



Writing at Highlees - Writing Strategy

Our Intent

At Highlees Primary School, we believe that all pupils should be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing. We want pupils to acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and be able to spell new words by effectively applying the phonic knowledge, spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time in primary school. We want them to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of purposes and audiences.

Children begin in our Early Years working well below what is expected for their age in English. Many lack experience and exposure to the English language which presents a barrier, which we are determined to overcome.

As a school, we understand and value the relationship between early reading and writing; therefore, we dedicate daily practice to spelling and using our phonetic knowledge in context, following our SSP, Little Wandle. We believe that all pupils should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their writing, by developing a good, joined, handwriting style by the time they move to secondary school. We believe that all good writers refine and edit their writing over time, so we want children to develop independence in being able to identify their own areas for improvement in all pieces of writing, editing their work effectively during and after the writing process.

The National Curriculum

Writing at Highlees Primary School is based on the EYFS Framework and National Curriculum.

The programmes of study for writing in the EYFS Framework and at Key Stages 1 and 2 are:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

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. 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. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Teachers should refer to the National Curriculum English Programme of Study and Appendices when planning for writing.

Note: an effective writing curriculum

- The National Curriculum does not require pupils to be taught particular genres or text types.
- The focus is on writing for different purposes: for example, to describe, narrate, explain, instruct, give and respond to information, and argue.
- Pupils will have the necessary opportunities to develop both their transcription and composition.

OFSTED Review Series

[Curriculum research review series: English - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Spoken Language

We plan spoken responses weekly,

- allowing children to explain understanding of books and other reading, through Reading for Pleasure
- preparing and rehearsing ideas before writing, through Drama for Writing
- using the conventions for discussion and debate

This is planned, not only in English lessons, but throughout the curriculum. For example, discussions in PSHE; collaborating in Art summarising understanding of research in History and carrying out and refining methods for scientific investigation before writing. Spoken activities are planned to explore and develop understanding as well as to present understanding.

Teachers ensure pupils have knowledge of a topic before speaking by carefully planning reading; research; teaching and first-hand experiences.

From Ofsted English Review

Spoken Language - Oracy

- Children with a language deficit at age 5 are 4 times more likely to have difficulties with reading when they are adults.
- Developing spoken language - including vocabulary - is essential for the academic progress of all children, and especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- It is critically important to develop vocabulary explicitly - particularly in the early years.
- Reducing the word gap in EYFS and KS1 can help disadvantaged children develop their vocabulary faster.
- A strong command of the spoken word is a vital outcome of English education: spoken language is an important goal of the curriculum.
- There is a correlation between pupils' spoken language skills and their academic outcomes, social development and emotional development.
- Talk can sometimes be undervalued because its function can be considered as being primarily social; however, in the classroom, talk can be cognitive and cultural as well.
- There should be clearly planned provision for developing pupils' spoken language across the curriculum.
- Spoken language is not just about improving speech - it is also about developing pupils' ability to collaborate through conversation.
- Pupils' success in using spoken language depends on the knowledge of the topic they are talking about.
- It cannot be assumed that pupils will learn the necessary knowledge just by being encouraged to speak more or through participating in unstructured activities.
- Teachers should always model competence as a speaker and a listener. This modelling makes a significant contribution to developing pupils' spoken language.
- There should be carefully planned opportunities for 'exploratory talk' as well as for 'presentational' talk. These require direct and explicit teaching and practice.

