Malvern Parish CE Primary School

'Learning Together for an Exciting Future'

Approach to Early Writing and Writing

At Malvern Parish C of E Primary School, we believe that writing is central to a child's application of the school curriculum and is a vital life skill. Through our teaching of writing, we aim to develop pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need in order to flourish as individuals, achieve academically and build firm foundations for the future. We believe that being able to write confidently and competently is key to this.

This vision is deeply rooted in strong Christian tradition and based upon:

"I come that they may have life and have it to the full". *John 10.10*

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD**, *"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*** Jeremiah 29.11

We seek to develop our vision through our Christian values of Friendship Respect, Trust, Peace, Truthfulness and Forgiveness and live out these values in every part of school life.



At Malvern Parish, we believe that writing begins early in EYFS, when we value every mark made by the children. This mark making gradually evolves to include letters and then words. By valuing their emergent writing, we aim to develop confident 'writers'. The children very quickly begin to apply their understanding of phonics when they are writing and we celebrate the progress they make. This is because we believe that writing is an essential skill and the ability to write with confidence and accuracy will support a child through their life. It is our intent that our children understand the social and academic requirements of writing in order to use different genres of writing appropriately - considering its purpose and matching this and the intended effect to its audience. Furthermore, it is our intent that every child develops a progressive understanding of grammatical conventions - the way in which punctuation aids understanding and how to apply spelling rules. It is also our intent that all children have a joined, legible and increasingly efficient handwriting style.

We hope to implement this through careful planning and teaching using up-to-date strategies. We aim to inspire quality writing by making use of quality reading materials and resources within English lessons and in reading sessions which often lead into our writing lessons. We believe that, to become a confident and happy writer, being able to form letters and spell words is not enough; we believe that children need to have a desire to write and a purpose for their writing. Therefore, we aim to create opportunities for writing different genres within English sessions and across the curriculum.

Aims

It is our aim to allow children the opportunity:

- to nurture a love of writing
- to write regularly for a range of purposes
- to write for a variety of audiences, including real audiences
- to make their own choices within their writing
- to become aware of the link between reading and writing
- to be inspired by what they have read and use models to help them to write their own texts
- to use ICT to further the development and love of writing

Implementation

The classroom environment

Classrooms provide a stimulus for writing. Curriculum-themed books - including fiction and non-fiction books - are available in the classroom to enable children to read as often as possible to develop their understanding of written language – and to use these texts to inspire children's writing. Displays and 'working walls' are used to display key spellings, subject-specific vocabulary and ideas for writing. Model texts are created by the teacher and these are displayed for children to refer to along with key vocabulary and key writing objectives (Widgits)

Writing routines in EYFS, KS1 and KS2

Throughout the year, teachers will plan for children to read and write a variety of poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts in class, all aimed at developing a child's writing ability. Children in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 are all provided with regular opportunities to write independently. In EYFS, writing is both planned for and is spontaneous – it takes place in every area of the classroom including outdoors. Motor skills and writing each form part of the 'Busy Bee' challenges – a curated set of tasks the children are asked to complete within a week. Throughout KS1 and KS2, English lessons usually take place daily. In most English lessons, children will be learning one of their year group's writing

objectives - development of a grammatical concept, producing a piece of writing or evaluating and editing their own or a peer's piece of work, for example.

Early writing

We believe that writing begins early in EYFS, when we value every mark made by the children. This mark making gradually evolves to include letters and then words. We believe that developing a sure foundation will help the children to grow into more confident writers. Therefore, we focus on developing the basics: the correct pencil grip; a good writing posture or body position when handwriting; regular opportunities to learn letter formation and we provide regular sessions for practice. We set targets for the children as soon as they begin to write so that they understand the importance of punctuation and grammatical features such as capital letters and full stops and Standard English. These foundational skills are developed in the EYFS and then revised and reinforced in all the other year groups throughout the school.

