

Our approach to writing

How do we teach writing?

Writing effectively is a more difficult skill for our children to learn than reading. Reading is **receptive** (the creating of the language is done by the author). Writing is **productive** (the child has to create the language). As a result it is natural that the learning of writing follows that of reading and takes longer. Throughout the school our teaching of writing starts from the children reading and saying texts. They become familiar with the language and sentence patterns used in a type of text which they can start to use in their own writing.

We read carefully chosen texts and give time to talk about them. We place emphasis on **"Talk for writing"** and give time, at all stages, to model writing through shared writing. Different styles of writing are explored through quality texts, drama and topic work, with these quality texts used to inspire different styles of quality writing.

All children are set achievable targets and are informed of the "next steps" they need to take. We give time for the children to reflect on their writing and understand what they need to do to improve. Children are encouraged to develop self and peer assessment (star and wish) with time each lesson to evaluate, improve and identify next steps in the learning journey. Before extended writing sessions, children are also provided with success criteria for detailed pieces of extended writing (see Relax, Think, Write). This allows them to know **how** they will be successful and the **steps** that they need to take in order to get there.

Here at Billingshurst Primary School, through our creative curriculum we are able to find lots of opportunities for writing with a **real purpose** and an **authentic audience**. We may have a real visitor (or indeed a virtual one!) who then asks for the children's help which the children provide in writing. We may have surprise such as a mystery box of eggs appearing in reception or a project to plan and write about the new school eco-path. We may also write for **real purpose** for **real newspapers** (*recently a Year 4 pupil was published in the district post!*) All of this adds to the excitement and sense of purpose needed to write effectively. We feel that all writing should have a purpose and an intended audience, to allow our children to become **real writers**.

Children are given regular opportunities to write for pleasure through role play and in their classes writing areas. Each classroom

has a writing corner which are equipped with a range of writing implements and resources which encourage the children to write independently for a range of purposes.

A **Writer of the week** will be identified in each class by the teacher and sent to see the Deputy Head teacher for special praise. Their work is displayed with pride in the main corridor of our school.

We teach spelling, grammar and punctuation throughout the school, both in dedicated lessons and embedded into all reading, writing and speaking and listening.

We have high expectations for the presentation of work and expect the children to take pride in their work. Our handwriting style is cursive and joined from the start.

See our new handwriting policy for our approach to handwriting.

Relax, Think, Write!

Extended Writing

Children need time for preparation, thinking and planning, for writing, and for revision and editing. Teachers plan a block of time that enables the children to link reading and writing. They also allow the time to focus on teaching the skills of writing an extended piece of writing via **demonstration, shared writing** and **guided work**, as well as enabling children to engage in development in substantial chunks of writing time.

Once children have been supported during the early stages, an extended block of writing time is provided to allow children to really get their teeth into a piece of writing. This may span over the course of one lesson, a few lessons, a whole morning or possibly longer!

Focus is being given to these extended pieces of writing through our child chosen name, **Relax, Think, Write!** This is a focused time where children are encouraged to spend a substantial amount of time developing a piece of writing.

As writers, children are encouraged to get into the '**writing mood**,' with the use of a special relaxed atmosphere created by music, dimmed lights and complete concentration. They are also warmed up with **Quick-fire writing games** to exercise and strengthen the imagination. These include the use of various grammatical features to improve sentences and pieces of writing.

Marking and Feedback

Our Extended writing pieces are marked on a BPS feedback sheet identifying next steps for the children in the form of star and a wish. We do not edit the children's writing, but our marking is detailed and developmental. We clearly identify next steps for the children. The children are given time to revisit work and are given the opportunity to **respond to the marking**. This time is vital and can be held any time during the following week. It is important as this is the time that pupils improve their work and learn their next steps.

EYFS/Y1

In Reception and Year 1 the children learn all the initial sounds and how to form all letters correctly.

Children are encouraged to mark-make and activities are provided to develop their fine motor skills and the pincer grip needed for writing.

Child initiated activities enable the children to explore and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the process of writing.

Regular oral story telling using actions builds the language structures that the children will use later in their writing.