



Excalibur Primary School

Writing

Intent, Impact and Implementation

Writing Intent

At Excalibur Primary School, our writing curriculum endeavours to inspire children to have a love of, and a mastery in, the use of words and language. We strive to enrich our children's vocabulary in all areas through regular and visible exposure to words from across subject areas, ensuring a focus on understanding meanings.

Through the use of quality texts, our children will be facilitated to write confidently in a full range of genres in order to convey meaning across the wider school curriculum and beyond.

Implementation

In EYFS, the children learn to write through a combination of adult-directed activities and child-initiated play. Alongside play, teachers will encourage children to begin to write through more formal activities. Phonics is taught through the Read Write Inc. programme which includes writing opportunities and vocabulary development. Helicopter stories are used to promote verbal telling of stories and to promote drama. The Poetry Basket supports speech and language including exploring rhyme and rhythm. Incidental writing opportunities, such as white boards, clipboards and sand are used for children to make marks. Funky fingers and dough disco is done regularly to develop fine motor skills for the children to improve their pencil grip and subsequent writing competence.

In KS1, to ensure that every child learns to write, we ensure that:

1. Exposure to quality texts

Our children are exposed to a diverse range of quality texts, including fiction and non-fiction. These are read to the children and read by the children and include publications by and about culturally, physically and neurologically diverse individuals. There are reading areas in all classrooms, where children can select books of their choice. The children take home books, which are matched to their current reading level. Our school library is available for the children to use, making their own book choices and being further exposed to quality texts.

2. The Read Write Inc. programme is fully implemented from reception to Year 2.

The children write every day, rehearsing out loud what they want to say, before spelling the words using the graphemes and 'tricky' words they know. They practise handwriting every day: sitting at a table comfortably, they learn correct letter formation and how to join letters speedily and legibly. Children's composition (ideas, vocabulary and grammar) is developed by drawing on their own experiences and talking about the stories they read.

3. Handwriting



Handwriting is taught explicitly through modelling and emphasis on high expectations of presentation at all times. A semi-cursive style is taught in Year 2, termed as “Excalibur Cursive”, with discussions had around which letters are better not joined to one another.



4. Think it, say it, write it, check it.

Throughout the school, we teach the strategy of “think it, say it, write it, check it” to support children to talk through their ideas before writing them down. The “check it” part is scaffolded throughout to build up to the introduction of draft books in Year 3.

5. Modelled writing

Teachers explicitly model the writing process at all stages. This is done on flipchart paper and displayed around the classroom on “washing lines” or on working walls. The children can then use these to support them in their writing, thereby encouraging an increased independence as they move through KS1. This includes the thought processes of the teacher, modelled explicitly through verbalising each step.

6. Feedback

At Excalibur, we mark in pink and green pen to make it clear to the children. Pink, termed “tickled pink”, is used to show children what they have done well in a piece of writing. This includes sentence-level specific targets, such as “you have used full stops and capital letters accurately”.

Green pen, termed “green for growth” is used to show children the area where they need to improve. Again, this is sentence-specific, such as “use commas to separate items in a list”.

For smaller writing pieces, such as sentence-level activities, “green for growth” may be identified through underlining or circling errors (see Appendix 1a for writing feedback overview sheet).

For more extended pieces, we use a “Two Stars, One Wish” approach, with two comments on what the children have done well and one focusing on what they need to improve.

Comments are written in a way that can be understood by the children; for children in lower KS1, this may be a visual prompt or single word as opposed to a sentence.

Children respond to feedback in the following ways:

- Writing incorrect spellings out three times;
- Adding missing full stops or commas to sentences.

Please see below for a summary of the process of writing in KS1 at Excalibur:

The KS1 Excalibur Writing Process

1. Immersion in the text type



Children are exposed to examples of the genre, including a WAGOLL (What a Good One Looks Like) to clearly show what is expected.

2. Word-level activities

Children are involved in the process of compiling words and phrases which can be used in their piece of writing.

3. Grammar activities

Grammar activities relevant to the piece of writing are explicitly taught and practised.

4. Sentence-level activities

Children practise sentences in the style of which will be needed for the piece of writing. These will include the grammar taught.

6. Checking

Following explicit teaching, and with structured support, children check their own writing and make changes.

7. Writing up

Children write up their piece neatly.

8. Feedback

Children receive feedback on their piece of writing (appropriate to their age group).

