

Practice Guidance for Writing, SPaG and Handwriting

At Cavendish Close Infant and Nursery School, we believe that there must be a consistent, whole school approach to writing and children must be encouraged to develop a genuine love of writing. We encourage children to be creative thinkers in order to produce imaginative writing.

Why is Writing important to the children in our school?

Learning to write is one of the most important concepts a child will learn. Children use their writing in almost all other subjects of the curriculum.

Writing supports children to;

- have a voice and to share their ideas with the world. Each child is born with their own unique voice which is expressed in writing.
- develop critical thinking and problem solving skills; before a child puts pen to paper they need to think about what they want to say and how they want to say it, in a logical manner.
- develop organisational skills; all good writing has a structure to be followed.
- develop decision making skills.
- develop skills to collect information.
- use their creativity and imagination.

At our school we encourage writing from the start with a rich language based environment. Writing is so closely linked with communication that it is a vital life skill. We have an expectation that all children are capable of achieving high standards in English.

What is writing?

Writing is a method of representing language in a visual or tactile form. Our writing system uses a set of symbols to represent the sounds of speech.

Writing is constructed through *transcription* (spelling and handwriting) and *composition* (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

The National Curriculum 2014 for English aims to ensure all children:

- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn, they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for writing.

Our approach to Planning Writing:

Long term planning

We plan using Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes for EYFS and National Curriculum objectives for Key Stage 1. *See Appendix 1 Whole School Writing Curriculum Plan.*

Medium term planning

Medium term planning outlines the skills to be taught and identifies the high quality texts and core texts that will support the children to learn and apply those skills. Grammar and punctuation skills are taught, practised and consolidated, alongside opportunities of how to apply them in writing. Teaching explicit vocabulary is the core of outstanding writing outcomes.

See Appendix 2 Medium term plan format.

Weekly planning

The majority of children progress through the curriculum content at the same pace using the mastery approach strategy. Differentiation (Earth, Moon, Stars) is identified on weekly planning and is achieved through additional support and challenge.

Interventions focus on gaps in knowledge and skills and developing a growth mind-set in order to ensure all children achieve. *See Appendix 3 Weekly planning format.*

Essential resources for Writing:

Adults should model good writing and have quality interactions with every child. This is the most effective resource to support and develop children's writing.

All children must write using a sharpened pencil in order for them to be successful writers.

All children in school have a writing book, labelled with 'My Special Writing Book'. Children must take care of their books and be proud of their work.

The following resources are in classrooms and are available for children to access independently whilst they are writing:

- Word banks
- Dictionaries
- Knowledge mats
- Sentence starters
- Sound mats
- Word mats
- Writing Mats
- Self – assessments
- Common Exception Word Mats
- Core and Quality texts

See Appendix 4 Examples of writing aids.

Topic boxes, Story Sacks and a variety of Big Books are stored centrally.

Our approach to teaching and learning in Writing:

We have clear expectations of writing and communicate these to the children. We have high expectations of the finished writing product and encourage the children to maintain the same standards at all times.

Writing is taught every day through Shared, Guided and Individual Writing opportunities. Our school pedagogy is set out in our Teaching and Learning Handbook.

Shared Writing

Through shared writing, adults demonstrate specific writing skills.

- ✓ Generate imaginative and informative ideas through discussion and questioning and record these ideas in notes, plans, and drafts;
- ✓ Structure ideas in writing through the appropriate use of language, sentence structure, punctuation, sequencing, and lay-out;
- ✓ Develop specific skills in spelling, punctuation, and handwriting;
- ✓ Refine writing to make it clearer and better suited to its audience and purpose;
- ✓ Develop an understanding of technical terms and the vocabulary essential for understanding and discussing writing;
- ✓ Publish and present written texts for others to read and use.

Guided Writing

Guided writing sessions are used flexibly to provide a bridge between shared and independent work. The adult may scribe for specific children or support children writing independently, in groups or pairs. The support will focus on:

- ✓ Planning a piece of writing;
- ✓ Supporting a work in progress;
- ✓ Evaluating and improving writing.

