

Rationale for Writing

Intent

At Bramley C of E Infant and Nursery School, we strive for our children to become empowered writers and storytellers. Recognising the cognitive demands of an early writer, we place strategic support in communication skills, phonic knowledge, composition and grammatical rules - building an ambitious and inspiring curriculum for all.

To achieve this, our writing curriculum is rooted in high quality texts, selected to engage the interests of each cohort. We base our curriculum on high quality texts to ensure fiction, non-fiction and poetry are explored in immersive ways. To embed the links between reading and writing skills, the teaching of handwriting and spelling is linked to our chosen phonics scheme, *Read, Write, Inc* (RWI.)

Implementation

Spoken Language

"Spoken language is the first and most important resource that young writers have. Children need to have a wide experience of story, knowledge of written language and how this works and knowledge of how print works as a means of communication." CLPE The Writing Scale 2016

Recognising the importance of spoken language, we place a strong focus on discussion, drama, modelling, questioning and vocabulary. This begins in Nursery, but extends and continues through the school, composing phrases orally that eventually form as writing.

Composition

In Nursery Children begin to explore and experiment with mark making and the children will begin to give meaning to the marks they make.

As their motor skills develop in pre-school, their mark making begins to resemble letter-like shapes and numerals. Children begin to express their ideas in verbal sentences, that are then scribed by an adult. Through role-play and modelling, children gain more confidence with the writing process and demonstrate more understanding of the alphabet. They may have some strategies for writing independently such as drawing, mark making, copying, or inventing their own code.

As children learn phoneme-grapheme correspondence in Reception, they begin to learn letter formation. Once this knowledge grows, children start to use phonetic spelling strategies and selected memorised words in writing. They begin to write for a range of personal purposes (role-play, messages, notices) and structure full sentences with capital letters and full stops.

Moving to Year 1, children build writing stamina, creating multiple sentences with some conjunctions. As the year progresses their letter sizing becomes more consistent, along with orientation, punctuation and spacing between words.

In Year 2, children become more accurate with spelling, sentence structure and punctuation. Their written narrative begins to form cohesively and they start to experiment with fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Tenses become more consistent, along with proof-reading and editing work. Towards the end of the key stage, cursive letters are formed.

Spelling

Daily teaching of spelling begins in Reception, following the *RWI Phonics* scheme. Children are taught to say the word and then count the phonemes heard. They then produce the grapheme that best matches the phoneme. Teachers support the children to then mark or correct their word. As phonic knowledge increases through to Year 1, more complex

graphemes are introduced. In addition, children are also taught to spell common exception words (CEWs) from memory. Once children have completed the *RWI Phonics* scheme, they begin the *RWI Spelling* scheme in Year 2. This teaches children further spelling rules and homophones.

Handwriting

Handwriting is also taught daily using the *RWI Phonics* scheme. A mnemonic phrase is used to help children remember each letter formation and guidelines are introduced part-way through the scheme to improve letter sizing and consistency. Once children are secure, they then begin to learn a mature, cursive style of writing. This is also taught using the *RWI Phonics* scheme for consistency.

Lowest 20% and SEND

We recognise that reading attainment is closely linked to writing attainment. With this in mind, much of our work with the lowest 20% and SEND is focused on phonological awareness and phonics (see reading rationale.)

To support children in their sentence structure and narrative, we may use *colourful semantics*. This is often used in regular class teaching but can also be extended as 1:1 intervention.

For handwriting, we explore fine motor interventions first. This begins with *Clever fingers* and the Teodorescu program *Write from the start*. Careful support is then given to letter formation and sizing, embedding the *RWI Phonics* steps mentioned above.

Impact

The school's teaching of writing is measured and assessed in a variety of ways. This informs the impact of our work and continuous reflection moving forward.

Assessment

Children's writing is assessed formatively in class, and summatively each term through book looks. Spelling is measured by the taught phoneme-grapheme correspondence and explicit teaching of common exception words. Handwriting is evaluated on age-related expectations.

Similarly, we follow the national curriculum's age-related expectations to assess sentence structure, punctuation and cohesive narrative. To do this, we look at a variety of work from cross-curricular topics as well as unsupported, independent work.

Observations

To ensure the teaching of writing is consistent across the school, we observe English lessons, spelling and handwriting in each class. This is a collaborative process, where teachers can voice if things work or do not work for their particular cohort. Pupil engagement also forms a part of observation, where some are asked to explain what they have learnt and what they need to do next.

Pupil Voice

To enrich our curriculum design, we ask children for feedback. Each term, we meet with a selection of children from each year group. Children tell us the things they enjoy about writing and things they might like to try moving forward.