooms, we all aim to have a variety of handwriting displayed - not only that which is word-processed. Children need to see good examples of handwriting, so teachers and classroom assistants should model suitable handwriting at every opportunity. Children need to experience different fonts so that they recognise letters in different styles, thus; when computer generated signs, posters and labels are produced, a variety of fonts should be used.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

We adopt a structured approach to the process of teaching selected forms of writing, as follows:

- **Familiarisation** - (exposure to many samples of genres)
- **Problem Solving** - (exploring text genre)
- **Agreeing success criteria for the piece of writing**
- **Modelled writing** - (teacher writing for children)
- **Shared writing** - (teacher writing with the children)
- **Guided writing** - (teacher supporting children's writing)
- **Independent writing** - (children writing on their own)
- **Feedback from pupil against success criteria**
- **Peer assessment using the language of the form.**

Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing sessions take place across all age groups and all genres of writing. Writing sessions include whole - class/group planning and discussion where ideas are shared and recorded through the use of writing frames, mind mapping and brain storming.

Modelled Writing

- The teacher demonstrates writing a text
- The teacher verbalises thoughts and actions involved to give an insight into a writer's mind
- The teacher is responsible for generating and recording ideas
- Pupils are observers.

Shared Writing

- The teacher and pupils collaboratively compose a text
- Pupils ideas and suggestions are considered and included
- The teacher takes the responsibility for recording.

Interactive Writing

- Teachers and pupils jointly compose a shared, large print text
- The teacher records the words students know and engages pupils in the problem solving of challenging words
- Teaching focuses on recording - spelling and handwriting.

Guided Writing

- Short teaching sessions to focus on an aspect of writing
- Pupils construct their own texts
- Teacher guided, responds and extends pupils thinking.

In this school it is considered that guided writing provides a supported step towards independent writing. Teachers work with a group of children at a similar ability level in writing, targeting teaching on particular objectives at an appropriate level. The pupils make decisions and compose and revise their own texts. Guided writing therefore supports; improves (through revising, editing and evaluating) and facilitates differentiation.

Various forms of writing are on display, so that children become familiar with the structure and language forms, e.g., letters, diaries, lists, invitations, notes, menus, recipes, newspapers, reports. Stimuli for writing are used, e.g., artefacts, drama, visitors, competitions, first - hand experience etc.

Learning intentions and success criteria are also shared with the children before they begin writing tasks. Teachers and pupils use the agreed success criteria to assess learning and highlight areas for improvement. Children are made aware of target audiences before beginning a writing task. They are encouraged to share their work with their peers, in school and with their families.

Children write in various genres, for a variety of purposes, e.g., to narrate, entertain, amuse, retell events, instruct and explain, classify and describe, inform and complain and to persuade or argue.

Children write for other curriculum areas, themselves, their peers, younger pupils, assemblies, parents and other adults as well as for the wider community, e.g., letters, brochures and guides, competitions, display etc. Children are also provided with opportunities to engage in collaborative writing working in pairs or small groups. This approach allows children to develop their co-operative and thinking skills in a safe and secure setting.

Writing sessions will include time for discussion, planning and redrafting. Teacher's comments, oral or written, on pupils writing should be as positive as possible. From Year 3 children are encouraged to revise and redraft which is initially teacher led, progressing to children becoming more independent. Not all writing sessions end with a written task. This may be with the teacher, whole class, small groups or independently. Some writing is completed solely for the individual and therefore no redrafting is required, e.g., notes for personal information. Redrafting should be used in a positive way and not become a chore. Word processors will also be used as an aid to writing. Grammar, spelling and punctuation will be taught both in the context of the individual's writing and as a discreet class lesson.

Spelling

Spellings are taught through the look, say, cover, write and check method from year 3 and assessed through weekly dictations/tests and an annual standardised test.

Children from an early stage are encouraged to "have a go" and try to spell words for themselves within a safe environment. Teaching strategies e.g., onset and rime are also used within classrooms.

Materials such as magnetic letters, Alpha and Omega pack, Word Shark, sound directory flip charts, spell checkers and phonic cubes are used to support children experiencing difficulties.

Handwriting

'From the earliest mark-making, children are showing an understanding that messages can be recorded. As they realise that print carries a constant message, they recognise the need for more conventional forms of handwriting which other people can read.'
(Handwriting in the Foundation Stage)

Children progress through a range of developmental stages before they have the necessary hand eye co-ordination, fine motor skills and visual discrimination to create a conventional handwriting style.

In Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School, we aim to encourage handwriting which develops from an early print to a joined style and ultimately to an individual writing style which is neat and legible. Handwriting should display knowledge of lower and upper case letter formation, size and spacing.

In the Foundation Stage, handwriting is modelled by the teacher. Children are engaged in practical guided activities so that they develop increased control over the formation of letters.

In Key Stage 1 the Nelson Handwriting scheme is introduced. Joined handwriting is modelled and practised regularly with the aim that the children will develop a legible style.

In Key Stage 2 handwriting pens are introduced, initially for handwriting practise progressing to daily use in other curricular areas, so that the children develop a swift and legible style of handwriting.

Assessment of the writing process

We will try to help the children to read each other's work and to comment constructively. Children will be encouraged to collaborate with each other as they develop their writing and during the refining of their work. This will help them to exchange ideas and will stimulate their thinking.

All aspects of work in Literacy should be geared to the needs of the individual child and his/her attainment and achievement will have to be carefully assessed. In school we use a range of assessment techniques, which are administered to ensure that children are working to the best of their ability, that teaching methods are appropriate and to enable us to provide further intervention or progression. As is age and stage appropriate, we will work with pupils to set targets for improvement.