



“Writing to me, is simply thinking through your fingers.” (*Isaac Asimov*)

Intent

At Woodhall, we recognise the inextricable link between spoken language, reading and high-quality writing. One element cannot thrive without a secure understanding and application of the other two. In this statement, we will outline the specific intent, implementation and impact of our writing curriculum but this document should be read and understood in conjunction with our approach to the other two key elements of English in mind.

The teaching of writing is made up of two main parts; transcription (encompassing handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation) and composition (writing, drafting and sharing ideas with creativity, exploring genre, purpose and audience). At Woodhall, we follow the programme of learning set out in the Early Years Framework and the National Curriculum to develop these core writing skills and provide children with opportunities to learn, practise and apply them. From Early Years, we seek to embed a love of writing in all areas of the curriculum; recognising that without the passion to pick up a pencil and express a feeling or share an idea, a child will never truly meet their full potential. To support language development across the school, we believe in saturating children in vocabulary and giving them multiple opportunities to apply their learning across the curriculum.

Early Years

We lay the foundations for future success in reading and writing through ensuring that every child masters the phonics code as quickly as possible; and can therefore decode words, read them and comprehend larger texts. At Woodhall, we use the Twinkl Systematic Synthetic Phonics Scheme, which provides clear scaffolding, thorough knowledge and appropriate challenge.

In our EYFS setting, provision includes an engaging mark-making/writing area. Children may choose to use this area during Child-Initiated Learning (CIL) where high-quality interactions with adults support learners to extend their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and bring purpose to early writing. In addition, purposeful writing opportunities are provided in other areas of the setting. For example, the children may write shopping lists in the home corner or prescriptions in role-play or job lists in the construction area. Children’s talk is captured in speech bubbles around the Early Years setting, so that children may refer back to these and use them as a prompt.

Through the year, children’s progression in writing is assessed against the Characteristics of Effective Learning and Development Matters statements. At the end of Reception, children are assessed using the Early Learning Goals , with Communication and Language, Literacy and Physical Development being the most pertinent to writing.

The Writing Journey

We have a well-established writing journey that includes the stages of; engagement, analysis, learning and practising skills, planning, drafting, editing and publishing. Different units focus more heavily on certain stages than others. Teacher’s personal planning is sometimes supplemented with resources from the Herts for Learning English scheme, carefully adapted to meet the needs of the individuals.

At the beginning of each new unit of writing, the children either make or are given a title page. They also learn what their final piece will be so they can see purpose and logic to the following sequence of learning. As language development is at the heart of our curriculum, the next page is always an age or developmentally appropriate word list so children can be front-loaded with new and pertinent words to use or a glossary page so children can record new and evolving vocabulary throughout the unit of work.

From Year One onwards, the teaching sequence starts with sharing a high-quality text. We are selective and purposeful in the texts we choose to share with children. We focus on our children's current interests whilst exploring ways to expand their world view and open them up to new concepts, language and ideas giving them new interests in the process.

To engage with a new unit of work, the children are immersed in the text in a bid to get them excited about the writing process. This stage of the writing journey takes on many formats; from physically recreating a scene from the book in the classroom to mind maps, acting out the story, related art activities, performing poetry or even trying out instructions for themselves. From the beginning of the writing journey, children will keep in mind what their final piece will be, helping them understand the steps they will need to take to achieve their goal.

At the analysis stage, learners may explore the text, analysing its use of vocabulary and grammatical features or look more widely at the genre; learning about its unique layout and features. Children may answer questions on the text, use a dictionary and thesaurus to explore the language or identify and colour code features using a success criteria. This stage may be a part of the main writing sequence of lessons or explored separately through related Guided Reading (Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2) and VIPERS (Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summarising) sessions (Upper Key Stage 2). Once the learners have really examined the text or genre, the children learn and practise the relevant age-related vocabulary, grammar and organisational features they will require to complete the final piece.

After the preparation work is complete, the children can start to plan their writing. This may involve methods such as using a planning format, generating ideas using word banks or researching a topic. On completion of the planning stage, the learners can then begin the process of drafting and editing to create their final piece. Teachers use a blend of shared, modelled and independent writing techniques to help children record their ideas in a first draft. Children also learn how to 'red pen' their work; improving vocabulary choices and sentence structures, rewriting for cohesion, concision and clarity and amending punctuation and spelling errors. The use of success criteria can help the children identify areas for improvement and ensure all necessary features are included.

Children publish their work in several different ways such as creating their own individual or class books, sending letters, creating leaflets, newspaper or typing writing to be displayed online. Not only does this highlight the many different uses of writing, it helps motivate children and give their efforts purpose. Publishing also gives children an opportunity to produce a final draft using their best handwriting, encouraging them to take pride in their writing and presentation.