Independent Writing:

Children are given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared and guided writing are transferred into their own writing. Children are expected to apply their independent writing skills across the curriculum. They are expected to write at length and at a standard that is in line with their writing in English.

Children must practise the writing skills that have been explicitly taught. It is expected that;

- Foundation Stage have the opportunity to write every day through play. Nursery children must write in their 'Have a Go Books' at least once a week.
- Reception children must record their writing in their 'Special Writing Books' at least three times a week. Teachers must share their expectations daily through modelled writing use the white board, this will enable children to improve their writing skills and develop stamina for writing.
- KS1 children must formally write at least 4 times a week in their 'Special Writing Books'. Teachers must share their expectations daily through modelled writing use the large white board, this will enable children to improve their writing skills and develop stamina for writing.

Daily opportunities of writing are through every subject as well as writing for specific purposes, this enables a child to:

- be confident, happy and enthusiastic writers
- understand the power of writing and equip them to use it well.
- enjoy writing and to be competent, confident and not to hesitate in putting their ideas on paper.
- recognise the need to adapt their writing to suit a range of audiences and purposes.
- use the most appropriate form of writing for a given task.
- use spelling and grammar accurately and with confidence.
- develop a fluent and legible handwriting style in which to write.
- plan and draft their own work.
- revise and edit work in progress.

The expectations of a taught Writing Session must include:

- The use of a quality core text.
- A 'Hook', 'Audience' and 'Purpose' to engage and inspire the children to write.
- Collaborative learning opportunities.
- Paired talk opportunities.
- The use of taught vocabulary.
- Earth, Moon and Stars self-assessment used once a week and stuck into their work
- In 'My Special Writing' books children **must** write a title and the date.
- Marking and feedback policy must be used with clear next steps (star and a wish)
- Opportunities to take action for their next steps needs to be addressed as soon as possible (Fix it time)

Homework

- Weekly homework related to writing to support children's targets or to consolidate the current learning, this can be games to play, an activity to complete or a mini project.
- Weekly spelling to Year 2 children. See Appendix 5 for homework examples.

Writing in the learning environment:

Every classroom has an accessible, motivating and engaging Writing Hub with resources for the children to use in continuous provision See Appendix 6 Writing Hub essentials checklist. This area is used daily. The children are encouraged to write independently using the resources.

A weekly certificate is awarded in each class for 'Writer of the Week' See Appendix 7 Writer of the Week Certificate

SPaG: Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation:

Our SPaG curriculum allows for all children (SEND, disadvantaged and the more able) to achieve high outcomes whilst demonstrating all aspects of fun, creativity and achievement.

Aspects of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar are taught in the context of daily Reading, Word Wise and Writing activities, as well as through isolated exercises. These daily lessons are fun and engaging. Teaching is progressive and meaningful, allowing the children to see how their choices help them to communicate clearly to an audience. Each year, as children develop as writers, they are given the opportunity to consolidate and embed the grammar and punctuation skills from previous years and develop an

understanding of new concepts, which will help them to develop and progress as confident writers. (Appendix 8 for progression)

In EYFS, the teaching of grammar and punctuation happens alongside the writing process, in particular during shared writing. Misconceptions for specific groups of children should be picked up on through marking and future sessions will be put in place to support those in need. Oral starters to writing lessons are used to support the development of key vocabulary and sentence structure. Word Aware strategies are used to select, teach and activate new vocabulary.



Across years, 1 and 2 there is a consistent approach to the teaching of grammar. This follows the approach:

- 'Teach it' (the new concept is explained);
- 'Apply it' (children experiment with the concept) and
- 'Assess it' (children apply their learning).

In Key Stage One, there are opportunities for SPaG to be taught explicitly each day. This happens during the first ten minutes of the writing lesson. This is further consolidated during the writing process, particularly during shared writing. In Year 2, there are also additional opportunities for grammar to be taught outside of the writing lesson across the year. (Appendix 9)

Our approach to assessment in Writing:

Writing is taught and assessed using a Mastery approach with a 'Learning without Limits' strategy. Challenge is provided through the planning of 'Earth, Moon and Stars' activities with children encouraged to 'Reach for the Stars'.

