

# All Saints' CE VC Infant School

'Building the bridge to success'



## Writing Policy

September 2013

### AIMS AND PURPOSES

The ability to communicate is vital in our quest to know about and investigate the world around us. The school builds upon the early foundations laid in the home and it is vital that parents and teachers work together to support, inspire and encourage pupils in their language development by acting as continuous role models. It is our belief that children learn best when they are actively involved in their learning.

By adopting a whole school approach to writing across the school we aim:

- To enable pupils to become proficient and confident users of the English Language.
- To engage children in active learning by using a range of teaching strategies.
- To develop confident writers able to produce a range of styles suited to audience and purpose.
- To enable pupils to develop consistent and neat handwriting.
- To enable children to spell an ever-widening vocabulary by encouraging them to use a range of strategies for spelling.
- To provide quality resources and learning opportunities.

### PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

Children participate in a daily literacy session. A range of text types is planned across the year to provide children with the skills to produce a variety of styles including information texts, poetry and narrative texts. Where ever possible literacy work is linked across all areas of the curriculum to provide a real purpose for writing. Links to visits and visitors are also made and these links are identified in the medium and short term plans.

Lessons are planned on a weekly basis, or within a block, within a year group and planning is based on the National Curriculum. Teachers within a year group will plan the main objectives of the lessons together, but teachers will produce individual plans for their class to ensure the needs of their children are met in full. Literacy lessons and activities should be planned in accordance with the Teaching and Learning policy.

### TEACHING OF WRITING

For children to be good writers they need to be immersed in good quality reading and writing. Teachers should read regularly to children, promoting authors and discussing texts. By discussing language used and highlighting good ideas, children will begin to "magpie" words and phrases and incorporate them into their own work. Pupils need to write regularly and for different purposes in order to become fluent writers. They need to have the opportunity to orally rehearse their ideas before writing.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the Foundation Stage, pupils begin with mark making and emergent writing. These early stages of writing are carefully planned for across all areas of the Foundation Stage Curriculum both inside and outside the classroom. More formal writing skills are taught during the daily phonics session (*see Phonics policy*) and through the introduction of literacy adult focused activities, including guided writing, as children progress through the year.

### **Modelled and Shared Writing**

Teachers need to model good writing by thinking aloud and modelling the thought processes. Teachers should demonstrate improving writing and children should be involved in this process.

### **Guided Writing**

Teachers and support staff should lead regular, well planned guided writing groups within literacy lessons. Guided writing is underpinned by effective assessment for learning. The objectives of guided writing sessions should be clearly set out based on the next steps or gaps in learning of the children in the guided writing group and should be detailed in the weekly literacy planning. Teachers should aim that all children should experience two guided writing sessions per week in Key Stage 1 when writing activities allow. In Foundation Stage 2 children should be introduced to guided writing when they have reached an appropriate level in their learning. Guided writing provides a powerful tool in accelerating the progress of children in writing and providing truly personalised learning.

### **Punctuation and Grammar**

Punctuation and grammar skills need to be taught and practised explicitly so that they can then be applied within written work. Punctuation should be taught in line with the expectations for the year group. The correct grammatical terms should be introduced to the children as the concepts are taught.

### **Spelling**

Spelling is an integral part of the writing process. Pupils who spell with ease are able to concentrate on their writing. Whilst it is important to remember that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling often has a profound effect on the writers' self-image. Children will learn how to spell a number of high frequency words and common irregular words within the daily discrete phonics session, enabling them to write fluently. As their phonics progresses they will begin to investigate and learn to use common spelling patterns, frequently used prefixes and inflectional endings in their own writing. Children are taught and encouraged to use simple dictionaries, a range of word banks and their knowledge of word families to support their writing. The "Look-say-cover-write-check" routine is established and spellings are sent as homework on a weekly basis. Children are encouraged to take risks when spelling unknown words using all of the strategies they have been taught.

### **Handwriting and Presentation**

All teachers should have high expectations about handwriting and presentation. Teachers and support staff must model neat and legible handwriting in line with the agreed Penpals letter formation. Weekly handwriting sessions will be planned using the Penpals handwriting scheme and where children are observed forming letters incorrectly these should be addressed promptly to prevent reinforcement of incorrect letter formation. Children are encouraged to produce their best efforts of handwriting/presentation in writing opportunities both in Literacy and across the curriculum.

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage handwriting should focus on the development of fine motor skills and strengthening the muscles required for writing through a variety of activities. Where appropriate these fine motor activities should continue into Key Stage 1. Developing a good pencil grip and appropriate posture are key features of teaching effective handwriting.

Rubbers are not a solution to poor presentation, handwriting or spelling. Children should be confident and secure within their classroom environment to learn from their mistakes whilst always trying their best. Rubbers should not be available in the writing provision area and should not be used within literacy books.

## **CLASSROOM PROVISION AREAS**

Wherever possible, reading and writing opportunities should be incorporated into all continuous provision areas within classrooms in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Where children engage in reading and writing activities in their own child initiated activities they show that the skills that they have learnt are truly embedded. Children should be provided with the opportunity to practise the skills they have been taught within reading and writing in a variety of purposeful and meaningful contexts and these opportunities should be carefully planned and modelled throughout the year.