Throughout the writing journey, the children develop, strengthen and apply their handwriting and spelling abilities and where appropriate, these skills are also taught in discrete SPAG sessions.

Handwriting

In Early Years and Key Stage 1, letter formation is taught explicitly as part of the phonic sequence. At Woodhall, we have introduced the Twinkl SSP scheme. Our skilled teachers then adapt this programme to support the needs of our individual learners. Using the principles, methodology and terms outlined in the Twinkl phonic scheme, we have established our own handwriting policy, to ensure continuity and progression of skills throughout Key Stage 2.

Spelling

The foundations of spelling (grapheme-phoneme correspondence) are also taught during phonic sessions. In Key Stage 2, teachers use a combination of Purple Mash and the Essential Spelling resources from Herts for Learning to teach the rules and conventions of spellings.

By the time our children leave Woodhall, we intend to:

- Develop the children’s creativity and passion for writing. We want the high aspirations to travel with them so they feel empowered to write and share their unique writer’s voice and experiences with the wider world.
- Nurture a legible, fluent handwriting style allowing them the freedom to write fluently and at speed and build a knowledge and understanding of correct spelling and grammar so they may communicate their written ideas effectively.
- Foster an understanding of genre, text type and writing for purpose across the curriculum. Children will know appropriate tones and style for different real-life writing situations.
- Promote that writing is a necessary tool for life and that everyone, no matter the age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation should be able to write. We will pitch the learning so that it scaffolds and challenges learning to meet the needs of the individual learner.
- Empower our learners with a sophisticated, technical yet expressive vocabulary so they may articulate their ideas and share their feelings. We want our children to understand and be understood so they can communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing on both a professional and personal level.
- Ensure our children’s sense of safety and responsibility, being able to use resources appropriately.

Implementation

Writing in Nursery

In Nursery, the building blocks of writing-speech and language and fine motor skills- are built through play and adult-guided focused activities. High quality interactions between adults and children help enhance and develop children’s speech and language as adults model and extend the children’s vocabulary and sentence structures. Fine motor skills are developed through a myriad of activities including threading, playing with malleable materials such as plasticine and cutting. The continuous provision environment provides lots of opportunities for early writing, with clipboards and writing materials available in all the different zones of learning.

Writing in Reception

Sharing a space with Nursery, our Reception children make use of the same purposeful applications of early writing skills in the continuous provision areas during CIL time. Letter formation skills are developed through guided phonics teaching. In the daily phonics sessions, the teacher models how to write the sound/s of the day, the children practise the letter using different materials and air-writing, exploring different materials and different scales. They might then use printed frames and models to trace and write letters on a smaller scale using writing pencils. Provision is developed through the year as appropriate; for example, focused writing sessions (separate to phonics teaching) are introduced in the spring term. The adults assist and guide the development of an effective pencil grip. This practise is reinforced by weekly writing homework.

The Writing in Year 1

Children transition to KS1 learning using a blend of formal English lessons and ‘enhanced provision’ activities during child-initiated learning (CIL) time. Foundation letter formation and spelling is taught during phonic sessions and applied in the following writing activities. Writing units are built around high quality, engaging texts. Using the texts as inspiration, the children build and generate ideas, orally rehearsing what they want to say and how they want to say it, learning how to apply their phonic skill to formulate words and construct simple sentences. Over the course of the year, the children develop their writing stamina; starting from words and simple captions and eventually building up to a sequence of full sentences by the end of the year.

The Writing Journey in Year 2

As the children move into Year 2, they continue to develop their transferable writing skills. English lessons start with phonics, followed by guided reading and this leads into writing sessions. There is a heavy grammar focus in the Year 2 writing journey as the children must secure their use of capital letters, full stops and conjunctions. They also learn to identify and sort words based on their classes, helping them to build more complex sentence structures in preparation for the End of Key Stage 1 SPAG assessments.

The Writing Journey in Year 3

In the Key Stage 2 English curriculum, there is a big step up in writing expectations with children needing increased understanding of layout and genre as they begin to write for more specific purposes. As part of the writing journey, Year 3 children consolidate their previous grammatical learning and develop new skills such as punctuation to demarcate direct speech.

The Writing Journey in Year 4 and Year 5

For the academic years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, we intend to teach Year 4 and 5 as a mixed age class (subject to pupil numbers). As a mixed age class, the children will work together and use the same modelled texts but it is very important that the children still learn age related grammar skills. Therefore, certain stages such as practising and editing will be differentiated by age group as well as ability.

Learners focus carefully on the writing journey sequence in Years 4 and 5, using either a longer chapter book or a modelled text to inspire their own writing. When analysing the given text or 'good model', children in Year 4 and 5 identify and highlight features they have learnt in previous years, helping consolidate their previous learning. There is a strong emphasis on genre and learning how to write for different purposes, with different levels of formality. They then develop new and interesting ways to write sentences from the use of fronted adverbials in Year 4 to the use of relative clauses and parenthesis in Year 5. When writing, they use slightly different success criteria, focusing on their own age-related expectations.