Most children make good progression with their writing skills and are working on writing objectives within their year group but others take longer to develop their writing skills. Some children in Y1 (and above) are unable to work at the level required for their year group (perhaps due to a special educational need, poor attendance due to trauma or illness or perhaps because they have recently arrived in our country). For children who have recently arrived in our country, using the National Curriculum for their year group is often inappropriate so we follow a process set out in our 'Approach to English for EAL learners at MPPS'. For other children who are not keeping up with their year group expectations in Y1, they follow the process that also takes place in our EYFS class. Here, the children build up to writing a sentence that is rehearsed orally and modelled by their teacher during their daily phonics lesson. This sentence includes target sounds and or target words. For some children, they will initially be working towards writing just the target word but will then be building up to writing a full sentence (including a capital letter, letters that are correctly formed and a full stop). Some children in the EYFS make good progress with these sentences and are therefore challenged to write their own sentence using a given word.

For early writers in Y2 and KS2 (children who are not yet working within their own year), class work is adapted for them so they can succeed at level that is appropriate for them. This adaptation may include writing simpler sentences, writing less than others in their class or by being supported in other ways (scaffolded sentence structures, cloze sentences, oral rehearsal with an adult etc). Children who are still struggling with handwriting or spelling are supported with targeted sessions or targeted resources. For example, some children in Year 4 who have found letter formation difficult throughout school have been supported with 'bubble' writing resources.

Writing

There are several distinct but related processes involved in teaching children to write: learning to spell words; developing legible and fluent handwriting and developing understanding of punctuation, grammar and a knowledge of structure and content required for various audiences and purposes. All are essential for learning to write effectively.

- **Sequences of Learning**

Teachers produce a Sequence of Learning (SOL) for each unit of work within English – culminating in a piece of writing. SOLs include key national curriculum objectives and teaching sequences to work towards those objectives. Punctuation, sentence structure, grammar and reading are all considered. SOLs also consider opportunities to support writers who may not be working at age-related

expectations as well as opportunities to challenge those who may be working above age-related expectations. Editing and publishing are often included as part of the SOL. Model texts are produced by teachers as part of the SOL so that children have the opportunity to see all of the elements of the SOL in a real piece of writing.

- **Spelling (phonics and NNS)**

The teaching of grammar and spelling is in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum (2014). To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the development of meaning. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's self-image. We aim to use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins, structure and meaning of words and their parts, the shape and sound of words, the letter patterns within them and the various ways they can learn these patterns.

In Reception and in Year 1, daily phonics is the key to the children's learning of spelling. This is taught using the Little Wandle programme (see Approach to Reading document). Children are taught to blend sounds to read and segment to spell. At the same time, they learn words that are not phonetically regular (common exception words). In Year 2, the Little Wandle approach is also used for spelling, developing and using their phonic knowledge to help them understand and apply spelling rules.

The 'No Nonsense Spelling' scheme (NNS) is used from Years 3 to 6. It has been specially created to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Spelling rules are introduced, practised, assessed and revised in a systematic way. Opportunities for learning and practising the statutory words lists are also provided. The children continue to learn phonics (fpr example, the rare GPCs within the Y3/4 and Y5/6 statutory lists). We also teach children to use their growing understanding of the morphology (word structure), etymology (root word meaning) and orthography (spelling structure) of words to support their spelling. Helping the children to understand how to use and apply known spelling patterns (and to develop strategies to tackle tricky words) is the key to helping them to become successful spellers. Spelling skills are taught at least three times per week during discrete spelling sessions.

When actually writing, children should be concentrating on higher order thinking skills and should simply 'have a go' at spelling using their knowledge and practising on their 'Have-A-Go' sheets. When marking children's work, we do not correct all spelling errors every time. Instead, we focus on common exception words, curriculum-linked words and those studied in spelling sessions. A pink 'sp' is used to show the children that a spelling error has been made. Opportunities for follow up, proof-reading and editing are provided regularly. We believe that self-evaluation and self-editing are key skills in developing as a writer so we give the children regular opportunities to do this – usually scaffolded by success criteria or by discussions in class. Children also have chance to evaluate a teacher's model (either good or bad) in order to learn from that and they have opportunities to review their peer's work too.

