



The importance of writing

At Berkeley Primary School, writing is a crucial skill for children as it lays the foundation for their academic development and personal growth. Writing allows children to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions. It helps them to learn how to convey information clearly, improving their ability to communicate effectively. Writing compliments reading and oracy by reinforcing vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure. It deepens their understanding of language and helps them to become better readers. Writing gives children the opportunity to explore their imagination and creativity, through storytelling, poetry or nonfiction writing. As children learn to express themselves through writing, they gain a sense of accomplishment, which, in turn, helps to build their self-esteem. Writing is a fundamental skill across all subjects and it prepares children as they embark on their educational journey.

We create a positive writing environment where children can feel encouraged to express themselves. Around the school, we display examples of good writing that includes children's work to inspire and motivate.

The physical act of writing, especially handwriting, helps children develop fine motor skills which are essential for other tasks as children grow. Writing enables children to develop their emotional intelligence along with learning to think independently, form their own opinions and support their ideas with reasoning.

Writing at Berkeley Primary School will equip children with a skill that empowers them to succeed and thrive through their lives - for personal, academic and professional reasons.

Writing for enrichment and enjoyment

We want to enable every child in our school to fulfil their potential in writing through a language rich environment that promotes a culture of writing. We feel it is important to develop a love of books and high-quality literature in pupils in order to promote a love of writing that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment and enrich their lives.

We have a range of additional activities that enhance our day to day activities and promote the enjoyment of writing. These include:

- **Inspire afternoons** – parents are invited to share a lesson each term, we turn the school hall into a classroom and we all learn together.
- **Authors and visitors in school and visits to events** – we are fortunate to have accessed sessions with real authors / poets and other visitors, who lead sessions and assemblies with our children to develop their writing skills.
- **World Book Day, Roald Dahl Day and National Poetry Day** – we celebrate days like this each year with activities in school to promote writing.

Widening our children's vocabulary

Widening children's vocabulary is essential as it builds the foundation for their communication, comprehension and their overall academic success. We provide our children with a language rich environment which supports them to express themselves more precisely and effectively. Vocabulary helps them to articulate their thoughts, feelings and ideas more clearly. Our children come to school with varying levels of vocabulary knowledge so focussing on vocabulary at our school will bridge these gaps, ensuring children have equal opportunities for success.

We teach and display a 'word of the day'. This aims to expose our children to a wide range of vocabulary so that they are able to decipher new words and then use them when writing both informally and formally. With a more extensive vocabulary, children can write with greater variety and sophistication. We want our children to know and apply subject specific vocabulary to all areas of the wider curriculum. Ambitious vocabulary is taught within English lessons and other curriculum lessons, with new subject specific vocabulary embedded daily and it is applied in various situations. Daily vocabulary activities linked to the words can include: exploring definitions, synonyms and antonyms, related words and ultimately the correct application of the new vocabulary in written pieces.

The writing journey at Berkeley Primary School

At Berkeley Primary School, we aim to inspire all of our pupils with a positive attitude towards English and towards the development of all of their writing skills. We want our pupils to gain enjoyment from challenge and to develop a willingness to learn. We want our pupils to be confident and competent users of the English language and to have a love of language; as part of this, we encourage children who speak additional languages to share these with their friends and staff when and if they wish to do so. Our teaching of writing will have an impact across the whole school curriculum, offering pupils opportunities to develop their skills through cross-curricular learning. Adults in the school team know that they are role models for children in their use of English.

In Nursery and Reception, we follow the DfE 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' and the non-statutory guidance in 'Development Matters'. Writing is found within 'Communication and Language', 'Physical Development' and 'Literacy', which are three of the seven areas of learning.

Year 1 - 6 writing is planned and taught following DfE statutory KS1 and KS2 English National Curriculum.

- Writing – transcription
 - spelling
 - handwriting
- Writing – composition
- Writing – vocab, grammar and punctuation

We have mapped our writing progression across all year groups and have a clearly structured weekly plan for English, laid out in year groups. The plans have been broken into the areas of reading, spelling, handwriting, composition, grammar and spoken language. As oracy plays an integral part to writing (they need to be able to say it before they can write it), spoken language (oracy) is fed through our planning.

Writing Lessons

Early Years (Nurs & Recp)

In the EYFS, the staff plan and thread English activities through continuous provision, enhanced provision and specific teaching opportunities. The children are taught and encouraged to write in planned teacher-led sessions and incidental activities, in the indoor and outdoor environments.