Working Walls

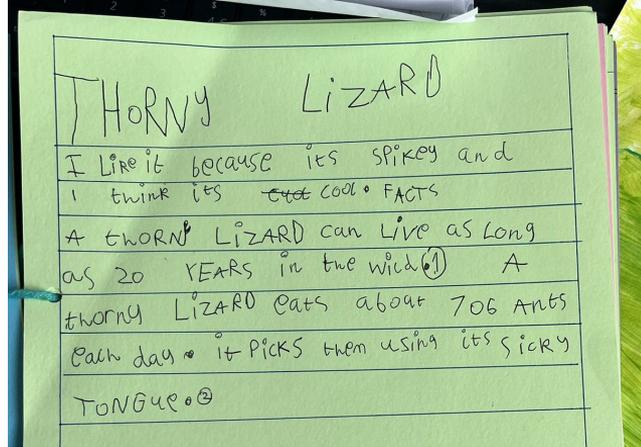
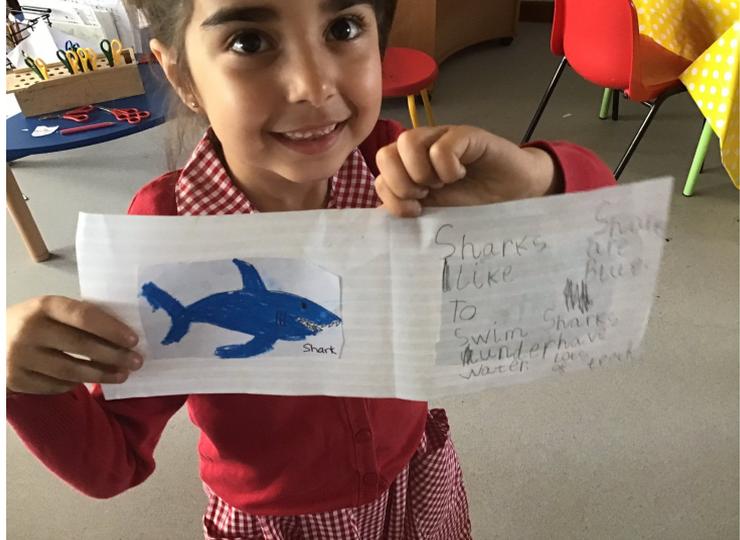
Working Walls, or washing lines, are where we record our writing journey. They evolve throughout the unit of writing and include elements from drama, modelled texts, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

They are organised so that they support the children's understanding of a unit and recall of different parts of the writing journey.

Teacher and pupils add to the working wall.

They are for everyone in the classroom.

Teachers model how to refer to them when completing tasks.



Transcription



Handwriting



Letter-join 

At Highlees Primary School, we follow the whole-school programme Letter Join Handwriting. This is designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet curriculum expectations. We do this because, when children's writing is legible, they can communicate their ideas effectively and when their handwriting is fluent, it frees up cognitive resources.



Individual letter formation is explicitly modelled and taught by teachers and this progresses to joining letters, again modelled and taught by the teacher.



Teachers model this handwriting in all areas of learning (for example, on whiteboards, written feedback in books)

Handwriting is taught three times a week across the school.



Children identified as needing further modelling and practice in handwriting, participate in smaller group or individual activities to develop these skills.



Handwriting expectations remain the same in all areas of children's written work.

Spelling



At Highlees Primary School, we follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds and Spelling Shed for Spelling. These programmes support us in explicitly teaching spellings and providing pupils with extensive opportunities to practise them.

| GPCs |
|-----------|
| ai ee igh |
| oa oo oo |
| ar or ur |
| ow er |

Phonics is taught daily in EYFS and Year 1, including a write the grapheme/word/sentence element as part of the lesson.

-est

Spelling beyond Year 1 is taught three times a week, focusing on phonology (sound), orthography (patterns), morphology (relationship to other words e.g. adding prefixes or suffixes to a root word) or statutory word lists.

- children are explicitly taught these
- given opportunity to practise in school
- and then asked to learn them for homework
- focus graphemes or spellings are then tested weekly



Recorded work from spelling lessons is completed in English writing books.

Spelling: teaching strategies explicitly

- Visual strategies: look, cover, write, check; memorising letter patterns or words from common exception list
- Auditory strategies: phonics; over-articulation e.g. Wed-nes-day; syllables e.g. clapping in-de-pen-dent; using knowledge of other words e.g. **call**, **ball**, **fall** or **un**happy, **un**usual, **un**pleasant
- Learning a method for remembering the word; spelling mnemonics; study the word; speed writing; syllables; rules e.g. singular nouns ends in -f, plural ends in -ves (wolf → wolves)

Spelling is taught and practised explicitly.

