



Merrydale Junior School

Writing Policy 2023-24

Headteacher: Antony Corbett

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Policy Review Date:	September 2024	Antony Corbett
Ratified by Advisory Board:		
Lesley Butcher		

Writing Policy

Introduction

This policy reflects the school's aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of writing. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. It gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the National Curriculum which sets out the rationale for teaching each area of the English Curriculum and specifies the skills that will be developed for the majority of pupils within each year group.

This document is the outcome of consultation and review undertaken by the English subject leader, DSAT lead practitioner for English and with the staff of the school.

At Merrydale Junior School, we use the new 'National Curriculum for English' (2014) as the basis of our English programme.

Rationale

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an important, if not the most essential, role of a primary school.

At Merrydale Junior School, we are committed to nurturing our children to become highly effective communicators in order to succeed in our future world. We have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and is viewed as a key part of learning throughout school life and beyond. The effective learning of English is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p.6. National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p.10. National Curriculum)

Aims

By the end of Key Stage 2 we aim for a child to be able to:

- Write with **confidence, fluency** and **understanding**, demonstrating a range of **independent strategies** to self-monitor and correct.
- Acquire an **interest in words** and their meanings, developing a **growing vocabulary** in spoken and written forms.
- **Understand a range of text-types** and to be able to write in a **variety of styles and forms** appropriate to the situation (*becoming increasingly aware of the **purpose** and **audience** of writing*).
- Develop the powers of **imagination**, inventiveness and critical awareness.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The new English Programme of Study (2014) is based on 4 areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation

The new National Curriculum is divided into Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6).

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. The new National Curriculum 2014, gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key Stage under the following headings:

- Spoken language
- Reading - Word reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription, spelling, handwriting, presentation and composition
- Grammar and punctuation

This policy focuses specifically on:

- Writing – Transcription, spelling, handwriting, presentation and composition
- Grammar and punctuation

(Policy to be read in conjunction with the school's Reading Policy.)

Progression across KS2

Planning

It is the responsibility of each year group to plan the English learning for their pupils in the year group(s) that they teach.

Planning is based on:

- The National Curriculum (2014)
- A 'Novel-study' approach to teaching & learning ('S-Factor' Strategy for Success)
- The 'Writing Toolkits' (for each of the text-types)
- The key skills/grammar overview map (with year group expectations)

Each year group has their own specific scheme of work which outlines the novels used by that year group as a stimulus for writing; suggested text-types taught across that year group; and the key grammar objectives taken from Pie Corbett's teaching guide for progression in writing.

Across KS2, writing is taught in a range of ways:

Modelling Writing

The teacher talks aloud the thought processes as a writer. They explicitly model strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model various writing skills such as punctuation, rehearsal, proof-reading, editing & improving, vocabulary selection, sentence construction and paragraphing.

Shared Writing

This is a collaborative approach in which the pupils contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to write. The teacher models and teaches specific writing skills and there is the opportunity for discussion with the class to choose the most effective or suitable ideas.

Supported Composition

The children work in pairs to provide the next sentence of the text. This may follow on from the modelled or the shared writing process.

Guided Writing

When appropriate, pupils are grouped by writing ability. The teacher (or another adult) works with the group on a carefully selected task to support that group's particular targets and needs. This will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process rather than writing a complete piece.

Independent Writing

Children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text-type in their own writing. They are encouraged to plan, draft, write, edit and assess their own work, applying the skills they have learnt throughout the unit of work on that particular text-type.

Grammar

Grammar objectives are embedded into the curriculum as well as being revisited throughout relevant starters and/or discrete lessons (when needed).

Alan Peat's 'Exciting Sentences'

The 2014 National Curriculum set out expectations for children's writing skills. It makes clear that children need to be exploring a variety of sentence structures and draw on this learning when composing their own writing:

'Teachers should therefore be consolidating pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology. Teaching them to develop as writers involves teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence. Teachers should make sure that pupils build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing and the more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures from which they can draw to express their ideas.' (Lower Key Stage Two, Programme of Study forward, p. 23)

Alan Peat's 'exciting sentences' ensure that we are meeting this aspect of the National Curriculum, giving the children opportunities to explore a greater variety of sentence structures across KS2. In addition, children and teachers will have the opportunity to meet the expectations of the National Curriculum, exploring a range of punctuation in context. These sentence types, and wider use of punctuation, can then be applied and extended in their cross-curricular writing.