A variety of writing and mark-making materials (e.g. pencils, crayons, chalk, different size felt pens, paints) are available throughout the units and within different zones (e.g. indoor and outdoor construction has paper and clipboards). Physical development (fine and gross motor) activities planned provide opportunities for our children to develop their coordination, control, movement and precision - these are essential to developing the skills needed to write and be able to use a pen / pencil to write letters.

In Reception, we teach phonics and learning to write through the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' programme. Phonics is taught through a daily 30 minute session. This allows children to learn strategies to support early reading, writing and spelling. The children learn to link the sounds to the letters of the alphabet and graphemes, they use their phonic knowledge to blend and segment words for reading and writing. They are also taught that some words are not phonetically correct and are therefore learnt as 'tricky' words, such as come, said and when. Independent spelling and writing is a specific part of phonics lessons, adult lead in small groups at tables. Children are taught how to hold writing tools and make marks using these tools and sit correctly. The amount children write builds across the year, from mark-making, to individual letters, to cvc words, to more complex words, to phrases and sentences.

The staff ensure the EYFS units have a language rich environment, to develop children's confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations. A wide range of reading materials and written word are displayed and shared with the children (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest and our classrooms are text rich.

On an ongoing basis, Foundation Stage practitioners make and record observations of children's achievements, which is shared with parents. This is analysed and checked regularly in order to ensure curriculum coverage and as one way to identify next steps for children.

<p>Year 1</p>	<p>The approach to writing continues with learning to write through the ‘Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised’ programme. Phonics continues to be taught through a daily 30 minute session. This allows children to learn strategies to support early reading, writing and spelling. The children learn more complex graphemes, they use their phonic knowledge to blend and segment words for reading and writing.</p> <p>They are also taught that some words are not phonetically correct and are therefore learnt as ‘tricky’ words, such as once, because and should. Independent spelling and writing is a specific part of phonics lessons. The amount children write builds across the year, from more complex graphemes (e.g. alternative graphemes like ai/eigh/aigh), to using more complex phrases and sentences, to writing several sentences that are linked together, using conjunctions.</p> <p>Children also use their writing skills to write in response to texts they are reading, using words that they have the phonetic knowledge to spell. Children will learn and be able to correctly verbalise more complex words, including subject specific words (e.g. transparent and translucent in science) that they do not currently have the phonetic knowledge to spell, so we would not expect them to write these words. They will write in the wider curriculum subjects, when they have the phonetic knowledge to do so.</p>
<p>Year 2 - 6</p>	<p>Our writing starts from something that has inspired us. Mostly this is a book, but it may be a short film or a practical experience like a visit or a visitor (e.g. a report from a geography field trip to the Humber Bridge or a recount from a trip to a farm). We explore, un-pick and discuss the resource in great depth; vocabulary, spelling and grammar elements, features of a genre, author tone and voice, character, setting, audience, plot development, structures. This enables our children to understand the features of writing.</p> <p>Across the school we have carefully planned opportunities that ensure our writing varies in length, complexity and genre. We write a range of fiction, non-fiction, poems, newspapers, scripts (for plays and podcasts).</p> <p>Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation objectives are planned for within units and taught discretely. To maximise learning, grammar objectives are often linked to the style or genre being taught. It is vital that children see the link between grammar and writing and opportunities are built in throughout the teaching sequence. This learning builds to the children then applying this knowledge within a specific piece of writing and future writing, recapping as necessary to ensure objectives are learnt at the correct point in time.</p> <p>In writing lessons, we use modelled, shared and guided writing to teach the children how to meet the objectives for writing, using the knowledge gained from our genre exploration. The features and layouts of a full range of writing genres are taught in both fiction and non-fiction, with planned opportunities to write freely in these genres and in other curriculum areas.</p> <p>We use tools like picture prompts, mind mapping, scaffolding, story maps or graphic organisers to teach children to organise their thoughts and to prepare them for writing. The children then use these to write for a purpose and audience with varying formats.</p> <p>Our school uses double-page spreads regularly to pull learning together at the end of a unit (within English and other subject areas).</p> <p>Children have the opportunity to up level, edit (e.g. purple pen, post it notes, editing flaps) and improve their work, looking at content, grammar, structure, spelling, handwriting, vocabulary). This is done through teacher feedback, paired talk, peer-assessment and self-assessment. Where relevant, children will produce a final best copy of a piece of work, either handwritten or word processed.</p> <p>We celebrate success (e.g. showing to another teacher, on a display, copy to parent, sharing in celebration assembly) to boost confidence and ensure writing is high-status and important in our school.</p>

Spelling

Spelling is taught each week in Y2-Y6, using the Spelling Shed resources (Year 6 also use additional resources). The scheme has been created following key National Curriculum objectives and will take children through the statutory and non-statutory spelling lists in each age phase. The whole-school scheme for spelling gives 100% coverage of the National Curriculum including all statutory words and spelling rules. The scheme is broken up into a weekly progression with a Spelling Shed list for each week. In Year 2 - 4 it is taught for at least 10 minutes daily. In Year 5 - 6, it is taught three times a week and followed up independently during the other two days. At least once a week, a spelling activity is recorded in English books. Practice activities may be planned for in other times, for example in guided reading. Ten weekly spellings with the spelling pattern for that week are given out and sent home to practise and children are expected to learn them, but there is no formal weekly spelling test. Spelling patterns and words will be continually assessed throughout the week.