To ensure transcription development and accuracy

We:

- teach phonics well (using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds), including segmenting for spelling. Know which children are struggling with specific phoneme/grapheme correspondences and teach at these gaps
- ensure that we are teaching handwriting and spelling at several points during the week
- assess children's spelling and handwriting against age-related expectations (NC) and intervene when children have gaps in their knowledge (1:1 or small guided learning groups)
- use dictation to embed basic skills (including spelling), using words which contain letter-sound correspondences
- when children's fluency (basic skills) are holding them back, we focus on these skills and have an unrelenting focus on children's accurate application of the skills they have learned



Composition

Audience and purpose

The National Curriculum states: 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.

Audience refers to the reader.

Purpose refers to the reason for the **writing**.

Purposes are mapped out in the English overview to ensure a range and progression.

to entertain

to inform

to persuade

to discuss

End of KS2 Teacher Assessment Framework

A pupil working at the expected standard can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader

Teachers consider this at their planning stage, making a conscious decision about who the audience and purpose are and be clear on how this impacts the vocabulary choice, level of formality etc. They share this explicitly with pupils at the start and throughout a journey of writing, so they can communicate and organise their writing appropriately with consideration for the reader.

Teachers consider the different ways to share the finished outcome with the chosen audience e.g. oral presentation, letter sent outside of school, etc.

Purposes

In Early Years and Key Stage One, the purposes begin with a focus on entertaining and informing and developing. By the end of Key Stage Two persuading and discussion is also included.

These are mapped progressionally and deliberately to allow children to practise a variety of writing purposes in a variety of contexts. For example, children begin the year by focusing on effective character and/or setting descriptions and by the end of the year are expected to write a full narrative incorporating these learned elements. Every year group will write a narrative and the National Curriculum expectations will ensure these are progressively different.

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Purpose and text type for writing | Mark making Name writing To inform (labels) | To inform (fact file) To inform/entertain (letter) | To inform (fact file) To entertain (setting description and character description) | To entertain (narrative [myth]) To entertain (poetry) | To entertain (character description) To inform (report) | To persuade (formal letter pleading not to execute) To entertain (historical setting description/atmosphere) | To entertain (poetry) To entertain (setting description /atmosphere) To inform (non-chronologic |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|

The Writing Journey

Pre-stage
Teacher
planning

Context setting

- drama
- reading
- models
- writer's toolkit
- vocabulary

During

- discrete grammar
- mini-writes
- drama
- modelling
- vocabulary
- planning

End

- independent
final piece
- editing
- proof-reading
- present to
audience

Post-stage

Teacher
uses
assessment
to inform
next
journey





The Writing Journey - Pre-Stage

- September - from Year One upwards, the first two weeks are used as consolidation of the previous year's National Curriculum expectations, retrieval and re-teaching
- Refer to the long-term map to identify key text or texts for writing and purpose for writing
- Complete the medium term overview plan (in Google staff drive) and identify National Curriculum content for writing (grammar and punctuation), features, and discreet grammar to be taught
- Consider the amount of time needed for each phase of the writing carefully - it will take time to do each phase well and each phase must be included
- At the beginning of every half-term (6 times a year), review any new National Curriculum content already taught for writing (grammar and punctuation)

Planning and Prioritising



As a staff, we have looked carefully at the English programmes of study and identified key objectives, which need prioritising. These often focus around having a solid understanding of sentence structure. We understand that a teacher may commit to a particular learning focus for a continued period of time and return to it often, because it takes time to learn and is essential to further learning.

When children have a sound and secure knowledge of word classes and sentence structure, they can use them effectively to communicate in writing. When they have mastered these, they can manipulate and control them for specific purposes and audiences.

| EYFS | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences</p> <p>Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed</p> <p>Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters</p> | <p>Spell some common exception words</p> <p>Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</p> <p>Form capital letters</p> <p>Leave spaces between words</p> <p>Understand what constitutes a basic sentence</p> <p>Begin to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop</p> | <p>Spell all common exception words</p> <p>Secure formation of lower and upper case letters</p> <p>Understand sentence types</p> <p>Use and understand coordination <i>and</i> and subordination <i>because</i></p> | <p>Legible neat handwriting, joining where appropriate</p> <p>Spell common homophones</p> <p>Secure understanding of sentences with more than one clause</p> <p>Begin paragraphing</p> <p>Begin writing speech</p> | <p>Legible joined handwriting</p> <p>Secure Y3/4 spelling list</p> <p>Secure paragraphing</p> <p>Secure written speech</p> | <p>Writing is legible, fluent and at speed</p> <p>Secure spelling patterns taught to this point</p> <p>Select and use appropriate verb and tense consistently</p> <p>Secure use of comma and inverted comma</p> | <p>Writing is legible, fluent and at speed</p> <p>Secure Y5/6 spelling list</p> <p>Secure understanding and use of range of clauses and sentence types</p> <p>Secure use of punctuation taught to this point</p> |