Formative assessment

Assessment for learning is ongoing and central to effective classroom practice. During interactions with individual children, groups or the whole class, assessments are being made. Children's learning is observed and then matched against expectations. This informs future planning and identifies where children are in their learning and what their next steps are. Misconceptions are addressed as they occur. Teachers give effective immediate feedback using *Appendix 10 Marking Codes for Writing*

Summative assessment

Writing is formally assessed **every term** for all year groups using the Assessment Criteria Grids that are linked to end of year Age Related Expectations.

Early Years:

- Nursery/FS1- refer to Development Matters statements for 'Writing' and 'Moving and Handling'.
- Reception - refer to Early Years Foundation Stage profile outcomes for 'Writing' and 'Moving and Handling'. *Appendix 11*

Key Stage One:

- Pre – Key Stage Standards
- KS1 – WTS - Working Towards
EXS - Expected Standard
GDS - Greater Depth

Refer to KS1 National curriculum expectations *Appendix 12 Writing Assessment Grids* for further information.

To support end of year judgements for reception please refer to *Appendix 13 EYFSP Writing Exemplifications*.

To support end of year judgements for KS1 please refer to *Appendix 14 KS1 Writing Exemplifications*.

All staff working with children need to be able to accurately describe a child's writing development, track progress, identify delay and put appropriate interventions in place.

O' Track is used by the literacy team to gather data on progress and attainment for writing at each assessment point.

Intervention in Writing:

Intervention - 'Read it, Write it'

This intervention programme takes place Key Stage 1. It is designed to support groups of children with significant difficulty with acquiring or maintaining some basic skills in writing. The intervention is carried out by trained teaching assistants who plan and lead the sessions on a daily basis. The programme focuses on reading and writing single letter sounds, simple words (VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC) and reading and spelling common words by sight with an emphasis on fluency. Children are assessed weekly as part of the sessions to inform planning of future sessions. Staff are committed to using a 'Read it, Write it' approach in the classroom to enable the transference of these skills back into the classroom.

What is cloze procedure?

Cloze procedure is a writing activity that has a passage of text with missing words that need to be filled in. This is high quality writing activity for children that find writing challenging. It encourages children to think about words that fit in a blank space so the entire sentence makes sense.

Cloze procedure is an intervention designed to support groups of children with significant difficulty with acquiring or maintaining some basic skills in writing.

Writing across the curriculum:

Writing relates to every subject within the primary curriculum and opportunities to link writing experiences to a range of activities. This will allow children to begin to use and apply writing in real contexts. We aim to have writing as part of our continuous provision in every classroom.

Enrichment opportunities in Writing:

Literacy is often the catalyst that sparks amazing topic work and other cross-curricular activities. Visits and visitors add a relevance and real life context to learning.

Handwriting:

Handwriting is a demanding and complex skill that takes time to perfect. As a child progresses through school, the requirement to write quickly, legibly and fluently increases considerably.

At Cavendish Close Infant and Nursery School, we aim:

- for all children to develop a legible and fluent style of handwriting
- to promote a consistent letter shape and size
- to raise motivation and self esteem
- to establish and maintain a high profile for handwriting and presentation skills
- for excellent handwriting habits to impact positively on all written work

Our approach to teaching and learning Handwriting:

Handwriting objectives are taken from Development Matters 2020 and The National Curriculum English Programme of Study. Handwriting is taught in explicit, regular sessions focussing on letter formation, consistent size and shape of letters, as well as accurate joining. Learning is based on the needs of the individual child. Excellent handwriting is applied in all writing and when modelling, and there is a consistent focus during marking.

Weekly handwriting objectives and activities are identified on the weekly English plan. Lessons follow the Early writers supported by '*Letter Family Formation Mats*' - *Appendix 15* and 'Achieving Success in Handwriting' handwriting programme from Cusworth Education Services (Doncaster) written by Martin Harvey. See *Appendix 16*

Good handwriting needs quality teacher input. Handwriting is taught in formal sessions. The minimum expectation is a daily session of 5 minutes in FS2 and 1 weekly session of 30 minutes in KS1. Sessions always start with a warm up activity (Hand and finger warm up exercises using dough disco, finger aerobics and finger rhymes).

