

Writing Policy

Meir Heath Academy



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‘If you wish to be a writer, write.’ **Epictetus**

‘The hard part is getting to the top of page one.’ **Tom Stoppard**

‘You’re not going to be a writer someday. You’re a writer today.’ **Jack Heffron**

‘What you write becomes who you are... So make sure you love what you write!’ **JK Rowling**

Aims

At Meir Heath Academy, we have a number of specific writing aims:

- To ensure progression of writing skills across the school.
- Provide meaningful writing experiences using the contexts inspired by quality core texts.
- Inspire pupils to write through exciting shared experiences.
- Model high standard writing to secure high expectations and inspire writers
- Ensure children are taught and recognise the range of social functions that writing can perform e.g. persuade, instruct, inform, and entertain.
- Develop a clear understanding of the structure and language features associated with different genres of writing.
- Enable children to demonstrate the ability to choose the appropriate form and content to suit the purpose and audience.

Teaching and Learning

- High quality texts are used to challenge, enthuse and engage children.
- Core texts, where possible, link to topic themes to enhance learning.
- There is a clear progression in the teaching of writing which includes the familiarisation of the text type through reading, the identification of structure and language features, modelled writing, shared writing, supported composition, guided writing and regular, independent opportunities.
- Progression of teaching writing includes exploring features, planning, drafting, assessing and editing.
- A form of modelled or shared and guided writing should take place in every session.
- Use topic themes to provide meaningful writing experiences through contexts
- Use of drama in English sessions is used within lessons to improve speaking and listening skills and build confidence and self-esteem, as well as a stimulus for further writing.

Modelled Writing

The teacher talks aloud the thought processes as a writer. They have complete control over the writing and make explicit the structure, language features, spelling and punctuation of the text type as appropriate.

Shared Writing

This is a collaborative approach; pupils contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to select the most appropriate. The teacher needs to give reasons for the choices made.

Guided Writing

Pupils are grouped by writing ability according to their levels and/or target needs. The teacher works with each group in rotation during the week so that every child partakes in guided writing at least once per week. The task is carefully selected to provide an appropriate level of challenge and will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process as opposed to writing a complete piece. Tasks may include the processes of planning, drafting and editing pieces of writing. Teachers choose a target for each group to work on based on an assessment of their individual needs and previous writing.

Independent Writing

All children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text type in their own writing. This is vitally important if children are to develop their skills as writers within different genres

Practising and applying grammar and punctuation skills

Using the national curriculum programme of study, age appropriate sentence and punctuation skills will be taught daily and, wherever possible, will be in context with the reading or topic material in use.

Spelling

Children in EYFS and Key Stage One learn to spell through daily practice. From Year One, a daily spelling programme is followed. This is based on proven strategies of teacher modelling followed by partner work, to embed learning. The programme covers all of the word structures and spelling requirements for Years 1 to 6.

Handwriting

The whole school follows the cursive approach to handwriting. Pupils are encouraged to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing. Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and is taken into consideration during all lessons. In Foundation Stage, handwriting is addressed during daily phonics sessions and pupils also have one focused handwriting session each week.

Provision

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Communication, language and English

Each classroom have a well organised writing area that includes a variety of different resources for mark making and writing such as large sheets of paper, coloured paper, notebooks, diaries, postcards, clipboards, whiteboards, pens, pencils, high-frequency word cards, alphabet cards, interactive displays, messages and examples of children's writing. These resources should all be available for the children to use independently.

- The outside area also provides opportunities for reading, writing and role-play
- Activities to develop children's fine and gross motor skills are provided e.g. building wrist strength by twirling ribbon sticks, practising writing patterns with big brushes and water, making letters in the sand
- Children are able to access a computer which has suitable reading and writing software in use.
 - The interactive whiteboard is accessible for the children.
 - Inviting book corners have a good variety well organised quality books - hard cover, soft cover, fiction, non-fiction and rhymes.
 - Displays celebrate children's achievements and support children's future learning, being interactive where appropriate. They also include typed and handwritten text and captions from adults and children.
 - In the EYFS there must be a daily whole class phonics session and a regular literacy based session. These should be supported by linked independent and adult directed activities. These are to be clearly described on planning with the use of learning intentions and key questions, along with details of differentiation. Core texts should be used and links to the learning theme made where possible.
- Children each have an English workbook in which directed activities are recorded.

Upper juniors have magpie books/Keynote dictionaries in which they can capture new vocabulary for impact.

