

Carr Manor Community School

CARR MANOR
COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Writing Rationale

Introduction

Writing makes a significant contribution to the development of children as thinkers and learners. The purpose of this rationale is to promote a consistency of approach and to ensure that continuity and progression are embedded in our practice. All staff must follow the Carr Manor Community School Long Term English Plan as this forms the basis of our teaching.

We will ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of gender, race, religion or ability. Children with specific speech and language or hearing difficulties will be identified and supported through support programmes in school and external help will be sought where necessary.

Writing Aims

1. To assist pupils in becoming efficient and effective writers who are able to write appropriately for a variety of audiences
2. To assist pupils in acquiring the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within a range of contexts
3. To assist pupils to become aware of and appreciate the writer's craft

Writing is a complex skill that will not develop without teaching and practice. We endeavour to meet our aims by ensuring that:

- pupils are provided with experiences that help children to use texts to gain more knowledge about improving their own writing
- pupils have practice of extended writing in a variety of purposeful context
- pupils develop positive attitudes to the writing process including planning and redrafting
- staff support improvement and high expectation of core skills i.e. spelling, grammar, punctuation
- we provide feedback to pupils which will enable them to improve their writing skills
- Carr Manor maintains and develops a high writing achievement ethos at all stages in the school

Approaches to teaching and learning

The teaching of writing must be carefully planned to meet the needs of all of our children taking into account low literacy baselines and inconsistent home support. We recognise the importance of taking a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of writing to close any gaps and to target the highest possible number of children to attain:

- End of FS - ELG
- Children achieve at least ARE by the end of Year 2
- Children achieve at least expected (*Secure + on Target Tracker assessments*) year on year
- Children achieve at least ARE by the end of Year 6

Principles of effective learning and teaching

- Clear targets should be set for each writing lesson. These should be shared with the pupil/group and displayed during the lesson.
- Provide children with a model of the kind of writing expected.
- Children should be encouraged to plan their writing, perhaps following a group discussion, with teacher recording suggestions on the board.
- Children may be given a scaffold to help them with their planning.
- Children may discuss their plan with a writing partner.
- All children should be involved in some form of continuous writing at least once each week
- Any context for writing may be chosen but the range of skills necessary should be taught systematically.
- Starting points for writing should be carefully selected to provide a meaningful context; children respond better when they know why they are writing and whom it is for.
- From time to time pupils should be given the opportunity to write about any subject of their choice
- There should be a literacy rich environment in the classroom, reflecting both current topics and pupils writing.
- Talking and reading assist writing. This should be appropriately encouraged in both the classroom and home to encourage knowledge and use of extended vocabulary and style.
- Planning / drafting / editing should be used to improve both the context and the conventions of writing.
- Spelling mistakes of “known” words can be highlighted and used as a tool for learning but this should not overshadow other aspects of the writer’s craft.
- Conventions of writing i.e. grammar are best taught from the child’s own writing but these will also be taught in a systematic way using No Nonsense Spelling.

Skilled Adults

At Carr Manor Community School, much time has been invested into the training of teaching staff and support staff so that they are equipped and confident to deliver the teaching of writing. Teaching staff and learning support staff have been trained in higher level questioning through writing. Children are taught to see that writing is part of their everyday life.

Promoting high expectations

All teachers should have high expectations in regard to the standard of pupils’ writing, taking due account of the child’s stage of development. All pupils should be encouraged to achieve the highest possible standard of writing according to their stage of development and level of ability. These expectations can be made explicit in a variety of ways:

- Use of positive feedback (oral or written)
- Stickers/stamps (as outlined in *CMCS Marking Policy*)
- Star writer awards in weekly celebration assembly
- Reading children’s writing to the class
- Child reads writing to the class (or another class)

- Display children's writing around the school
- Publish children's writing where appropriate

The Teaching of Writing:

- **Reception**

At the very early stages teachers will use a three pronged approach to developing pupils' writing skills:

1. Independent writing – the child attempts to write his/her own story. This may consist of scribbles, letter-like forms, actual letters, invented spellings, conventional words, or a combination of these. Children should be encouraged to read back what they have written.
2. Scribing – the teacher acts as a scribe for the child. On some occasions it will be beneficial to write down exactly what the child says without modification by the teacher. Children should learn that writing can be speech written down.
3. Copying – the child creates a short piece of writing using either a class or personal bank of word cards. The child selects the relevant cards from the word bank, places them in the correct order and then copies them onto a page. It is not recommended that children simply copy a scribed story as this has little value in terms of developing story writing skills.

- **Additional needs/ SEND**

Children with specific writing or language difficulties may require an individualised programme. This may be planned in consultation with the learning support teacher. Time should be taken to analyse the problem/s which may be related to language processing, hand, eye or ear difficulties.

Appropriate short/long term strategies should then be planned. Such children may be identified at any time.