In order to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, we have a policy for progression which introduces these 'exciting sentences' at the right time to coincide with the expectations of the National Curriculum. Each of the sentence types is explored and extended throughout the year so that they are completely embedded in the child's sentence repertoire. Many of the sentence types can be applied to narrative, non-fiction and even poetry so children will have ample time to understand how the various sentence types can impact (excite/engage) their reader/s.

'Activating Acronyms'

In addition to the 'Exciting Sentences', we use the 'Activating Acronyms' to support children with a useful mnemonic to remember to include a range of sentence openers, conjunctions and figurative language within their writing. These show a clear expectation and progression across the Key Stage.

Novel-based Writing (& the ‘S’-Factor)

At Merrydale Junior School we use a ‘Novel-study’ approach to our teaching of writing. A high-quality text, that is read with the children over a number of weeks, is used as a stimulus for writing – with appropriate text-types and narrative elements being taught (closely linked to the text). This provides children with a clear context for their writing as well as giving them further exposure of effective writing (*vocabulary, punctuation, composition, structure, etc.*).

After reading the chosen novel, year group teams plan which text-types are best covered and which elements of story writing (narrative) could be taught. For example:

“Charlotte’s Web” – E.B. White (6-8 wks.)		
Text-type		Possible Skills to be taught discretely
Non-fiction text-types (2-3)	Letter <i>(of persuasion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modal verbs (<i>Must, Should, Could, etc.</i>) - Verbs (<i>Present tense</i>) - Conjunctions (<i>so, as, because, but, even though, despite, although, however</i>)
	Journalistic Writing <i>(Newspaper report)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct/Indirect speech - Fronted adverbials (<i>of time and location</i>) - Relative clauses (<i>who, which, that, whose, where</i>)
Story writing (Narrative) elements	Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inverted commas - Synonyms for ‘said’ - S.A.T.A.S. (<i>interspersing narrative</i>)
	Description of Setting <i>(Barn/Fayre)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanded noun phrases (<i>using adjectives <u>and</u> prepositions – e.g. the tall boy by the garden wall</i>) - Figurative language (M.A.P.O.S.) - Sentence openers (P.I.L.E.)

Our teaching cycle follows a **three-phase model** (which is *often* repeated over a unit of work):

Phase 1 – Familiarisation with the text-types

Phase 2 – Capturing ideas and planning

Phase 3 – Writing (including editing/improving) and presenting

The 3 key phases work together to develop knowledge, confidence and independence in writing.

Each unit of work usually begins with a 'cold write,' which requires the children to write a piece of work in the chosen text-type. This allows them to have a first attempt at the writing, demonstrating their prior knowledge. It also allows teachers to carry out 'assessment for learning' – identifying common areas of needs and highlighting specific areas of grammar/punctuation that need explicit teaching.

Teachers start the teaching cycle (Phase 1) sharing a model text-type (i.e. teacher-created "WAGOLL" – *'What a Good One Looks Like'*) linked to the class novel, which children explore to identify the language and structural features of the text-type being learnt. In explicitly sharing an agreed Success Criteria (to be displayed on the Working Wall) for the unit of work, children are made aware of the 'ingredients' that will be investigated and learnt over the following weeks – culminating in their own version of the text-type being covered. Children will commonly annotate (either as a group or individually) features of the text and be involved in co-constructing the agreed 'success criteria' for the unit of work to be covered. Teachers (and children) can also draw upon the key information in the school's 'Writing Toolkits' (*See appendices*).

Key skills, identified from the 'cold-write' (or previous learning), which are linked to the text-type, are then discretely taught in a number of sessions (Phase 2). These sessions may cover either grammatical skills or elements of punctuation which are necessary for the given text-type.

The next part of the second phase involves children capturing ideas (through images, drama, role-play, etc.) and planning collaboratively (as a class, a group or in pairs) their version of the text-type being covered. The teacher closely supports and guides children through the writing process, modelling through 'shared writing' and regular oral feedback.

Children are shown how to draft, edit and improve their work as part of this process. This leads to their first version of the text-type, which they will self-assess against the agreed success criteria and/or be marked by the teacher (against the skills learnt).

In the final phase, children independently plan and write their own text, applying the learning of the first two phases and making use of the Working Wall to support their own work. Again, children will capture ideas, plan, draft, edit and improve and finally publish their independent version of the text-type they've been learning about. This final piece of work, closely resembling a 'hot' task, is where pupils 'showcase' their actual learning. Pupils can then review their learning against a 'Writing Checklist' (relevant for the text-type), assessing whether they have achieved their targets using the required features of the text-type being learnt.



















