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### Policy Connections

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum & School Organisation Policy, the Supplementary Guidance for Policies (covering Philosophy & Ethos; Audience; Monitoring & Evaluation of Curriculum Subjects; Assessment, Recording & Reporting and Supporting Learning Beyond the Classroom), English policy and Schemes of Work and subject mapping for English which set out in detail what pupils in different Key Stage ability ranges will be taught.

### Aims and Purpose of Study

Writing is a tool for everyday life, helping pupils to communicate their ideas to others. Using the National Curriculum National Programmes of Study for writing it is our aim:

1. To enhance pupils understanding of the value of writing for a range of different purposes - as a means of remembering, communicating, organising and developing ideas and information.
2. To develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness, through writing.
3. To regard writing as a pleasurable and purposeful activity.

These aims are consistent with our school philosophy and take account of the National Curriculum and Local Authority curriculum guidance.

The programme of study for writing for each key stage consists of 2 dimensions; transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) and it is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions. (National Curriculum for English 2013).

### Rationale for teaching and learning of Writing

In order to become successful and independent writers, pupils need to possess a variety of skills and knowledge. These are:

1. An ability to differentiate between print and pictures
2. To understand the connections between speech and writing
3. A good visual and auditory memory
4. A knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and how to write them
5. An understanding of morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words
6. An understanding of clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context and a good comprehension of vocabulary and grammar.

Not all of our pupils will become writers in the conventional sense; manipulating a writing tool to communicate information or thoughts and feeling may not be possible. In these instances, alternative communication aids will be used and the fine motor skills needed to utilise this equipment will be targeted. In all cases, we must be sensitive to the pupils' needs and priority areas of development. For the vast majority of pupils fine motor skills are important in their own right and should be targeted where appropriate to support life-long learning skills. See the guidance section of this policy.

**The successful teaching of writing** – provides structured teaching of spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and the selection of words, in the context of writing for a purpose

### Key Stage 1

Pupils should be taught:

- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Composition (including planning, drafting & evaluating)
- Vocabulary grammar and Punctuation

By writing about

- Narratives involving personal experiences and those of others
- Real events
- Poetry
- Non-fiction for different purposes

### Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught:

- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Composition (including planning, drafting & evaluating)
- Vocabulary grammar and Punctuation

By writing about

- Narratives, creating settings, characters and plots
- Poetry
- Non-fiction; non narrative material using organisational devices

### Key Stage 3 & 4

Pupils should be taught:

- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Composition (including planning, drafting, evaluating, editing & proof reading )
- Vocabulary grammar and Punctuation

By writing about

- Narratives, settings, characters and atmosphere, using dialogue to convey character
- Poetry
- Non-fiction; using further organisational and presentational devices to structure text

Each Programme of Study is differentiated to allow all our pupils to access the content in a meaningful and realistic way. Further details of this can be found in the Schemes of Work for each Key Stage.

### Strategies for teaching writing

- **Shared Writing** – includes modelled writing when the teacher demonstrates how to write, commenting explicitly on what he/she is doing and why.  
shared writing – pupils contribute ideas and suggestions, while the teacher scribes to produce a shared text
- **Guided Writing** – where teacher works with a specific ability group to support them in applying principles they have learned in the shared sessions
- **Independent Writing** – where pupil work alone to practise and refine the skills acquired through shared and guided work
- **Collaborative Writing** – where pupils work together to produce a piece of written work

### School Schemes of Work for Writing

The Scheme of Work for Writing details specific level descriptors and teaching strategies on a developmental basis. The Scheme of Work describes the Stages of Writing as follows (pre NC and NC levels noted):

Stage 1 – pre-writing/pre-one word communication (P1-P3)

Stage 2 – role play writing (P4-P7)

Stage 3 – experimental writing (P8, Year 1 programme of study)

Stage 4 – early writing (Year 2 and above Programme of Study)

### Method of delivery

The curriculum organisation and structure is outlined in the policy document entitled 'Curriculum and School Organisation'. The procedures for planning, teaching and learning strategies, monitoring and evaluation are outlined therein.

In relation to Writing specific considerations apply to Key Stages as outlined below:

### Early Years Foundation Stage

Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) follow the educational programmes outlined in the framework for the EYFS. The strands personal, social, emotional development, communication and language and literacy, physical development give pupils opportunities to play and explore and learn in an active and creative way. The document 'Development Matters' supports the planning and assessment of activities. These opportunities will provide broad and balanced experiences that will prepare pupils for the KS1 English curriculum.

### Key Stage 1, 2, 3 & 4

Writing is planned and delivered, as practical and appropriate elements within the wider context of the Schemes of Work for English and the National Curriculum for English. Teachers plan a unit of work, which outlines the texts, and learning objectives. The short term planning specifies the focus, activities and learning outcomes for each lesson. Where appropriate learning outcomes linked to writing for individual pupils can be taught in Personalised Learning Outcome Time.