The Writing Journey - Context setting



- We use drama, reading and researching to set the context and establish the audience and purpose for the piece of writing the children will complete.
- When writing is based on a longer text, we plan carefully to ensure we reach the relevant point so pupils have sufficient knowledge for writing.
- When looking at model texts e.g. a letter, a diary, a report these are provided and modelled by the teacher. This ensures they include all relevant GPS content we expect and key features from our 'writing toolkit' at the appropriate pitch for our classes. We explicitly talk through decisions made e.g. headings, layout, word choices, sentence structure to develop pupils' understanding of writer's choice.

Drama

At Highlees, we use drama as a teaching tool for writing. We use it to develop pupils' understanding of reading; to support and develop their ideas for writing; to practise and develop spoken language and listening skills; and to develop critical thinking skills. Drama supports the pupils in articulating and communicating their understanding.

When planning a journey of writing, teachers select different drama conventions to support the pupils' understanding and learning.

These conventions can be used at any stage in a lesson or journey and the time taken can vary from a short burst to an extended session.

This includes supporting editing, throughout the writing process. A teacher can select a key focus, e.g. words describing a character's reaction to an event and support this by hot-seating themselves as that character, pupils then return to their writing to edit.

Language and ideas generated during drama are placed on the working wall.

The Writing Journey - Writer's toolkit

- We read different versions of the text type with the children and create a 'writing toolkit' aligned with year group expectations.
- We use these toolkits as a reference point for each time we revisit this type of writing e.g. in Year 6, we write a non-chronological report on Victorians in our Autumn Revolution topic. In the Summer, we write a non-chronological report in Geography so we pull out the toolkit and revisit expectations for this text type. (Toolkits are kept electronically on the drive or hard copies in our English planning folder).

Our Writer's Toolkit for Suspense

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Simile & metaphor: Snow fell like... | Alliteration: Silently, snow.. | Personification and pathetic fallacy: The open door welcomed... | Onomatopoeia: The wheels rattled and clattered... |
| Hyperbole: She was about to explode with excitement... | See: There were dolls... | Smell: A faint scent of... | Touch: The floor was hard and cold... |
| Hear: A faint tinkling sounded... | Description: Beautifully dressed dolls, clothed in... | Action: Smiling, Alma walked.. | Thoughts and feelings: What was going on? |
| Balance of shorter and longer sentences: Alma jumped. | Powerful verbs: Crept, clambered | Adjectives and expanded noun phrases: The soft, silky cushion covered in red velvet.. | Adverbs, adverbials and prepositions: In front of her, silently |

Words to Investigate

Every classroom has a display board dedicated to this. It is updated regularly, with the pupils, as they explore and encounter new and useful vocabulary.

When selecting words to investigate, we choose vocabulary that challenges and stretches the child but also so it can be specifically used in their writing for impact on the reader.

These words are displayed and revisited often. This is to ensure the pupils are confident in using them when they read and write. The expectation is that they will use them in their spoken and written activities.

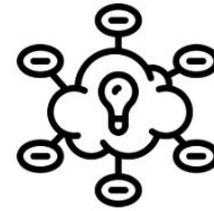
Vocabulary teaching sequence (direct instruction)

1. Read the word aloud.
2. Contextualise the target word within the text.
3. Have the pupils say the word out loud.
4. Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word.
5. Present examples of the word used in contexts different from the immediate context.
6. Engage the pupils with a range of activities that get them to interact with the word.
7. Pupils repeat the word out loud.

