

Writing at Ampney Crucis C. of E. Primary School

Intent:

At Ampney Crucis C. of E. Primary School, we understand how important the skill of writing is for children to communicate their ideas and convey their learning across the curriculum. As well as writing academically, we aim to instil a love of writing creatively, so that children are able to express themselves and build on imaginative play. Detailing thoughts, opinions, hopes and dreams is also a way of maintaining good mental health, so we aim to provide all the necessary writing tools for our pupils to write effectively and skilfully both for learning and pleasure.

With this in mind, our writing curriculum includes the following aspects:

- Developing competency in phonics, word and spelling structure,
- Developing handwriting skills to ensure that writing is both fluent and coherent.
- Building resilience and stamina so that children can produce longer texts over time.
- Teaching a progressive understanding of grammatical structures in a purposeful way, so that pupils can utilise new skills straight away.
- Developing a sound understanding of the full range of punctuation so that this can be deployed correctly and effectively.
- Broaden pupil vocabulary to ensure they are able to select the optimum way to express their point.
- Immerse learners in a wide range of genres so that they understand the structure, purpose, audience and language requirements for each.
- Providing time and strategies for editing their work independently.
- Providing opportunities for creative writing so that children develop a love of writing.
- Celebrating success in writing and instilling pride by displaying work in classrooms, on the 'wonderful writing' wall, as well as by awarding certificates for effort and craft.

Implementation:

Spelling begins with the teaching of Twinkl phonics in EYFS and our KS1 class. We follow the Twinkl spelling programme which delivers the spelling patterns as set out by the National Curriculum. This entails a weekly taught spelling session for each year group, with spellings then being learnt by children over the week. There is an expectation that children then use their weekly spellings in their written work, with spelling lists being displayed each week on the working wall.

In both Key Stages, children are encouraged to check spellings by using either a spelling mat or dictionary. The use of a thesaurus is expected in Key Stage 2 so that children are able to select better quality vocabulary. The skills for using these resources are taught at the start of each year. The alphabet is displayed in all classrooms as a way of enabling all students to quickly find what they are looking for.

When marking, teachers will write 'Sp' in the margin for errors in spelling of previously taught words or patterns. Some words will be selected for the child to copy out and write into their spelling dictionaries (KS2).

Weekly spellings are sent home to be practised which can then be supported by parents or carers. In Key stage 2, there is an emphasis on showing that children understand the meaning of each word by putting them into sentences as part of their task. From years 3-6, spellings are tested weekly. Key stage 2 children build up their own spelling word banks, creating their own, quick-access dictionary.

Intervention is provided for identified pupils and often addresses phonic patterns being taken from our chosen phonics programme, Twinkl.

Handwriting:

We use the Nelson Handwriting scheme which starts in EYFS where children start to learn letter formation and builds to ensure that pupils have a cursive, fluent and neat joined handwriting style by the end of Key Stage 2. The correct pencil grip and writing position are taught in KS1 and pencil grips are provided to children of all ages as necessary. Specific intervention is provided of all ages who are identified as struggling with their handwriting.

Once children have developed a consistently neat and joined handwriting style, they are allowed to write in pen. By UKS2, all children will be proficient in writing with a pen.

All pupils are encouraged to take pride in their presentation of written work, by underlining with a pencil and ruler and crossing through errors with one neat line.

Approach to writing:

Our long-term plans set out the genres and texts in line, where possible, with other topics being taught each term. This ensures that regular teaching of different types of writing takes place and includes both fiction and non-fiction texts, as well as poetry. We use quality texts as examples to base our work on.

In our EYFS class, there is a focus on delivering vocabulary-rich talk in order that the children have a modelled approach to using language as a way of expressing themselves. Staff support and encourage this talk so that children can then go on to using it in their written work when they are ready.

Grammar objectives are planned throughout the year by teachers so that they are purposeful and can be used in children's written work straight away. All objectives are revisited several times in each academic year, with retrieval activities built in. Grammar and punctuation sessions are not discreet, being delivered 3 times per week as part of our English sessions.

Our teaching of writing is based on 'The Write Stuff' whereby a range of writing tools and techniques are taught alongside modelled chunks of writing by the teacher. This reinforces sentence and text construction and enable high-quality outcomes. More able writers are given more independence to explore their own craft.

Vocabulary choices are explored, gathered and displayed and topic-related word mats are provided.

Where possible, teachers will work with year groups for writing, rather than whole class, to ensure a greater focus on all learners as they write.

Working walls in each classroom are accessible to all learners and built up over time to be purposeful. Children are encouraged daily to use the wall to help them with their writing. On these walls, age-appropriate punctuation is displayed, in addition to examples of word class, weekly spellings, and examples of correct usage of grammatical terms, often written by the children, to be referred to in later sessions.

The alphabet is displayed in all classrooms. Phonics patterns are shown as taught in EYFS and Key Stage 1 and displayed for reference. Age-appropriate dictionaries, word mats and thesaurus' are available in all rooms.

Children struggling with obtaining the skills for writing are identified and supported through more scaffolded tasks. These are activities which build confidence, understanding and independence including the use of colourful semantics, the Clicker programme, targeted punctuation revision and slice and scribe-type tasks.

Throughout all writing tasks, pupils are encouraged to check and edit their own work each day. Children are provided with purple editing pens from Year 2. The focus for the writing each session is shown on a 'non-negotiable' slip on which prompt and targeted feedback can be given as the children work. A pink highlighter indicates something deemed particularly good by the teacher and is considered a 'mini celebration'.

In Key Stage 2, children are provided with 'free write' books and given regular opportunities to use these with the intention of handing children creative licence and building a love of writing for pleasure.

Impact

NFER grammar and spelling tests are carried out twice a year.

Teachers assess 6 pieces of writing against age-related objectives and regular moderation is carried out.

By providing a writing environment where children grow in confidence and develop a love of writing, we produce competent and successful writers who take pride in their work and understand how mighty the pen is.