Feedback (*Reference - Merrydale Junior School 'Feedback' Policy*)

- All work will be acknowledged in some form by class teachers.
- Any pink highlighting will be addressed promptly and appropriately evidenced.
- Any written comments need to be specific, purposeful and clear.

In draft books, teachers provide feedback within the lessons (e.g. through Post-it notes and/or discussion). These discussions may take place with individuals, groups or the whole class.







The **final** published piece will be marked against a specific 'Writing Checklist' covering the aspects of learning for that specific text-type (including relevant key skills covered). In the majority of cases, there will be no further written comments as the feedback has already been given during the drafting and editing process. Children also self-assess their learning against the given checklist (based on **key** aspects of learning – 8 Max.), **after** they have completed their piece of **independent** work.

- Example of an end of unit 'Writing Checklist' (Year 3. - Narrative):

 Writing Checklist: Narrative Writing 		
Pupil Voice	Have I used these super skills?	Teacher Voice
	I have used a range of conjunctions – B.A.B.S. (<i>but, and, because, so</i>)	
	I have used inverted commas <u>around</u> what is being said.	
	I have used correct verb tense consistently. (past)	
	I have used capital letters for proper nouns .	
	I am beginning to use paragraphs appropriately.	
	I have used expanded noun phrases for effect (with interesting adjectives).	
	I have used different synonyms for 'said'.	
	My work makes sense and flows well. (<i>cohesion</i>)	

Most pieces of work, especially within the English book, will have a 'learning' slip for children to self-assess (using R.A.G.) and teachers to mark against. These show the main success criteria for that session. For discrete grammar/punctuation sessions and for collaborative learning opportunities these are clear and **explicit** – whilst for independent writing (which is to be assessed) these are more **generic** (whilst **Year 6**, *spring term onwards*, only have the 'learning objective' given for independent/assessed writing). See below for examples of each:

Specific (explicit) 'Learning Slips' Criteria:

Ingredients for Success		
Date: Wednesday 13th January I S P G		
Learning Objective: Use inverted commas to punctuate direct speech		
Pupil Voice	Have I used these super skills?	Teacher Voice
	Use inverted commas around what is being said (direct speech)	
	Include appropriate punctuation at the end of speech (for example: ,!?)	
	Use capital letters for proper nouns (names)	
Challenge: Use synonyms for 'said'		

