



HOLLICKWOOD



school

Writing Handbook 2024-5

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Writing 'The Hollickwood Way'

Ensuring that children learn to write fluently, creatively, accurately and with enjoyment is of paramount importance in our school. We therefore have an unashamedly ambitious and rigorous approach to the teaching of writing so that all children leave our school with a love of literature and the written word and the writing skills necessary to fully access the next stage of their education. Our teaching of writing is rooted in our school's core values: Compassion, Creativity, Commitment, Confidence, Curiosity and Courage. It has been informed by research-based evidence of best practice. Typically, only a half of our pupils join us with the necessary pre-writing skills and vocabulary to be on track to meet standards typical for their age.

Writing Curriculum Intent

Our writing curriculum is designed with the aim that **all** children:

- Develop into articulate and imaginative communicators, who are well-equipped with the basic skills they need to become life-long learners.
- See themselves as real writers and see writing as an interesting, purposeful and enjoyable process.
- Write clearly, accurately, coherently and creatively, adapting their language and style for a range of meaningful contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Are able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through writing.
- Take pride in the presentation of their writing and develop a fluent and consistent, cursive handwriting style.
- Develop a genuine love of language and the written word.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, a solid understanding of grammar and are able to spell new words by effectively applying their knowledge of etymology, morphology, syllables and phonics.
- Develop an understanding of how widely writing is used in everyday life and, therefore, realise how important and useful the taught skills are.
- Understand the conventions of writing and manipulate language to create effects for the reader.
- Acquire and learn the skills to plan, draft, edit and refine their written work.
- Develop independence so that they are able to identify their own areas for improvement in all pieces of writing.

Implementation – How do we teach writing at Hollickwood?

Learning Environment

All teachers should refer to the 'Learning Environment Guidelines' document available on the staff shared area for more detail about what all teachers should have in place in their classroom. The key displays and expectations are also summarised below:

- Phonics Display fully aligned with Essential Letters and Sounds (EYFS and KS1 and KS2 as appropriate for the class).
- Spelling Display fully aligned with 'Sounds and Syllables' and including the focus words of the week and the spelling strategies sequence outlined in Sounds and Syllables.
- Expanded Success Criteria (Y2 and up) which is added to regularly throughout each sequence of writing, and reflects the current unit of writing being taught.
- A display which makes it clear what the current core text is.

-Any handwritten information on displays must reflect the school's high expectations and handwriting policy.

Planning

All documents referred to in this handbook can be found on our google drive under 'English'.

Planning for writing is centred on high quality literature, or real-life experiences, which will engage, inspire and motivate pupils and equip them with the vocabulary needed for effective writing. These are the writing 'hooks'. Core Books, film texts and the wider curriculum provide a springboard for writing. The writing opportunities overview and core books overview set out for teachers what should be taught in each year group. Core texts have been very carefully chosen so that they are excellent models of the written word, and will widen children's vocabulary beyond that they would ordinarily encounter. Teachers also follow the agreed school sequence for the teaching of writing. This is called our 'writing sequence'. In EYFS and KS1, we also draw on aspects of 'Talk for Writing' particularly in terms of lots of oral retelling of stories and the use of picture S maps for retelling and planning.

There is a detailed progression in skills and knowledge document for each aspect of writing. This is set out in our English Progression Document. Teachers use this to make sure that they are building on prior learning, as well as having high expectations. In addition to this document, there is a genre-specific progression document which sets out clearly the age related expectations for each year group for each genre of writing. This is a useful document for teachers to support them to pitch their teaching of writing appropriately.

We welcome creativity and innovation and teachers are able to introduce new core texts or change the writing focus for a core text so long as they have clear justification for doing so and have discussed this in advance with the English Subject Leader. English long-term planning and documentation is reviewed yearly in collaboration with staff and any amendments are made in line with evaluations.