Structure for formal handwriting sessions:

For a formal handwriting session,

- Two teaching boards should be used to support differentiation.
- Tables organised so all children are facing the board relevant to their ability.
- Children are explicitly reminded to use the following 3 good habits for handwriting
 - Use two hands (one to write, the other on the book)
 - Keep six feet on the floor (two human, four chair)
 - Sit in the Bottom Back in Chair position (BBC)
- Teachers model handwriting during a lesson using a whiteboard and marker pen.
- Teachers should model right and left handed movements.
- Left handed children to sit at the end of a table so that their movements are not restricted.
- The quality of 'teacher talk' during modelling and the lesson in general is vital. Teachers should vocalize the size and shape of letters, the movement of the pencil and the nature of joins.
- Each teacher demonstration is followed by children's practice lasting about 3 minutes.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants must constantly move around the class while children are writing to reinforce teaching objectives, assess progress and offer praise or support as necessary. Modelling in children's books should be in yellow.
- Letters should touch both lines on the narrow bands, but not go above the top line or below the bottom line.
- Tall letters go up to the top line and descending letters go to the bottom.
- The letter 't' ends halfway between the top line.
- Letters b/p/s/g/y/j are never joined to other letters.
- Numbers are the same height as capital letters.
- Capital letters are never joined to other letters.
- All other letters sit between the top and bottom lines, touching both.
- The joining of letters begins in Year 2 if children are ready.

Essential resources for Handwriting:

- In the early stages, a soft pencil with a thick stem is most appropriate and a standard pencil should be introduced as a child's motor skills begin to improve. Pencils need to be sharp. Pencil grips are available to support those children who need it.
- In Nursery and Reception, handwriting is recorded 'Have a Go' books.
- In Year 1 each child has a 'My Special Handwriting Book' with appropriate sized guidelines, which is used for formal handwriting sessions.
- In Year 1 and Year 2 handwriting is recorded in the back 'My Special Writing' books to support transference of skills. Each piece of handwriting is dated and a line is drawn underneath.

Our approach to assessment in Handwriting:

Expectations for the end of Nursery- Matched to 'Development Matters 2020'

- I can hold a pencil using a pincer grip
- Write some letters accurately
- Write some or all of their name.

Expectations for the end of Reception- Matched to 'Development Matters 2020'

- I can use a static tripod grip pencil grip
- I can form lower-case letters correctly.
- I can form numbers 0-9

Expectations for the end of Year 1 – Matched to National Curriculum 2018

- I can form most lower case letters and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- I can form numbers 0-9 correctly
- I can sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably with a dynamic tripod grip pencil grip
- I can form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- I can form capital letters correctly

Expectations for the end of Year 2 – Matched to National Curriculum

- I can form all lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- I can use some diagonal and horizontal lines needed to join letters correctly and know which letters do not join
- I can write capital letters and numbers at the right height in relation to each other and lower-case letters.
- I can leave spaces between words that reflect the size of the writing.

References:

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.
National Curriculum in England: Primary Curriculum 2014

Writing Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Whole School Writing Curriculum Plan
- Appendix 2 – Medium term planning
- Appendix 3 – Weekly planning sheet
- Appendix 4 – Examples aids for writing
- Appendix 5 – Homework examples
- Appendix 6 – Writing Hub essentials checklist
- Appendix 7 – Writer of the Week Certificate
- Appendix – 8 - Progression in Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar
- Appendix 9 – SPaG Terminology
- Appendix 10 – Marking Codes for Writing
- Appendix 11 – Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes for Writing’ and ‘Moving and Handling
- Appendix 12 – KS1 Writing Assessment Grids
- Appendix 13 – EYFSP Writing Exemplification
- Appendix 14 – KS1 Writing Exemplification
- Appendix 15 – ‘Achieving Success in Handwriting’ handwriting programme from Cusworth Education Services (Doncaster) written by Martin Harvey.
- *Appendix 16* – Early writers can be supported by ‘*Letter Family Formation Mats*’

This Practice Guidance was created by:

Name	Naila Asghar, Caroline Howett, Adele Doxey
Role	English Leaders
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