



“Writing is the painting of the voice.” (Voltaire)

At Woodhall Primary School, we know that writing is more than just putting words on a page. It is a way to explore ideas, express feelings, and make sense of the world around us. From crafting imaginative stories and descriptive poems to explaining a solution in mathematics or reflecting on a personal experience, writing allows children to communicate clearly and creatively.

Writing teaches us to organise our thoughts, consider our audience, and choose the right words to convey exactly what we mean. It develops patience and perseverance, as ideas often need careful shaping and polishing before they shine. Whether children are jotting down notes, composing letters, or creating stories that take readers to far-off lands, they are learning to think critically, reflect deeply, and share their unique perspectives.

A strong foundation in writing opens doors to countless opportunities. It supports success in all subjects, from science to history, and prepares learners for roles as authors, journalists, teachers, scientists, engineers, or even inventors. Beyond practical skills, writing nurtures imagination, encourages curiosity, and allows every child to find their voice—because a child who can express themselves well is never at a loss for words.

INTENT

At Woodhall Primary School, we recognise the inextricable link between spoken language, reading, and high-quality writing. Each element supports and reinforces the others, and one cannot thrive without a secure understanding and application of the other two. This statement outlines the intent, implementation, and impact of our writing curriculum and should be read alongside our approaches to spoken language and reading.

The teaching of writing comprises two main strands: transcription (handwriting, spelling, grammar, and punctuation) and composition (writing, drafting, and sharing ideas with creativity, exploring genre, purpose, and audience). At Woodhall, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the National Curriculum to develop these core skills, providing children with structured opportunities to learn, practise, and apply them.

From the Early Years, we aim to instil a love of writing across all areas of the curriculum. Without the passion to pick up a pencil and express ideas or feelings, a child will never fully realise their potential. To support language development across the school, we prioritise rich vocabulary exposure and ensure children have frequent opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful contexts throughout the curriculum.

Early years

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

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), provision includes an engaging mark-making and writing area. Children can access this area during Child-Initiated Learning (CIL), with high-quality adult interactions to extend vocabulary and give purpose to early writing. Purposeful writing is also embedded across other areas of the setting—for example, writing shopping lists in the home corner, prescriptions in role-play, or job lists in the construction area. Children’s talk is captured in speech bubbles around the classroom, providing reference points and prompts for their writing.

Children’s progression in writing is assessed throughout the year 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

At Woodhall, we have a well-established writing journey that includes the stages of: engagement, analysis, skill development, planning, drafting, editing, and publishing. Different units emphasise certain stages more than others. Teachers' planning is sometimes supplemented by the Herts for Learning Essential Writing Scheme, which is carefully adapted to meet the needs of individual learners.

At the start of each unit, children create or are given a title page and learn what their final piece will be, providing purpose and structure. Language development is central to our curriculum, so the following page always includes an age-appropriate word list or a glossary where children can record new and evolving vocabulary.

From Year One onwards, teaching begins with sharing a high-quality text. Texts are carefully selected to reflect children's interests while broadening their horizons, introducing new language, ideas, and perspectives.

Engagement

To spark interest in a new unit, children are immersed in the text to build excitement about the writing process. Engagement activities take many forms: recreating scenes from the book, mind maps, role-play, related art activities, performing poetry, or trying out instructions for themselves. From the outset, children keep their final piece in mind, understanding the steps they will need to take to achieve their goal.

Analysis

During the analysis stage, learners explore the text in detail, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and genre-specific features. They may answer questions, use dictionaries and thesauruses, or colour-code key elements using a success criteria. This stage may be embedded in the main writing sequence or explored through Guided Reading (Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2) and VIPERS sessions (Upper Key Stage 2). Once learners have examined the text or genre thoroughly, they practise the vocabulary, grammar, and organisational features required for their final piece.

Writing and editing

After preparation, children plan their writing using methods such as graphic organisers, word banks, or research. Drafting and editing follow, with teachers supporting through shared, modelled, and independent writing techniques. Children learn to "red pen" their work—improving vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesion, clarity, punctuation, and spelling. Success criteria guide children in identifying areas for improvement and ensuring all necessary features are included.

Publishing

Publishing takes many forms: individual or class books, letters, leaflets, newspapers, or online displays. This demonstrates the real-world uses of writing, motivates children, and gives their work purpose. Publishing also allows children to produce a polished final draft using their best handwriting, encouraging pride in their work.

Throughout the writing journey, children strengthen handwriting and spelling skills, reinforced in discrete SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar) sessions where appropriate.

Handwriting

In Early Years and Key Stage 1, letter formation is explicitly taught as part of the phonic sequence using the Twinkl SSP scheme. Teachers adapt the programme to meet individual needs. Our handwriting policy ensures continuity and progression of skills throughout Key Stage 2.

Spelling

Foundations of spelling, including grapheme-phoneme correspondence, are taught during phonics sessions. In Key Stage 2, spelling is taught using Purple Mash and the Essential Spelling resources from Herts for Learning. We also run a "Spelling Challenge," where children complete a set of spellings before moving on, promoting mastery and confidence.

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.

Due to low pupil numbers, we have to work flexibly across the school, making use of additional adults to support learners. In the academic year 2025-2026, Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children form the Parrot Class. The children in Year 2, 3 and 4 have become the Puffin Class and the Kingfishers Class is made up of children from Year 5 and 6. Children in these classes will work together and use either the same modelled texts or slightly adapted versions, 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.

The Writing Journey in Year 1

The Year 1 children have an additional teacher for English lessons four days a week. The 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 a phonics session in the adjacent classroom with a teaching assistant and they return to the classroom for their 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 writing and 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

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.

SEND

Most children are taught within their class and their needs are met through differentiated models, tasks, levels of support and outcome. Children can be supported by various equipment such as writing slopes, pencil grips, different types of pens and pencils, larger lines on writing paper, writing and speaking frames, handwriting prompts, phonics and word mats, glossaries and communicate in print resources. Where appropriate, interventions are run alongside their whole-class learning. For example: extra phonics sessions, spelling practice, handwriting practice etc.

Children identified as academic 'outliers' (working pre-key stage in either reading or writing) are given bespoke English teaching in line with their IEP targets. Writing opportunities may be taught through child-initiated learning or guided teaching.

Handwriting

Letter formation is taught from Early Years as part of our Twinkl Phonics Programme. The children are taught the correct posture for handwriting, how to hold and strengthen their pen grip and where to begin each letter for correct formation.

In Key Stage 2, handwriting and presentation is modelled closely by adults and teaching is supplemented with Twinkl concept videos. Letter formation must be secured before learning to join begins. Children have regular opportunities to practise and develop their joined-up handwriting skills learning continuous cursive with lead in strokes. 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.

We are mindful that as small school, percentages can be representative of very few children and be misleading. Therefore, we closely drill down into individual's performance, *alongside* the data, so we have a rounder picture of trends and development points throughout the school.

Monitoring Writing

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. Improving attainment in writing is also a key feature of our SDP.

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 certificates for their work.

Woodhall School Leadership Team

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