Children's growing understanding of spelling patterns is only valuable if they go on to apply it in their independent writing in all subject areas. This process is supported through:

- Shared writing: the teacher demonstrates how to apply spelling strategies while writing and teaches proofreading skills.
- Guided and independent writing.
- Proofreading; children in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught how to proofread their work and how to check words using a dictionary.
- Teaching and practising handwriting; learning and practising a fluent, joined style will support the children's spelling development (joined from Year 2).

Handwriting

We are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care with our cursive/joined-up handwriting style. Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with thinking. All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books. From Year 1, we use Letter-join as the main resource, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum (see Handwriting Policy and English planning for more detail).

EYFS: Early Years teach handwriting using the printed method. Staff use Little Wandle formation phase for handwriting practice:

- two to three weekly sessions
- movements to enhance gross and fine motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing, making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets
- letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary

YEAR 1: Staff use the Letter-join scheme. Teaching will continue through weekly sessions covering:

- gross and fine motor skills exercises
- printed handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice
- numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice
- cursive patterns and cursive letters are then introduced in preparation for Module 3 (Year 2)

YEAR 2: Module 3 introduces children to cursive letters and how to join them, weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes covering:

- letter formation - cursive letters and words, letter families, high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences, dictation exercises

YEARS 3 TO 6: More advanced handwriting techniques, weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- cursive handwriting re-enforcement
- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and speedy handwriting writing

Assessment

We assess children's writing formatively through the teaching units. This enables us to tailor our planning to meet children's next steps and provide individual feedback and support to enable children to make progress with their writing.

Each term, we review children's writing, moderate these as a year group, using the Local Authority (LA) exemplification materials. We also attend LA writing moderation sessions throughout the year. Each child is given a summative writing judgement termly, which is recorded on Insight.

At the end of Reception, we use the DfE maths criteria to provide an end of EYFS summative judgement. This is reported to the DfE and parents.

In Year 6, the children complete their SATs tests. These are national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in which there are two writing related papers: 'Spelling' and 'Grammar and Punctuation'. We use the DfE writing criteria to provide an end of Key Stage 2 summative teacher writing judgement, based on the children's writing throughout Year 6. The LA select schools each year to have the Year 6 writing checked by trained moderators, and we are chosen as part of this cycle. Parents are informed of these outcomes and the results are passed on to the children's secondary school.

Parents are informed throughout the year about their child's progress in writing, through parent consultation meetings and their school report.

Additional support for those children that need it

We are forensic in our approach to writing and our staff conduct regular assessments to identify children that are not on track and need additional support. Teachers and Teaching Assistants throughout school are all trained in supporting children with their writing.

Our SENDCO, EAL and Writing Leaders are on hand to advise teaching teams as needed and support their work in identifying any factors making progress difficult and finding solutions. There can be many different reasons that children experience barriers to writing. Individual support plans may be written and are tailored to each child's specific needs. These plans set out achievable goals and progress is monitored closely over time. Quality first teaching will be used in the first instance and appropriate scaffolding will be in place to support varying ability levels. These may include writing templates, EAL substitution grids, sentence starters or visual prompts. Small group interventions may be needed to provide focused instruction.

How carers can help

Carers are of course partners in their child's writing journey. We communicate with our parents to ensure they know what is happening with writing in school. We always let you know how well your child is doing and how you can support your child. Parents and carers of Berkeley Primary School children are encouraged to take an active role in developing their child's writing skills through engaging and practical activities.

Read and write together often. Reading with your child will expose them to different writing styles. You can discuss characters, settings and plots to inspire their own writing ideas. Show them how writing is part of everyday life by letting them see you write emails, notes or lists. Write letters or notes to your child and encourage them to reply. Provide prompts like "What would you do if you were invisible for a day?" or "What would it be like if everything was made of chocolate?" By making writing an enjoyable and regular part of daily life, you can help your child build confidence and skills that serve them throughout their education and beyond.