### **F.E. Centre**

Students continue to develop writing skills through schemes of work derived from their ASDAN accreditation units of work to embed and generalise functional skills alongside Entry Level descriptors. Students develop their awareness of a variety of literature by accessing texts, selected for their relevance to student maturity, chronological age and individual need. Most student's access studies at the relevant Entry Level in Literacy and, in addition to this, students will access relevant ASDAN challenges appropriate to their cognitive understanding, to gain credits towards obtaining their Personal Progress Award or Bronze and Silver Awards. Some students will gain functional skills accreditation in literacy throughout their 3 year course.

### **Guidance on teaching and learning of handwriting**

#### **Developmental levels of handwriting**

##### ***Role play Handwriter***

Experiments with handwriting and pencil grip. Enjoys tracing, copying and writing for fun.

##### ***Experimental Handwriter***

Attempts to formulate letters accurately. May reverse letters and may use upper and lowercase letters indiscriminately. Is confident that text and drawing are complimentary and are mutually supportive.

##### ***Early Handwriter***

Begins to develop an individual style of handwriting. Quality of handwriting may deteriorate when focusing on new demands of writing.

##### ***Transitional Handwriter***

Is aware of the importance and quality of handwriting. Controls basic formations and joins. Is aware of quality of handwriting is not maintained when focus is on other factors.

##### ***Conventional Handwriter***

Has individual and fluent handwriting. Is aware of the need to adapt handwriting according to the audience and purpose. Experiments with artistic or unusual scripts and computer generated graphics.

#### **Getting ready for handwriting**

The following skill sets demonstrate the nature of fine motor skill development and the activities suitable for priority target setting based on accurate assessment.

##### ***Skill 1***

Can open and close hands one at a time.

### *Suggested Activities:*

- Puppet play
- Finger rhymes
- Sorting activities
- Bean bags in boxes

### **Skill 2**

Can touch each finger with the thumb of the same hand.

### *Suggested Activities:*

- Tearing tissue paper and newspaper
- Using finger rhymes, finger play and puppets
- Printing using blocks
- Threading large and small beads
- Fastening buttons, zips, press studs, Velcro, laces and belt.
- Using typing and switch skills
- Peg boards.

### **Skill 3**

Can roll each wrist in turn.

### *Suggested Activities:*

- Rolling out clay, dough or plasticine
- Stirring with a large spoon
- Turning a skipping rope
- Brushing a dolls hair
- Whisking soap suds
- Twirling a hoop
- Shaking a dice or tambourine
- Undoing a screw top jar, using threading toys or screwdriver
- Playing with construction toys
- Tracing inside of circle shape with finger

### **Skill 4**

Can thread large beads

### *Suggested Activities:*

- Threading cardboard tubes onto a stick or rope
- Putting rings or quoits of various sizes onto a peg
- Using large lacing cards
- Winding thread around hooks
- Hanging clothes on pegs

### **Skill 5**

Can pick up small square bricks and make a tower.

### *Suggested Activities:*

- Using construction bricks, e.g. Duplo

- Posting boxes and shape sorters
- Simple jigsaw puzzles
- Balancing big bricks
- Inset boards
- Stacking beakers and barrels

### **Skill 6**

Can hold a pencil correctly.

*Suggested Activities:*

- Using finger puppets e.g. snapping crocodile
- Playing finger cymbals
- Practise correct procedure previous guidance
- Drawing skills – copying shapes & representational drawings
- Copying shapes in sequence 0 / \ - I +

### **Emergent writing**

Children should be encouraged to play at writing and 'have a go' – their attempts are praised and the child is asked to read their writing to the teacher. This is helpful in developing pencil control and handwriting skills. Pupils should be given the opportunity to use representational emergent writing skills as a means of writing. Value should be given to such writing, which may not in fact be legible and therefore staff may wish to underwrite examples of emergent writing to clarify its context. For some pupils with physical difficulties, emergent writing may be strings of computer-generated symbols, or symbols/pictures selected to form a sentence; thus the handwriting element is bypassed.

### **Use of Computing**

Computing is a useful tool for developing writing skills and for facilitating pupils with learning difficulties and motor problems to become more effective writers. Computer keyboards enable pupils who have difficulty with handwriting to write without being impaired by their physical difficulties. Programs allow pupils to generate and access 'word banks', develop phonetic and spelling skills and present work in a variety of forms. Use of handwriting software enables pupils to generate sentences by selecting whole words or symbols as well as produce writing in a joined up style. Staff can use programs to produce worksheets for pupils for individualised practice for pencil control and letter formation.