Vocabulary teaching sequence (example)

1. Teacher says, 'The word is a verb: **sniffed** or to **sniff**.'
2. 'No thank you,' **sniffed** Tisha.
3. The children say, 'The word is a verb: **sniffed** or to **sniff**.'
4. 'It means to take a breath through our nose loudly. When you sniff, you can hear you breathe through your nose.'
5. The rabbit **sniffed** the air. She could smell humans. I keep **sniffing** today. Perhaps I have a cold coming. "I'm fed up with you," **sniffed** my brother.
6. Play word games and activities using words in the '**sniff**' word family. Find synonyms, acronyms. Explore the word in different ways, e.g., what it sounds like, looks like, feels like.
7. The children say, 'the word is a verb: **sniffed** or to **sniff**.'

The Writing Journey - planning



Planning always involves discussion and opportunities to talk through ideas to check they make sense and fit the audience and purpose.

Planning may be whole class or individual depending on the focus for writing. All children have the opportunity to plan for their own writing, increasingly so in KS2. These can range from jotted ideas to a more scaffolded structure.

The process of planning for writing is modelled by teachers, explicitly talking through their ideas and making use of resources in the room, including the working wall.

The working wall supports the planning process, including key elements from drama, models read and specific grammar taught.

The Writing Journey - during



To build the skills required to complete a final piece at the end of a writing journey, teachers plan regular mini-writes. These provide an opportunity for pupils to practise the skills learnt.

This may look different depending on the text type e.g. it may be quicker building some non-chronological skills than building a narrative.

Throughout the writing journey, we return to the audience and purpose, including our 'writing toolkit' expectations.

Throughout the journey, we are clear about the intention of the task - both transcription and composition.

The Writing Journey - during - modelling



We have carefully selected the texts we read in school to provide high-quality models for writing.

During the writing journey, teachers model and think aloud the processes and skills a reader and writer use, sharing questions, thoughts and decisions.

Teachers ensure children have regular opportunities within the sequence to practise their grammar and punctuation, including retrieval of previously taught skills and re-teaching when identified as necessary.

Teachers also carefully select models from the pupils' writing and share these, highlighting particular use of grammar, vocabulary or attention to audience and purpose.

Discrete teaching of grammar and punctuation



We use short, focused activities - with whiteboards or in books.

We teach the skill and then provide several practice activities. We return to this skill periodically to ensure it has been learned.

The grammar is taught in the context of the journey of writing.

Examples are displayed on the working wall.

Test-style questions can be used to check recall of particular skills.

Teachers teach grammar according to identified gaps in prior learning and in line with NC expectations for the year group.

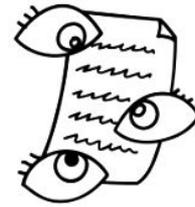
The Writing Journey - editing and redrafting



Editing is in line with the expectations for the cohort. For example, Year 1 have learned to use capital letters for proper nouns, so this is the focus for their editing. Year 6 may look at an opening paragraph, considering the use of vocabulary to evoke atmosphere.

Editing is taught and modelled by teachers. This may be done with the whole class, using the teacher's writing or within guided groups, using pupil's writing.

The Writing Journey - proofreading



Proofreading is checking writing for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. This is a process which is modelled and practised with pupils, according to NC expectations.

Strategies to support this:

- Spelling - read the piece backwards, focusing just on spelling. Pupils always have access to word mats and/or dictionaries. They are taught how to use these.
- Grammar - read the writing aloud. The pupil or a partner reads the writing aloud, so pupils can hear if it 'sounds right'.
- Punctuation - focus on one particular piece of punctuation at a time, in relation to content that has been taught.

The Writing Journey - writing independently



- At least once a half-term (minimum 6 times a year), children will write a 'published' piece in their writing assessment book.
- These pieces of writing are assessed by teachers using the TEFAT Writing Frameworks. TEFAT writing assessment framework
- These are independent pieces of writing (within the year group expectation of independence).
- These will have been edited prior to publishing in their assessment books.
- Teachers feedback to pupils following these tasks and provide targets for improvement. These are shared verbally and on bookmarks in writing books.



The Writing Journey - sharing the writing with the audience

Within the journey of writing, we plan an opportunity for pupils to share their writing with their intended audience e.g.