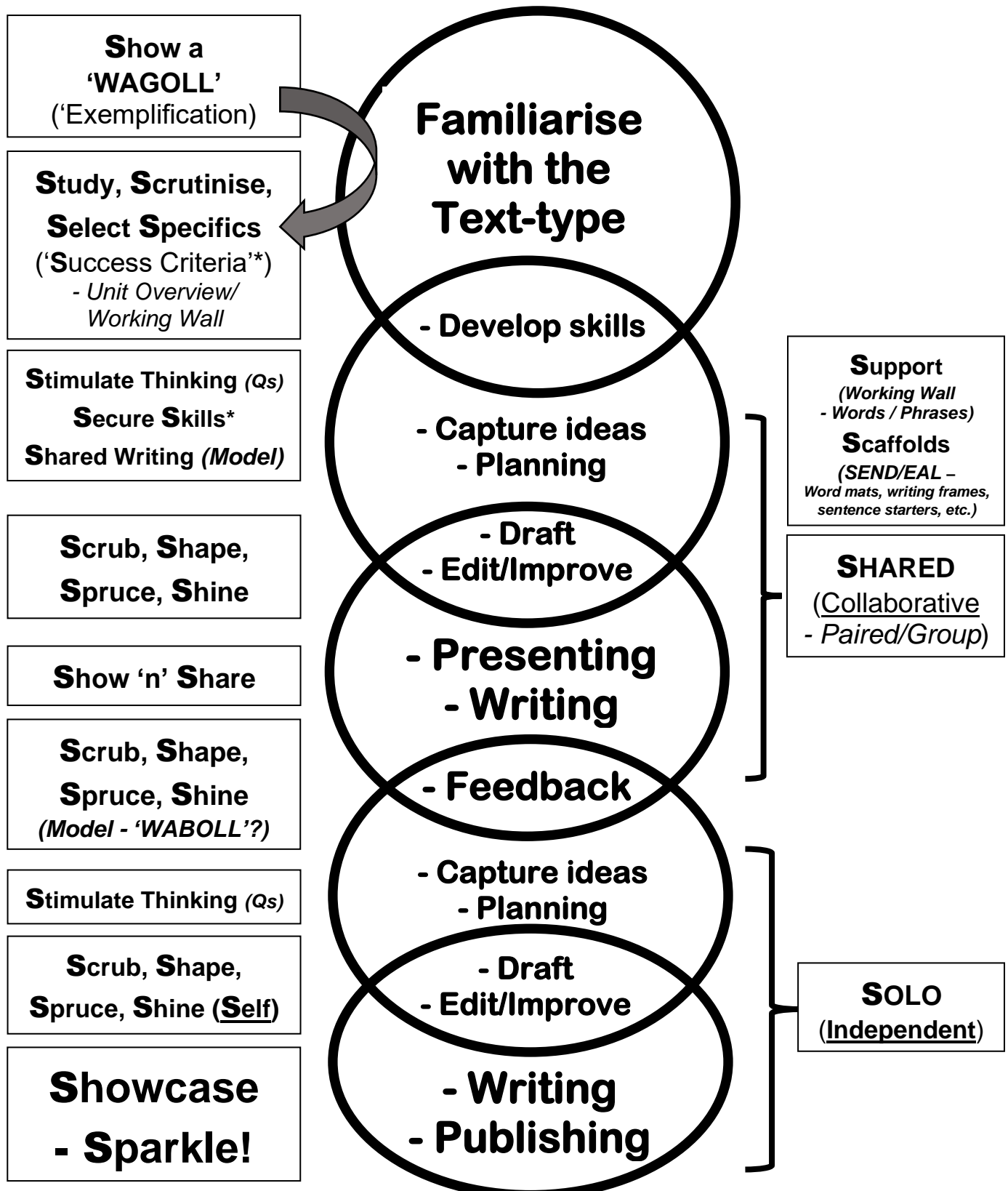
Generic 'Learning Slip' Criteria (for independent/assessed work):

Use these super skills:
Use speech punctuation correctly.
Use a range of conjunctions.
Use the correct tense consistently.
Produce neat handwriting.

The 'S'-Factor

As an aid to understanding the cycle of learning and the phases of instruction, the school follows the 'S'-Factor – to help remember the key learning at each point of the unit of work. Each element and action of the learning sequence begins with the letter 'S' – See below:

Sequence for Success



Cross-curricular Literacy Opportunities

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make appropriate cross-curricular links so that writing becomes meaningful. They also plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. At the end of a topic, children write up in a creative format (e.g. informative poster) what they have learnt during that topic.

Assessment

Effective assessment involves careful observation, analysis and review by practitioners of each child's knowledge, skills and understanding, in order to track their progress and make informed decisions about planning for the next steps of learning.

- Assessment is on a **continuous** basis, taking into account the children's work throughout the term/year.
- Work is monitored by the class teacher, year teams, English Subject Leader and the SLT to assist in planning for future work to meet the needs of the children.
- Work scrutinies, including moderation, are carried out across the school to track teaching and learning and areas for school development.
- Summative assessment records are passed to the English Subject Leader for information and analysis. These are stored on our automated assessment systems.
- External moderation opportunities, both with the Trust (and associated Affinity schools) and City moderation meetings.

SPELLING

At Merrydale Junior School, we encourage our pupils to think and write creatively, be adventurous with their use of language and to write with clear purpose and for pleasure.

In order for these aims to be realised, it is essential that our pupils learn to spell accurately. Children who can spell well feel confident and are able to write with greater enjoyment. We want our pupils to be equipped with a range of strategies for learning spelling and to be able to apply their strategies when spelling words in their independent writing.

Statutory Requirements

Pupils are taught the age-related spelling content using a published scheme: 'No Nonsense Spelling'. This scheme of work provides us with a manageable tool for meeting the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum, having a clear progression of teaching units across the year - supporting our teachers with the teaching of spelling.

Organisation of 'No-Nonsense Spelling':

Across KS2, pupils participate in 4-5 spellings sessions across two weeks.