### **Handwriting and the National Curriculum**

Handwriting is one of the dimensions of transcription and is a requirement of the National Curriculum at all Key Stages and emphasises the importance of well-formed, legible handwriting. There has also been a gradual acceptance of the value of children beginning joined writing from a much earlier age. Non statutory guidance from the National Curriculum states that pupils should be using joined up handwriting throughout their independent writing. However, in the context of special educational needs, we feel it is appropriate to use exit flicks from an early stage, when children are proficient and fluent in their pencil control, and to consider the joining of letters, as appropriate, at a later stage, taking into account the child's individual development.

### **A perceptuo-motor approach – the importance of fluency**

Children need the opportunity to practise and develop writing through grapho-motor exercises – see LDA Write from the Start. It is important to offer pupils the opportunity to develop pencil-control skills via regular daily practice and homework opportunities. Tracing of letters does not help with letter formation, but is a tool to develop fine motor skills. It is more helpful in the longer term to give extended opportunity to develop fluency in the pattern of movement required to produce the correct formation of the letters.

### **Teaching letter formation**

It is crucial that pupils are taught to form letters correctly on a consistent basis to avoid children internalising incorrect formational habits. Formation of letters - See Nelson handwriting materials for guidance on formation of letters and the teacher's book. Information should be shared with parents to ensure consistent practice and homework opportunities – see attached 'Guidance for Parents'

Pupils should ideally learn to write letters alongside the teaching of grapheme-phoneme correspondences but where this is not appropriate, the order for presenting and teaching groups of letters (following practice 'patterns' to achieve fluency) is as follows:

#### **Group 1**

c a d g o q

#### **Group 2**

l h b k t f

#### **Group 3**

i r n m p

#### **Group 4**

e j s u w v y z x

### **Seating and Positions for Writing**

It is important that pupils are correctly seated when writing. Staff should consult occupational therapists, wherever possible and ensure that the following is taken care of:

- a well balanced position for both left and right-handers
- head upright not tilted
- back upright and slightly forward
- body square with the writing surface
- forearms away from body and relaxed
- both feet firmly on the floor
- forearms supported
- table should be at elbow height when seated.



### **Pencil Grip**

The pencil should be held lightly between finger and thumb; the second finger is used as a cushion underneath the pencil. The shaft of the pencil should rest between the base of the thumb and the first finger. All the fingers should lie underneath the pencil. The hand and arm should rest on the table. The freehand should hold the paper steady. It is important that pupils have the developed fine motor skills that will enable them to grip a pencil.

### ***Procedure for correct pencil grip***

1. Place pencil on the surface in front of pupil.
2. Ensure pencil is to left or right according to handedness
3. Ensure pencil point is facing the pupil.
4. Pick up the pencil with thumb and first finger just above the sharpened end.
5. Keep practising picking up the pencil this way until it is vertical.
6. Allow the pencil to fall back naturally into the writing position.



**NB an established pencil grip should not be corrected if it is functional and effective – unless it is damaging**

### **Establishing hand-dominance**

It is important to give children the opportunity to explore and use both hands as part of a developmental stage, which for pupils with learning difficulties will often last longer than it would for other children. Staff should observe and note information to ascertain hand dominance during play and creative activities and when using writing tools. If staff are confident that hand dominance is established then they should offer consistency in guidance to encourage the use of the dominant hand. If hand dominance is not evident then children should be encouraged to use their right hand for pencil skill work. Close consultation with occupational therapists is important to consider pupils needs on an individual basis.

### **Left-handers**

Left-handers will often need a softer pencil than a right-hander. Many problems left-handed children encounter can be solved by:

- Child holding pencil at least 2cm away from tip so not to obscure writing
- Choosing a writing tool that will not stick or tear the paper
- Checking for awkward posture when writing. Place paper to left of body midline and tilt the top clockwise up to 30 degrees. This should bring the hand into the correct writing position (underneath the writing line)

- Recognising that early left hand writers may have tendency to write from right to left - mark the starting point for them
- Left-handed children should be seated on the left hand side of a double desk or next to another left-hander to avoid elbows clashing

### Spelling

The National Curriculum incorporates statutory appendices on spelling. Many of the words listed as 'example words' for years 1 and 2, including almost all of those listed as 'exception words' are used frequently in pupils' writing and therefore important that pupils learn the correct spelling. The word lists for years 3-6 are statutory and contain a mixture of words that pupils frequently use in their writing.

It is important, however, that when teaching spelling teachers should consider the individual needs of a child, considering the use of more meaningful words such as names as an initial starting point for spelling.

Spellings should be a planned aspect of English and it is expected that students are given weekly spellings, the number of which should be determined by the needs of the individual child. Each pupil for whom spellings are appropriate should have a spelling book.

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### Bibliography

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