EYFS

The EYFS Core Opportunities grid sets out the core books that are used in Nursery and Reception. There is also an EYFS Progression Document which sets out typical age related progression in English knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This documentation can be found within the 'EYFS' section of the google drive.

Transcription – Handwriting and Spelling

At Hollickwood, we are committed to rigorously teaching handwriting and spelling (transcription) as we know that poor spelling and handwriting is a key barrier to children being confident, enthusiastic and fluent writers. This frees children up to then focus on the composition and effect of their writing.

In EYFS and KS1 we use Essential Letters and Sounds to support our teaching of spelling. There is a 30 minute timetabled session each day.

Towards the end of Year 2, and in KS2, children transition to learning spelling through a programme called 'Sounds and Syllables'. This programme builds seamlessly on from the ELS phonics sessions. Children have a minimum of four Sounds and Syllables sessions a week, and these last for approximately 20-30 minutes. The repeated revisiting of the spellings throughout the week is crucial in supporting those children for whom spelling is more difficult.

Handwriting

At Hollickwood, we do not follow a particular scheme for handwriting although 'Penpals' is there as a resource for teachers to draw on where needed. However, there is an agreed way that each letter should be formed, and it is expected that teachers model this consistently across the school. Our 'Handwriting Progression Document' also sets out our expectations for each year group including when children should typically begin moving from a printed style to a cursive style. All children write in pencil throughout the school. Teachers are able to timetable handwriting according to the needs of their class, but the emphasis should be on a 'little and often' approach. It is expected that all teachers ensure that their handwriting follows the agreed school formation and is neat so that high expectations are modelled for the children.

Punctuation and Grammar

Punctuation and grammar skills are taught within the appropriate genres allowing pupils the opportunity to identify, practise and consolidate grammatical understanding. This way the teaching of grammar and punctuation has a clear purpose and is applied in context. Within the writing sequence, some lessons will focus on learning key grammar or punctuation skills and then practising applying this within the context of the text that they are preparing to write. The children are then expected to apply the taught grammar and punctuation skills in their writing. At Hollickwood, we rarely use pre-prepared, generic grammar and punctuation worksheets, or teach grammar and punctuation out of context, as this is not as effective as being taught it, and practising it, in context.

Fluent in Five

From the summer term of Reception right through until Year 6, children start English lessons with a 'Fluent in 5'. The purpose of the fluent in 5 is to build fluency in core skills and to provide the opportunity for spaced practice of previously taught skills. Please see the 'Fluent in 5' documentation on the google drive for further information.

Composition and Effect

Together with the teacher, pupils deconstruct high quality modelled texts to identify key features of specific genres. This enables them to create texts which make a meaningful impact on their reader. This key skill is applied across both reading and writing, which improves composition and comprehension.

The writing process is clearly 'live' modelled by moving through the relevant stages – planning, drafting, editing and publishing. See the previously mentioned 'Writing Process' for more information. As the class move through a sequence of learning in writing, they add to the 'Expanded Success Criteria' to create a blueprint of what features and techniques they need to include to make their writing successful, and to make sure that the audience and purpose of the writing remains at the forefront of their minds. We want our children to know what they are writing, but also why they are writing and who they are writing it for. We try wherever possible to make sure that there is a real audience for their writing so it is not only the teacher who sees it!

Editing

'Real' writers edit their work making many additions and amendments before publishing. We want our children to work like 'real writers' so we place a strong emphasis on editing within the writing sequence. In EYFS and KS1, most editing takes place with support from an adult through 'over the shoulder, in the moment' verbal feedback. In KS2, the children begin working in a 'thinking book' which they use to draft and edit extended writing before publishing a final piece in their English book. During the drafting and editing stages, teachers will conference with pupils providing them with in depth verbal feedback on their writing to ensure progress is swift. Pupils are aware of their strengths and areas of development in writing so that learners take ownership of their progress.