## **PLANNING AND ONGOING ASSESSMENT**

Assessment for Learning opportunities should be planned into all literacy sessions and the principles should be applied for all good quality teaching of writing.

### **Key Principles of Assessment for Learning**

- Pupils know what they are learning, what they have achieved and how they can improve.
- Learning objectives and success criteria are shared with pupils. Children are involved in setting success criteria at appropriate stages of the writing process.
- Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to reflect and talk about their learning.
- The classroom environment provides a supportive environment in which to make mistakes and learn from these and promotes confidence that every child can succeed.
- Pupils are involved in self assessment.

Teachers' plans should be clear about learning outcomes and should use a range of assessment strategies including speaking and listening activities. Assessment for Learning sheets are completed for each writing group on a weekly basis to record assessments. The outcome of assessments is used to refine planning. Feedback should be used to help children with their next steps.

All children have a writing target sheet at the front of their literacy book for at least the level they are working at and the level they are working towards. Regular assessments are carried out by the class teacher as part of the marking process to ascertain whether children have achieved a particular target. These highlighted target sheets form the basis of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) and the levels from these sheets are entered into Assessment Manager each half term by the class teacher. These target sheets are also used to inform future planning, addressing issues or gaps in learning as appropriate.

Early Years Foundation Stage writing is assessed at the end of the Foundation Stage using the EYFS Profile and progress towards this during the year is tracked using the Development Matters Ages and Stages statements.

### **Learning Objectives and Success Criteria**

Learning objectives are shared with the children using WALT (We Are Learning To) at the beginning of lessons. Success criteria are also shared with the children in the form of WILFs (What I am Looking For). Success criteria are differentiated within each lesson and link directly with the children's targets. Within each year group, including throughout the Foundation Stage, a set of success criteria that should ALWAYS be evident in any piece of work is displayed in the classroom. These are known as

ALFs (Always Looking For) and should be referred to throughout the day in any session where children are expected to write.

Success criteria provide a focal point for plenaries and feedback and encourage children to take more responsibility for their work. Learning objectives and success criteria will be stuck into children's books and will provide them with a checklist for evaluating their own work and progress and the work of others as appropriate.

### **Quality Marking and Feedback**

Marking and comments are linked closely to the WALT and WILF. Work should be marked promptly so that children's learning is always being moved forward. Response time should be provided on a timely basis in the form of Blue Pen Time. An agreed set of marking symbols is clearly displayed in each classroom and the children should be familiar with these. Marking and feedback should be in line with the guidelines in the Teaching and Learning Policy.

### **ICT**

The children have access to the computers in the classrooms and are given the opportunity to use ICT to present writing. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to support their literacy teaching where appropriate. Computers in the Foundation Stage are equipped with lower case keyboards to support letter recognition at this early stage in their reading and writing.

### **INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Provision will be made for those children having additional needs, including children with special educational needs/disabilities, children working above or below age-related expectations and children for whom English is an additional language.

- Children with SEN/working below age-related expectations will work towards the same objectives with support/ appropriate differentiation so that they can access the curriculum. Those working well below the level of their peers will work on a related objective from a previous year group. Both teachers and support staff work closely with children with learning difficulties to support them in their work. Interventions will be planned to support children's progress and narrow gaps in achievement and are usually delivered by support staff within the classroom environment.
- Children who are gifted and talented will work to deepen or broaden their understanding of the objective which may sometimes be from a later year.
- Children learning English as an additional language (EAL) will receive appropriate support to enable them to access objectives.

### **PARENTAL LINKS AND HOMEWORK**

Children in Key Stage 1 will be given spellings to learn at home each week. Written homework is provided for Key Stage 1 classes on a fortnightly basis and will reinforce the work done in school. This will be marked promptly and feedback will be given to children.

## RESOURCES

Resources to support writing link closely with reading resources and some are stored centrally.

- 'Big Books' are stored centrally in numbered 'Big Book' bags and sorted into text types. An index of books and their numbers is kept with them. When 'Big Books' are taken to class, the empty bag should be left on the hanging rail and an entry in the log book on the hanging rail should be made to ensure the book can be located if needed.
- Texts linked with termly themes are stored centrally.
- Each class has two 'wedge' whiteboards to support teaching of guided writing.
- A range of story-writing prompts are available in provision areas

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

The planning, teaching, marking, assessment and differentiation of writing are monitored by the subject co-ordinator and senior leadership team. This is done by lesson observations, book scrutinies, looking at planning and assessment and talking to the children. The subject leader tracks pupil progress in writing using the assessments entered into Assessment Manager by the class teachers each half term. Pupil progress meetings are planned for each term to ensure class teachers evaluate their own class progress and set targets for those children underachieving. Feedback is given to individual teachers and to the team as a whole as appropriate. Issues are highlighted and addressed and a review of any monitoring is shared with the senior leadership team. Regular meetings are held during the year between the literacy governors and the subject co-ordinator.

Mrs K. Fox

(Literacy Co-ordinator)

Mrs K. Fisher Mrs V. Grainger

(Literacy Governors)

This policy has been approved by the governors of All Saints' CE Infant School.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_