A typical learning sequence is as follows:

Revise

- Activate prior knowledge

Revisit

- Previous linked learning

Teach

- Introduce the new concept
- Explain
- Investigate
- Model

Practise

- Individual/group work
- Extend/explore the concept independently
- Investigate
- Generalise

Apply/Assess

- Assess through independent application
- Explain and demonstrate understanding

Strategies for Learning Spellings

The following strategies are introduced incrementally through the 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme and can be used to support pupils' spelling across school and at home. A more detailed description of each strategy can be found in the 'No Nonsense Spelling' teachers handbooks.

- Look, say, cover, write, check
- Trace, copy and replicate (then check)
- Segmentation strategy
- Quick-write
- Drawing around the word to show the shape
- Drawing an image around the word
- Words without vowels
- Pyramid words
- Rainbow writing
- Memorable 'silly sentences'
- Clapping and counting syllables

Dictionaries

Our pupils are taught explicitly how to use a dictionary in order to investigate word meaning, origins and spellings. We currently use the Oxford School Dictionary across KS2 (as well as other differentiated dictionaries).

Applying the Learning

We teach our pupils a range of strategies to use when spelling words independently.

These strategies include:

- Segmentation (using phonic knowledge)
- 'Have-a-go'
- Dictionaries

Feedback

In addition, we place a strong focus on spelling in all feedback.

In Year 3 and 4, teachers pick up spelling errors by indicating the specific word that is misspelt. This is indicated by a line under the misspelt word. Where appropriate, these will either be corrected by the teacher and the child copies the correct spelling or the child will be directed to find the correct spelling for themselves. No more than five spellings are corrected in one piece.

In Year 5 and 6, teachers pick up on spelling errors by writing 'sp' in the margin. The child is then expected to find the incorrect spelling and correct it for themselves. This is through the use of vocabulary displays, using a dictionary, spelling mats or a spelling partner in class. The number of spelling errors indicated in any one piece depends upon the child.

Parental Involvement

We recognise and appreciate the huge part that parents play in their child's progress in spelling and all of our pupils are given spellings to learn as part of a fortnightly cycle. These spellings are tested through a class dictation.

- **Year 3** are given 5 HFWs (*either common exception words or frequently misspelt words identified from across the class*) and 5 words from the 'No Nonsense Spelling' objectives (for that fortnight).
- **Year 4** are given 4 HFWs, 4 words from the 'No Nonsense Spelling' objectives (for that fortnight) and 4 taken from the Yr 3/4 list.
- **Year 5 and 6** are given 5 HFWs, 5 words from the 'No Nonsense Spelling' objectives (for that fortnight) and 2 taken from the Yr 5/6 list.

HANDWRITING

The teaching of handwriting is most successful when a progressive and sequential approach is adopted, with each stage of development building on the child's previous experience.

We aim for our pupils to:

- Form all letters correctly, knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- Develop a clear, fluent and legible cursive style of handwriting.
- Adapt their writing to suit particular circumstances such as rapid jottings (when taking notes), drafting and redrafting and presenting neatly finished work.
- Take pride in their writing and present work for a variety of audiences to a high standard.

Provision

Handwriting will usually be taught as a whole class activity. Additional lessons at the beginning of a term may also be given to help pupils. Handwriting teaching and modelling will take place in any writing activity and will often be linked to spelling activities.

- The Collins Primary Focus: Handwriting Scheme is followed in school. The programme provides copiable material that is intended for use through shared sessions, guided group interventions and individual practice.
- Dedicated teaching will be given at the beginning of each school year to clarify expectations, with further encouragement through a mix of weekly discrete lessons and as part of spelling sessions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants will model a fluent and joined style when writing and presenting work (including marking).

- Displayed work will also show a **range** of scripts, including the school's agreed style for handwriting.
- Children who are left-handed will either sit next to each other or on the left side of a right-hander to make it as comfortable as possible to write clearly.
- Children who experience specific difficulty with handwriting will have this helped through interventions including slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips and alternative writing media. Individual cases may be referred to the SENDCo where necessary, for referral for additional support and guidance.
- Handwriting interventions are in place for children with particular difficulties (including fine-motor control).

Pen Licenses

Pen licences will be given to pupils in Year 4 when children demonstrate the ability to write fluently and legibly. All pupils in Year 5 and 6 will use a pen unless they experience a specific difficulty.

Targeted Intervention

Children who have been targeted for A.R.E. - but show that they are struggling to keep at this age-appropriate level - are given additional writing intervention. Children receive a small-group session one afternoon per week.