- **Key Stage 1 and 2**

At Carr Manor Community there is a whole school approach to the teaching of writing from Year 1 up to Year 6 and a consistency in language as regards Punctuation Kung-Fu, Talk4Writing, and VCOP. This approach is outlined below:

Formative assessment as part of teaching

- The purpose of formative assessment is to identify what pupils have learned and can do and what their next steps in learning should be.
- While children are engaged in their writing task teachers will 'conference' with children i.e. talk to them about their writing while they are doing it. This is the most effective form of assessment.
- Children should be encouraged to proof read and edit their own work, or that of a writing partner. It may be helpful to provide a criteria checklist to help children with this task.
- Teachers may conference with a group of children during the writing task. An effective technique is the 'author's chair' where pupil writers explain to others what and how they are trying to achieve in a piece of writing. Another effective technique is peer-marking.
- After each writing task pupils should be made aware of their next steps in learning.

Marking finished writing

- Teachers should mark a finished piece of writing against the targets/criteria set for the task (*according to CMCS Marking Policy*).
- Marking should help the child improve his/her writing and may have Next Steps which the child should respond to during DIRT (*Dedicated Improvement and Response Time*).
- The best approach is for the teacher to go over the pupil's work with him/her, highlighting obvious errors in spelling and punctuation, talking about choice and use of language and discussing the selection and organisation of ideas.
- From children's writing, the teacher should observe and note points, which require to be taught on an individual/group/class basis.

After discussion, and depending on the maturity of the pupil, s/he should be encouraged to follow a first draft with a second, more refined version. The redrafting process can also focus on just one part of the first draft e.g. *let's rewrite the opening paragraph to make it more mysterious*.

Teachers should avoid detailed scrutiny of every piece of writing produced by a child. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to focus only on the positive aspects of a child's writing.

Summative assessment and recording

- Teachers should make a summative assessment of pupils' writing and use this information to inform their summative judgement which should be updated periodically on Target Tracker.

Leadership and Monitoring

Monitoring of the teaching and learning of writing takes place through various means:

- Observations of teaching.
- Monitoring of planning and record keeping.
- Learning walks to establish whether writing has been given a high profile within each classroom (displays, learning walls, children's books).
- Evidence gathered is used to form an action plan for writing, including training requirements, support needs and resourcing.

Monitoring and Review

Teachers' plans will provide evidence of balance and appropriateness of writing activities. Pupil work on writing will be monitored regularly. This will involve the Leadership Team in sampling examples from each class on a regular basis through observations, postcard drop-in, learning walks, and book and planning scrutinies.

Classroom displays will also provide evidence of a number of the learning and teaching points. It is expected that all classrooms will display relevant phonics maps, word banks, Punctuation kung-Fu displays, and VCOP pyramids. Discussion with pupils and with staff will also help to ensure that the school policy is being followed.

Parental Involvement

We acknowledge that it is the job of school staff to teach a child how to write and to develop as a writer. However, we know that the best writer will also be reading and writing within the home environment. Parents are encouraged to help their children learn their weekly spelling list from Year 2 onwards.

Workshops are held each year to inform parents and carers of how we teach writing. Parents and carers have the opportunity to learn alongside their children so that they can provide the best support at home.

Appendix 1

Spelling

At the early stages the child's natural curiosity for and enjoyment in words should be exploited. Rhymes, rhythms, jingles and patterns will be a daily occurrence. Children should be encouraged to experiment with spellings and be praised for their attempts. At this stage the main aim should be to develop confidence and enjoyment in writing and the written word.

Handwriting sessions might also be used as a focus for spelling. Attention might be drawn to initial letter sounds, letter strings or phonic blends as appropriate. Using a multisensory approach involving finger tracing can help in learning to spell new words. Research has shown that a flowing, clear and speedy handwriting style helps to improve spelling.

As the child's writing and awareness develops the following principles should apply:

- The teacher should make reference to spelling regularly and on an on-going basis. This can include the teacher while writing on the board asking for help in spelling a word, pointing out pitfalls within words, asking for homonyms, homophones, words with the same pattern, etc.
- Throughout the school, the LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK strategy will be adopted
- The **No Nonsense Spelling Scheme of Work** and resources will be used to support spelling.
- Children should be encouraged to make an attempt at a spelling in order not to break the flow in writing. Spellings can be checked later.
- It is important that pupils are asked to attempt words for themselves before the teacher writes it for them. Breaking the word into syllables helps in this process.
- Encourage children to look for small words inside large ones e.g. ear/hear
- Children should be encouraged to check their own spellings. Automatic use should be made of dictionaries and class word banks for this purpose. These may be displayed on classroom Learning Walls.
- Spelling rules should be used frequently and the most common ones may be displayed in classrooms.
- Spelling and/or word study should be fun! Children should be encouraged to develop a fascination for words. For this reason games, puzzles and rhymes will be an essential part of the school programme.
- Progress in spelling should be monitored regularly through writing. If children write regularly, teachers will have ample opportunity to assess spelling. From Year 1, pupils will be given spelling homework.

Handwriting

There should be a consistent approach to handwriting in every class, by every teacher, throughout the whole school. To assist with this the 'Debbie Hepplewaite' handwriting schemes will form the basis of development work in handwriting.

- Short handwriting exercises should be planned as they produce the best results.

- It is important that a fast, fluent hand is promoted. First priority should be legibility and the second speed.
- Ensure that children are comfortable and relaxed and that their pencil grip is correct.
- Ensure that pupils have appropriate writing tools i.e. pencils are of adequate length and sharpened.
- Individuals should be monitored during handwriting exercises to ensure that the way they form letters, begin words, hold the pencil and position the paper are all conducive to good practice.