Feedback and Marking

Our expectations for feedback and marking are set out in our 'Feedback and Marking Policy'. This can be found on the staff google drive and on our website. At Hollickwood, we know that timely, precise verbal feedback throughout the writing process is much more impactful than only giving written feedback after a piece of writing has been published. The emphasis is therefore on 'over the shoulder' feedback at the point of writing. We also conference with pupils throughout the writing process.

However, teachers do set a precise next step target at the end of each piece of extended writing so pupils know what they need to focus on in their next piece of writing in order to make progress. This target is then transferred to the next piece of writing and the teacher and pupil indicate whether the target has been achieved.

Teachers co-construct an expanded success criteria with the pupils, which is used for self and/or peer assessment. This always has purpose and audience at the centre.

Support for Parents

We know that not all parents will feel confident to support their child with writing and that it is important for parents and school to work in partnership so that there is consistency. Therefore, we support parents in the following ways:

- Information on our school website.
- Parent in-person workshops
- Inviting EYFS parents in to join in with a phonics lesson
- Curriculum Information Booklet at the start of each half term

Adaptations and Interventions for pupils with SEND

All staff are expected to adapt lessons to meet pupils' individual needs. The SENDCO provides regular training for staff, and there is also lots of information available on the SEND area of the google drive. Widgit is available online to support with making visuals and resources in languages other than English.

Interventions are carefully planned and targeted to ensure that all pupils make swift progress. The impact of these interventions is carefully monitored. It is an expectation that teachers know the current SEND support or EHCP targets for each pupil with identified SEND in their class, and that there is evidence that teaching including feedback supports pupils to work towards achieving these targets.

In some year groups, there will be split class teaching. This is most likely when there is a high level of SEND in a class.

The way that we teach writing, including the writing process and our approach to the teaching of phonics and spelling, also support pupils with SEND as they support teachers and other adults to consistently teach high quality, evidence-based lessons, and provide timely and impactful support for pupils.

Resources

All guidance and documentation to support planning and assessment can be found in the 'English' section of the school shared google drive.

Assessment

Writing assessment information is collated and entered onto our reading tracker four times a year at the following times:

End of November

Mid February

End of April

Beginning of July

Teachers record whether children are 'on track' to meet the age related expectations for their year group, working at greater depth within the age-related expectations for their year group, or working towards age related expectations for their year group. If a child is working below the year group expectations then teachers record this with a 'B' and the year group expectations that they are working within. Our school 'Writing Assessment' documents set out the expected standard for each year group. Staff also meet regularly to moderate writing judgements within school, and have regular opportunities to moderate with other schools in order to support them to feel confident to assess writing accurately and identify the precise next steps will support the child to make progress.

Staff Training and Support

At Hollickwood, we know that it is essential that all staff receive regular, high quality professional development and training opportunities if they are to teach writing well in a way that brings about the maximum progress for pupils. Therefore, we have a programme of professional development in place. This is set out termly in our 'Professional Development Overview' document.

Monitoring of Impact

Writing is given high importance in our school and the monitoring of writing reflects that. The following monitoring take place:

Book looks

Subject Leader Surgeries

Staff training

Shared planning with the English Lead or SLT

Learning walks and lesson observations.

Team or modelled teaching

External and internal writing moderation.

The Subject Leader attends Barnet English Network meetings for Subject Leaders and specialist training, as available, to ensure she has expert and up to date knowledge of best practice.

Writing Curriculum Impact

As a result of our WRITING curriculum our pupils will:

- be confident to write for a range of different purposes and audiences;
- be able to manipulate language, grammar and punctuation to create effect;
- develop a wide vocabulary that they are able to use precisely and to good effect in their writing;
- be able to effectively apply the spelling rules and patterns they have been taught;
- have the ability to plan, draft and edit their own work;
- be able to transfer the skills taught in English to other cross curricular subjects;
- make excellent progress from their starting points.

- have a love for writing, write for enjoyment and see themselves as authors with their own voice.