

Writing

Intent

At Pensilva Primary School we value writing as a key life skill, and alongside reading, place it at the heart of our curriculum. We believe that writing is an essential skill for the children to be able to fully achieve our school motto To Live, To Love and To Learn. We believe that the skills needed to write effectively are integral to all aspects of life and, with this in mind; we endeavour to ensure that children develop a healthy and enthusiastic attitude towards writing that will stay with them.

We recognise that mastery in phonics is fundamental to support the process of learning to write and aim to teach pupils the phonic understanding needed to write effectively through the Read, Write Inc (RWI) phonics approach. The key understanding and skills taught in RWI sessions are explicitly reinforced and developed across the wider curriculum where written outcomes are closely matched to a range of genre; with skills developed progressively across the year groups within our 2-year rolling curriculum.

Our curriculum is structured with the use of high-quality core texts. These text types are carefully selected, across all year groups, so that children are systematically exposed to a variety of genres, different settings and cultures and rich vocabulary. This is particularly important in closing the vocabulary gap. Furthermore, within this approach, timely opportunities are seized to develop opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

Through our approach, we aim for children to become inquisitive about language and its structure and to be able to write fluently and competently for a range of purposes, generating the skills for life ahead. They also develop widening knowledge and use this to make connections between subjects and aspects of learning. As a result of this, we strive for our children to become happy, confident writers.

Implementation

Our early stages of learning to write are closely linked to our synthetic phonics programme: (RWI). This is a method of learning letter sounds and blending them together to read and write words. As part of this, children in Reception to Year 4 have four weekly phonics sessions in small groups where they participate in speaking, listening, reading and writing activities that are matched to their developing needs. The teachers carefully draw upon these early skills to reinforce and embed links between RWI learning within the teaching of writing in English and the wider curriculum.

We recognise that learning to form letters and spell words requires considerable effort and focus; therefore, the early skills of letter formation are taught using the RWI letter formation rhymes in a non-joined style. As the children progress in the accuracy of letter formation they are taught to develop a 'lead in' line to develop a pre-cursive style as they move through Year 1. As pupils secure this pre-cursive script, they are then taught how to join in a progressive manner both in RWI lessons and whole class teaching. A key element of the RWI approach and our handwriting approach is that practice across the school is completely consistent.

We use the highly successful RWI phonics programme to teach our children to read. Application of phonic skills and strategies taught also support early writing and spelling. Alongside the RWI programme in (KS1) and as the children progress beyond the RWI Phonics programme (KS1/KS2), we use the 'Spelling Shed' programme which teaches the fundamentals of spelling built upon the phonic knowledge already learnt to ensure the children build their understanding of the spelling rules and patterns required in each year group.

We teach writing through the powerful and effective tool of storytelling and immersion in high quality core texts. At Pensilva Primary, our approach anchors high quality literature and vocabulary at the heart of the children's learning experiences. Our approach places the learner, through formative assessment, at the heart of the planning, teaching and learning process. We include regular opportunities for speaking and drama as this helps

the children become better speakers, listeners, readers, writers and thinkers. Vocabulary is an explicit focus of our teaching in English (see separate vocabulary documents) alongside teaching of grammar and punctuation all linked closely to engaging and high quality literature.

The underpinning process of our approach in writing is moving from establishing patterns of language in the children's heads to the children exploring these patterns to create something new and finally providing the children with opportunities for independent application across all curriculum subjects. There are also regular opportunities for developing independent application of writing skills through producing 'Showcase' pieces of writing at least half termly. These will reflect upon teaching content/a genre that has been previously taught and provide valuable evidence to inform teacher assessment.

In ensuring high standards of teaching and learning in writing, we implement a curriculum that is progressive throughout the whole school. This ensures progression between year groups. We develop the use of grammatical language as well as close links with reading to allow children to find out for themselves. Planning involves teachers creating engaging lessons.

Impact

We use an ongoing writing assessment system to enable teachers to establish where the children are on their learning journey. Ongoing formative assessment takes place within each writing lesson to ensure children are making progress in their writing. Teachers use our assessment tool to frequently look for skills which are being developed in children's writing. This allows for quick identification of gaps in learning or skill acquisition allowing for teachers to quickly reinforce concepts. Each half term KS1 and KS2 children complete summative SPAG assessments to identify where interventions or modified teaching may be needed.

At Pensilva Primary School it is our intention that children will become confident writers that make clear and sustained progress from their starting points.

Essential Characteristics

- The ability to write fluently and with interesting detail on a number of topics throughout the curriculum.
- A vivid imagination which makes readers engage with and enjoy their writing.
- A highly developed vocabulary and an excellent knowledge of writing techniques to extend details or description.
- Well-organised and structured writing, which includes a variety of sentence structures.
- Excellent transcription skills that ensure their writing is well presented and punctuated, spelled correctly and neat.
- A love of writing and an appreciation of its educational, cultural and entertainment values.