The Writing Journey in Year 6

In Year 6, the children follow an accelerated writing journey allowing them to produce multiple final pieces based on one more in-depth model text. Learners use and apply the knowledge of genre, grammatical features and vocabulary that they have developed throughout Key Stage 2 in their independent writing, focusing on developing a distinct writer's voice, experimenting with formality, audience and purpose. To help prepare them for End of Key Stage 2 assessments, extra discrete SPAG sessions take place, allowing children to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the conventions of the English language.

Handwriting

In Key Stage 2, handwriting and presentation is modelled closely by adults. Children have regular opportunities to practise and develop their handwriting skills. Where a child has specific difficulties with handwriting, methods such as sloped writing desks, pencil and pen grips, adapted pens and pencils, fine motor skills, letter formation and touch typing interventions are explored and applied as necessary.

Children use pencils to write in all lessons until Key Stage 2 where they can earn a pen license for displaying clear letter formation and an ability to join letters successfully. Children in Years 3-5 who have earned a pen license can use their handwriting pen to write final pieces and in Year 6, all children are encouraged to use a pen for all writing in preparation for secondary school.

Writing Across the Curriculum

From our display to our books, we provide learners with opportunities to record and revisit new words and definitions. Every topic in both English and across the curriculum starts with a cover page and an age and unit

appropriate word bank or glossary. When writing the wider curriculum, subject leads carefully selected core vocabulary in each subject.

Impact

Assessing Writing in Nursery and Reception

Progress in writing is measured through daily Assessment for Learning (AfL) using the Characteristics of Effective Learning and Development Matters statements.

At the end of Reception, the teacher uses these informal, day-to-day judgements to measure attainment against the relevant Early Learning Goals.

Assessing Writing in Key Stage 1 and 2

In each year group, assessment of writing can look different but there are several commonalities throughout.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, the National Curriculum outlines specific outcomes for children to be considered as meeting age-related expectations; children are either identified as either working below the expected standard, working towards the expected standard, at the expected standard or greater depth standard.

To help measure their progress, identify gaps and move learning on, children's writing is analysed, assessed and banded using the PA Plus Assessment Model three times a year (see year group specific descriptions below.) Objectives from the National Curriculum are linked to a 'band' which indicates where the child is working at across the spectrum of Key Stage 1/ 2 learning. Teachers record children's bands on Year Group Tracking Grids. This assessment method helps teachers pinpoint where a learner is compared to age-related expectations and exactly what skills they have attained. The table below indicates how these bands link to age-related expectations at different assessment points throughout the year. Good progress is identified as three bands of progress within one academic year.

GUIDE TO PHASES AT END OF EACH TERM

YEAR GROUP	STANDARD	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
YEAR 1	WB	40-60E-	40-60S-	ELG-
	B	40-60D/40-60S	ELG	A0
	ARE	ELG/A0	A0/A1	A1/A2
	EX	A1+	A2+	A3+
YEAR 2	WB	A0-	A1-	A2-
	B	A1	A2	A3
	ARE	A2/A3	A3/A4	A4/A5
	EX	A4+	A5+	A6+
YEAR 3	WB	A3-	A4-	A5-
	B	A4	A5	A6
	ARE	A5/A6	A6/B1	B1/B2
	EX	B1+	B2+	B3+
YEAR 4	WB	A6-	B1-	B2-
	B	B1	B2	B3
	ARE	B2/B3	B3/B4	B4/B5
	EX	B4+	B5+	B6+
YEAR 5	WB	B3-	B4-	B5-
	B	B4	B5	B6
	ARE	B5/B6	B6/C1	C1/C2
	EX	C1+	C2+	C3+
YEAR 6	WB	B6-	C1-	C2-
	B	C1	C2	C3
	ARE	C2/C3	C3/C4	C4/C5
	EX	C4+	C5+	C6+

Teachers in all year groups use the age-related outcomes from the National Curriculum (as outlined in the 'Hertfordshire Teacher Assessment Framework' or TAFs), exemplification materials and also take part in moderation activities to substantiate their assessments and help identify and fill gaps to move the learning on. Particular

attention is paid that teachers assess children based on criteria laid out in the TAFs and not based on their achievement relevant to other learners within the cohort.

Pupil Progress Meetings

At several points in the year (Autumn Half Term, End of Autumn Term, End of Spring Term, Summer Half Term and End of Year), children's achievement in writing is analysed by class teachers, Senior Leaders (SLT) and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) through pupil progress meetings (PPMs).