Planning

The Foundation Stage uses the EYFS Framework to inform planning. Each class plans around a core text that should be linked to the current theme for learning; where possible, mark making and writing experiences are linked to these learning themes. Within the EYFS the planning for self-initiated learning takes place on a daily basis as it is dependent on and informed by the children's interests and progress. Whole class teaching and small group adult directed activities (adult led and independent) should be planned by the Friday previous to the week the plan is for. The EYFS and Key Stage One follow the Supersonic Phonic Friends Phonic Scheme and this should be used where necessary in Key Stage Two.

Both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 follow the schools core text curriculum when planning English. Texts are identified across KS1 and KS2 that are high quality. The core text allows daily reading as well as providing a meaningful context for writing. Each week is usually themed around writing a particular text type. Across each week, children are given opportunities to explore features and examples, writing sections or versions of a text before planning, drafting and editing their own written text.

Teachers are required to set high expectations during each English session to ensure children are being stretched. This means that children are required to write at length on a regular basis and for an extended period at least once a week. If a shorter writing activity is planned, the teacher will provide an extension activity. The extension should provide a learning experience that builds on learning and targets progress to the next level, it may be a form of self or peer assessment. Planning should show where each adult is placed within the class. Every lesson focused on extended writing has a success criteria; these are either shared with the pupils or created with the pupils depending on age and ability. Learning intentions and success criteria are displayed on pupils work; they are printed and children have a space to include their next step from the previous day's feedback. The success criteria are taken from the Year Group Overviews to target children's learning and move them on. The success criteria are the skills children need to demonstrate to achieve the Learning Intention.

Marking/Uplevelling

After extended pieces, teachers will expect pupils to uplevel their writing, using improved sentences, identifying two of the key areas: text, sentence and punctuation objectives. In addition, key spellings that have not already been corrected, must be written out three times.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation, 1:1 interaction, small group activities and whole class teaching. Parents are strongly encouraged to contribute to these assessments. Baseline assessments of the children will take place during the first three weeks of the autumn term, these will be used to inform planning and the organisation of interventions and activities designed to support the children's individual needs. Each child will have a Development Matters Profile in which their progress will be recorded. Their attainment will be entered onto Arbor termly. Moderation of observations and teachers judgements will take place internally along with externally between local schools.

In Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, the grades for each child are put on Arbor at the end of each term and teachers report to the Senior Leadership Team the writing grade of every child in the class. Children from Year 1 to 6 are assessed against the new curriculum objectives for each year group. Teachers are expected to update excel sheets for their year groups termly, stating if the child has achieved an objective in autumn, spring or summer. These will then indicate if a child is emerging, at the expected level or at greater depth. These are then used to input data on Arbor. Half-termly progress meetings identify strategies addressing any concerns. On a weekly basis, teachers evaluate the progress of children in order to track their progress and highlight any concerns. Children also complete 'EXIT style questions' at the end of lessons. They use voice notes to consolidate their learning and show their teacher that they have understood the objective. Children also complete retrieval style questions at the beginning of each lesson. This allows the teacher to see what the children can remember from previous lessons and helps to improve long term memory.

Strategic leaders and SLT moderate writing on a half termly basis, ensuring the whole school is moderated across a half term. Moderation for the following half term responds to the school needs identified at the end of the previous half term. All English work is to be marked on Showbie (online platform) so that imminent guided groups are up to date, highlighting against the Success Criteria and a number/statement explaining what children need to do to improve next time. See marking policy for further clarification of the expectations of marking within English.

As part of GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling), children in Y3 - Y6 will complete online termly tests to test their knowledge from the objectives already taught.

Inclusion

At Meir Heath Academy teachers set high expectations for all pupils. Teachers take account of their duties under the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, SEN / disability, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation. They plan, using adaptive teaching methods in order to stretch those pupils who are working significantly above expected standards, and for those pupils who have low levels of prior attainment and or are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers use appropriate assessment in order to set deliberately ambitious targets. Teachers ensure that there are no barriers to learning and that all pupils access the full curriculum.

Use of Digital Technology - 1:1 iPads

Digital Technology is used to support and enhance children's learning on a daily basis. All children from Year One upwards have one to one iPads and use these within their English lessons. There are a range of high quality resources available on the iPad that should be used regularly to support and develop children as writers, these include: split screen, vocabulary mats, spelling mats (common exception words), voice notes (teachers and children), Pages app for drafting work, Showbie to upload children's work.

Homework

English will be given as part of the general homework policy. This will generally be reinforcement of class based work and include grammar, punctuation and spelling.