EYFS post invitations to their parents

Year 1 record their stories and share with parents

Year 3 read their stories to Year 1

Year 5 publish their writing in a class book that is shared in the school library

Year 6 hold a debate, presenting their arguments for and against.

Each year group has a display board within the school corridors to share and celebrate their writing. These are changed each term. Each year group leads an assembly once a term and within this pupils share examples of their writing with a whole school audience.

Assessment and moderation



We use TEFAT writing assessment frameworks (which include the Y2 and Y6 TAF). These are for the current year group. A very small minority of children use small step assessment frameworks, in consultation with the SENCo.

Moderation takes place at school, local and national levels.

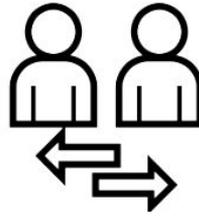
In school, moderation is at termly checkpoints.

Federated moderation is in the spring and summer term.

Trust level is at CP2, 4 and 6.

Local Authority moderation in Year 2 and Year 6. Staff attend LA sessions in the summer term if not being officially moderated to ensure accuracy and consistency of judgements.

Marking and feedback



Marking and feedback policy

Live marking/verbal feedback is given when possible, especially in sessions focusing on transcriptional skills.

Whole class feedback may be used. After looking at all pupils' writing, teachers focus on 4 areas to share with the class. These are: what worked well; good examples from pupils' books using features/skills taught; one specific area for improvement with a short activity to address this; and children identified as needing further support/scaffolding.

Feedback focus bookmarks

Each pupil has a bookmark in their writing book. On this, teachers record specific targets particular to that pupil.

Targets are selected as a result of assessment carried out by the teacher.

Targets may relate to handwriting, spelling, punctuation or grammar.

Targets are shared with pupils so they understand what they must focus on and why it will help them to improve their writing.

Writing and the Curriculum

At Highlees Primary School, we aim for our writing to link to our wider curriculum wherever possible, enabling children to make links between their learning in all areas.

Each half term, planned writing opportunities are carefully mapped out. This allows for coverage of different writing purposes and progression in skills as children move through the year and up through the school.

These may be linked to a class reading text or another writing stimulus such as an animated film. In each case, these relate to the wider curriculum that the children are learning about. For example, Year 1 children write an informative fact file on dinosaurs when studying Dinosaur Planet and an entertaining narrative, building tension in a wintry setting when studying Frozen Kingdoms in Year 6.

Writing across the curriculum

- Once per half term, in KS2, produce an extended piece of writing (with developing independence) that links to a topic area.
- This will take 2-3 sessions and should include an element of drafting, editing and publishing.
- It should be linked to a recent type of writing that has been done in English.
- For example, year 6 write non-chronological reports in Autumn 1, so in Autumn 2, they plan to do a non-chronological report in Science.
- In KS1, topic writing may focus on a particular element taught in English e.g. using the conjunction *because*.



Writing across the curriculum

This can be fiction and non-fiction

- diary entry from an explorer, describing their latest expedition
- biography or fact file for an historical figure or scientist
- report based on an historical event or scientific discovery
- persuasive writing promoting a location studied
- setting description based on geography.
- instructional writing for DT

Non-negotiables - Writing

- **Handwriting and Spelling is timetabled 3x a week** within your curriculum. Handwriting to be completed in Handwriting books and Spelling to be completed in English books.
- Drama for Writing should be incorporated into planning.
- Books should be regularly marked and verbal feedback where possible.
- Vocabulary is a priority so please ensure, where possible, you are displaying vocabulary to support within the lessons.
- All classes should have a 'Words To Investigate' area in their classrooms.
- All classes should have the letters from Letter Join displayed in the classroom to make reference to this during lessons.
- All writing, regardless of curriculum area, should be set with high expectations, this includes presentation.
- Marking and feedback in all books should include elements of marking spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Your class text should be displayed on your washing line/English working wall.
- All classrooms should have a SPAG display board.
- The writing assessments in the back of English books should be kept up-to-date and regularly checked.

Supporting Documents

EYFS framework

National Curriculum English programs of study

Progression in spoken language skills

Progression in writing (NC)

Glossary of drama conventions

TEFAT writing assessment framework

Marking and feedback policy