The **sequence** of sessions generally follows:

- Wk.1. Sentence composition (and vocabulary development)
- Wk.2. Sentence composition (and vocabulary development)
- Wk.3. Skills development (*See table below*)
- Wk.4. Paragraph building

Each session will follow a simple (and similar) structure:

- **Show** (and explore) good examples of sentences
- **Model** write ('I do') – Teacher/TA writes a model sentence demonstrating improvements and/or the new skill (*talking through their thinking*)
- **Shared** write ('We do') – Children support the teacher/TA to write another quality sentence (*explaining what/how/why*).
- **Collaborative** write ('You do' – **together**) – In pairs, children write a sentence (or two) on mini-whiteboards. These are discussed and evaluated as a group.
- **Independent** write ('You do' – on your own) – In books, children write their own examples of effective sentences linked to a given visual stimuli (e.g. images).

Key skills are taught during Week 3 of the cycle and are taken from the following termly plan.

Writing skills learnt and developed in previous weeks are then applied to a short paragraph to assess each child's progress. These groups are assessed termly (based on data submitted by class teachers) and groups changed when/where required. These groups provide a safe framework for the children to succeed - but ultimately the goal is for the children to be able to complete the work (at an age-appropriate level) in the main class lessons.

✍ Key Skills by Year Group/Term ✍

	Year 3.	Year 4.	Year 5.	Year 6.
Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions (?) • Prepositions • Adverbs • Conjunctions (B.A.B.S.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.I.L.E. Openers • Apostrophes (for possession) • Speech (<i>inverted commas</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.I.L.E. Openers • Apostrophes (for contraction/possession) • Plurals (-s, es, ies, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunctions (B.E.A.D.S.) • Relative Clauses • Synonyms
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.I.L.E. openers • Speech (<i>inverted commas</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modal verbs (<i>must/should/could</i>) • Similes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative clauses (<i>who, which, that</i>) • Dialogue (<i>with W.A.V.E.</i>) • Conjunctions (B.E.A.D.S.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct vs. Reported speech • Brackets/Dashes (<i>for extra information</i>)
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apostrophes (for contraction) • Past tense (<i>irregular verbs</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative clauses (<i>who, which, that</i>) • Dialogue (<i>with verb+adverb, e.g. shouted loudly</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brackets/Dashes (<i>for extra information</i>) • Possessive pronouns (e.g. I, me, my, mine, you, your, she, he, her, his, we, us, our, they, them, their) 	

DIFFERENTIATION AND INCLUSION

In accordance with the school's policies on S.E.N.D. and Equality, all children are entitled to access writing at an appropriate level for their age and development. Activities are differentiated where possible, both for the less able and more able pupils. Differentiation is through resources used, the difficulty of the task, support given (including the use of scribes or laptops) and outcome. Notice is also taken of targets within a child's Pupil Passport. Provision is made, when necessary, for pupils to extend their experiences beyond that of the majority of the class by providing further challenging opportunities. All pupils are expected to achieve the highest standards possible regardless of race, culture, gender or disability. Whenever possible, materials and images used reflect a varied cultural dimension, e.g. fruit from different cultures or learning about scientists from around the world. School staff are fully committed to ensuring all pupils, regardless of their differences, have the opportunity and support necessary to enable them to achieve their full educational and social potential.

ROLE OF ADVISORY BOARD

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to ensure the implementation of the National Curriculum and to review the policy. Additional meetings may be held to discuss English priorities across the school and to gain an overview of the teaching and learning of English.

MONITORING OF POLICY

We are aware of the need to monitor and update the school's Writing Policy on a regular basis, so that we can take account of improvements made in our practice and to changes in assessments, materials and government requirements. We will therefore review this policy at least once a year. The member of staff with responsibility for writing is the English Leader – Rita Sharma (with additional support from Jez Smith, DSAT English Lead Practitioner).

Writing throughout the school, and how it reflects this policy, will also be reviewed throughout the school year in the following ways:

- *Advisory Board work scrutiny*
- *School Improvement Partner*
- *DSAT peer reviews*
- *SLT/staff work scrutiny*
- *KS2 internal moderation*
- *KS2 external moderation*
- *Moderation with other schools (both within DSAT and the school's city development group)*
- *Learning walks*
- *Book trawls*

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed in September 2024 (or sooner, only if national legislation / policy demands it).

Signed: _____

Date:

Chair of Advisory Board

Signed: _____

Date:

Headteacher