In KS2, to ensure that every child learns to write, we ensure the following:

1. Exposure to quality texts

Our children are exposed to a diverse range of quality texts, including fiction and non-fiction. These are read to the children and read by the children and include publications by and about culturally, physically and neurologically diverse individuals. Our school library is available for the children to use, making their own book choices and being further exposed to quality texts. Each term, writing pieces are inspired by quality texts which have been selected by the class teacher in order to engage the children and provide opportunities to further their understanding of language, literature and wider curriculum areas, such as history.

2. Modelled writing

At Excalibur, we model explicitly the writing process, including the thought process of the teacher as writer. To record this process, flipchart paper is used across the school; these are displayed on “washing lines” in each classroom so that the children can benefit from the scaffolded support throughout the writing process. This includes the thought processes of the teacher, modelled explicitly through verbalising each step.

3. Handwriting





Handwriting is taught explicitly through modelling and emphasis on high expectations of presentation at all times. From Year 4, children can work towards achieving a pen licence in order to write in pen. To achieve this, children must be writing in a joined, legible fashion, with words being of consistent size with clear differentiation between ascenders and descenders. In Year 6, all children write in pen.

4. Spellings

We teach spellings on a weekly basis, following the Twinkl Spelling Scheme. Activities are taught to enable children to practise the spelling conventions and then apply those spellings into sentences. Spelling tests are carried out on a weekly basis. During the writing process, children are encouraged to check their own spellings through use of dictionaries and

through making use of word banks, which are often compiled as a class. When feeding back to children, a selection of incorrect spellings are identified and the children are required to respond by writing the spellings out three times.

5. Explicit teaching and application of punctuation and grammar

Our children are taught punctuation and grammar skills explicitly. This is done through initial identification and fluency of skills before application of those skills within sentences. For example, children will be taught how to identify extended noun phrases before being asked to add them to sentences. To apply their understanding, children then write their own sentences using an extended noun phrase.

These skills are then assessed in completed pieces of writing. If they are still not secure with taught skills, children may then be given opportunity to work on these areas further as part of the “green for growth” feedback.

6. Feedback

At Excalibur, we mark in pink and green pen to make it clear to the children. Pink, termed “tickled pink”, is used to show children what they have done well in a piece of writing. This includes sentence-level specific targets, such as “you have used full stops and capital letters accurately”.

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For smaller writing pieces, such as sentence-level activities, “green for growth” may be identified through underlining or circling errors (see Appendix 1a for writing feedback overview sheet).

For more extended pieces, we use a “Two Stars, One Wish” approach, with two comments on what the children have done well and one focusing on what they need to improve.

Children respond to feedback in the following ways:

- Initialling that they have read comments;



- Writing incorrect spellings out three times;
- Adding punctuation to a pre-written sentence, either one in their own writing or a sentence written by the teacher.
- Re-writing a sentence that doesn't make sense or otherwise needs to be improved;



The below summarises the KS2 Excalibur writing process:

The KS2 Excalibur Writing Process

1. Immersion in the text type

Children are exposed to examples of the genre, including a WAGOLL (What a Good One Looks Like) to clearly show what is expected.

2. Word-level activities

Children are involved in the process of compiling words and phrases which can be used in their piece of writing.

3. Grammar activities

Grammar activities relevant to the piece of writing are explicitly taught and practised.

4. Sentence-level activities

Children practise sentences in the style of which will be needed for the piece of writing. These will include the grammar taught.

5. Draft writing (KS2 only)

In KS2, children use draft books to write. They are encouraged to neatly cross out and change parts of their work in order to improve it independently.

6. Editing

Following explicit teaching, children edit their own writing independently, making use of success criteria as a marker for what is needed.

7. Writing up

Children write up their piece neatly.

8. Feedback

Children receive feedback on their piece of writing (appropriate to their age group).

Impact

The children's exposure to different writing genres across the school, including fiction/non-fiction and formal/informal, is carefully considered to ensure that children can convey ideas effectively across the whole curriculum.

Specific, individual feedback in an age-appropriate manner ensures that all children know their strengths and the areas with which they need to improve. This ensures that all children make progress during each academic year, leading to good outcomes by the end of KS2.

The end of year data for the academic year 2018/19 shows that attainment in writing at Excalibur Primary School exceeded both local and national averages. In Year 2, 83% of our



children achieved EXP or above and 17% achieved Greater Depth in writing. In Year 6, 93% of our children achieved EXP or above and 13% achieved Greater Depth in writing.