Before these meetings, the teacher transcribes information from the tracking sheet into the PPM analysis grid, identifying the percentages of the year group making good levels of progress and the percentages considered well below, below, at expected and greater depth standard. The progress of vulnerable groups (i.e. PPG/ SEND) are also analysed. In relevant year groups, predictions for End of Key Stage results are also made.

During the meeting, the team drill down into the data with forensic detail so trends, patterns and weaknesses can be identified. Individual children are discussed with the expertise of the whole team and plans are put in place to develop their writing. Where necessary, in school intervention programmes are planned, IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are put into place and external professionals are engaged. PPM meetings ensure that early intervention can take place to support children's writing and that teachers are held to account for their children's progress.

Where a teacher has been identified as struggling to manage or address the needs of their learners, a programme of support is built around the teacher to ensure swift and rapid progress can be made. In the past, teachers have been supported directly by members of SLT; either through planning support, team teaching, assessment moderation or through targeted support from our Herts for Learning English Advisor.

Assessing Writing Year One

Daily AFL activities help teachers make formative assessments of learning in Year One. At the end of each term, teachers assess children's attainment using the portfolio of writing they have built up both in English lessons and across the curriculum. Children's composition, handwriting and grammar are assessed against the National Curriculum objectives (as laid out in the TAFs) and spelling is assessed through a separate spelling test. The child is then 'banded' and their information added to the Year Group Tracking Sheet.

Assessing Writing Year Two

As with Year One, assessment in Year Two is a combination of formative and summative methods. Teachers collect a range of writing from each child to assess composition, handwriting and the application of grammar against the National Curriculum objectives. As with Year One, children are banded and added to a tracking grid.

At the end of the year, the children also complete the Standardised End of Key Stage 1 Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) assessment (SATs). The teacher uses the child's portfolio of writing and results from the SPAG assessment to make judgements of: B (Below), WTS (Working Towards the Expected Standard), EXS (Expected Standard) or GDS (Greater Depth Standard). This information is used to predict future achievement and as a measure to compare End of Key Stage 1 and 2 progress.

Assessing Writing Years Three - Five

In Key Stage 2, a mixture writing across the curriculum, final pieces from the writing journey and completely independent writing are used to assess outcomes. Each term Teachers compare writing to the National Curriculum criteria for each year group using the TAFs. In Spring, these judgements are augmented with the Rising Stars Optional SPAG paper for each year group. At the end of the year, the children complete the Test Base AQA Optional SPAG SAT paper for each year to help complete the picture of a child's achievement in writing. As with earlier years, the learning is 'banded' and then added to a tracking sheet for analysis.

Assessing Writing in Year Six

In Year Six, the children write a range of pieces across a variety of genres (including a balance of narrative and non-fiction) utilising the skills they have built up over Key Stage 2.

At the end of the year, the children also complete the Standardised End of Key Stage 2 Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) assessment (SATs). The teacher uses the child's portfolio of writing and results from the SPAG assessment to make judgements of: B (Below), WTS (Working Towards the Expected Standard), EXS (Expected Standard) or GDS (Greater Depth Standard). This information is then reported to the government and used as a measure of achievement across the school.

Tracking Trends in End of Key Stage 1 and 2 Data

The SLT compares the yearly end of Key Stage data to previous years noting any rising or falling trends.

This data is compared to National and Local Authority levels and our ongoing goal is to bring both Expected and Greater Depth Standard levels End of Key Stage 2 data in line with national averages.

Writing Monitoring

Knowing the importance of developing Writing across the school, English subject leadership was taken on by the SLT. The SLT report regularly to affiliated governors and termly to the full Governing Body indicating progress in English against our School Development Plan Priorities.

Progress and standards in writing are monitored regularly through lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny. From this, general strengths and weaknesses are identified and feedback is given to each teacher. Actions are then put into place to support individuals or all teachers as part of whole school inset, with the impact then measured in subsequent monitoring. Recently, whole School CPD has included training on the Writing Journey and writing assessment moderation.

The impact of our writing, grammar, spelling and punctuation curriculum can also be measured through the acquisition of pupil voice and talking to the children about their own learning. Pupil Voice surveys are carried out by members of the SLT, our Hertfordshire School Improvement Partner, our English Advisor and school governors. Past pupil voice surveys have indicated that the children are enjoying their learning and can talk about the subject and curriculum opportunities. Pupil voice has also highlighted that our children are proud of their writing and they are given opportunities to show this by sharing their work at whole school achievement assemblies and potentially win a 'Woodhall Writer' award.

Relevant Website Links:

End of Key Stage Assessment: <https://woodhall.herts.sch.uk/end-of-key-stage-results/>
School Development Plan (parents/carers' version): <https://woodhall.herts.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Woodhall-School-Development-Plan-2022-2023-Parents-Version-1.pdf>
Curriculum (subject ladders/curriculum overviews): <https://woodhall.herts.sch.uk/curriculum>