- **Handwriting**

On entry, our EYFS children are involved in varied activities to develop essential pre-writing skills in line with working towards the Early Learning Goals. There is much focus on developing gross and fine motor skills and strengthening muscles in the arms and fingers. We use 'Dough Disco', 'Funky Fingers' and many playdough and other activities to increase muscle strength. In our EYFS classroom,

children undertake 'Busy Bee' activities during the week: purple activities relate to fine/gross motor and yellow relate to writing. Children are introduced to the individual letters and rigorously taught correct formation from the very beginning of their time in school. From the time that children are ready, they are taught to sit with a good posture and are taught to hold a pencil with the correct grip.

At Malvern Parish we teach joined handwriting using a cursive script from Year 2 onwards. Handwriting is taught regularly from Year 1 to Year 4 and in Year 5 and Year 6 as required. These sessions are used to develop handwriting and can be used to consolidate the National Curriculum spelling lists for each year group (Appendix 1) and key words and phrases related to topic work. As children progress through school there is an increasing focus on fluency, consistency and speed. All children initially write with a pencil, with children moving on to using a pen when they are ready.

- **Punctuation, grammar, structure and content of writing**

The teaching of punctuation, grammar and content of writing is in line with the requirements of The National Curriculum (2014). We have carefully mapped out different genres of witing across the school to include varied opportunities and purposes for writing which include poetry, fiction and non-fiction. We regularly revise curriculum objectives from previous year groups or previous learning within a year group so that children become increasingly confident and competent with their writing skills. We have mapped out curriculum objectives by year group to support teachers with this. These curriculum objectives are referred to regularly, especially when planning our Sequences of Learning for writing (see above).

We use a variety of teaching methods to help children to stay motivated with their writing. We use engaging texts as a basis for writing; we use role play to immerse the children within a setting, a character or a plot; we use hot-seating to promote questioning and improvisation of answers; we provide opportunities to share work with peers or adults orally or in books; we use objects or illustrations to stimulate ideas.

When marking children's work, we do not correct every error every time. Instead, we focus on the skill that is the focus of the lesson, correcting non-Standard English as appropriate or the personal target for that child. A pink 'c' is used to show the children that a correction is needed. A pink zigzag or arrow indicates that something extra is required, perhaps an extra idea or an extra word. Opportunities for follow up, proof-reading, evaluating and editing are provided regularly. We believe that self-evaluation and self-editing are key skills in developing as a writer so we give the children regular opportunities to do this – usually scaffolded by success criteria or by discussions in class. Children also have chance to evaluate a teacher's model (either good or bad) in order to learn from that and they have opportunities to review their peer's work too.

- **Oracy**

We use oracy in different ways across English lessons. We are working towards embedding oracy within our school but currently undertake many of the following in our English lessons:

- We listen attentively to adults, our peers and other people who are speaking.
- We watch and listen when we visitors come to our school or we go to an event (e.g. with an author or a poet or engage in a workshop).
- We rehearse sentences and share evaluation or editing tips with our peers.
- We use talk partners, shared talk, group and class discussions to generate ideas, form and develop opinions and think about questions we might have while reading and writing.

- We discuss our reading and life experiences and draw upon these to create or develop characters within our writing.
- We discuss and debate what we think about issues in order to write persuasively or to inform.
- We use role play, hot-seating and other techniques in drama.
- We tell jokes and recite poems.
- We rehearse and perform poetry and narrate our stories to one another or to a wider audience.
- We read aloud to ourselves, our peers and other children or adults.

- **DADWAVERS!**

DADWAVERS! is a 'formula' for developing children's sentence structure in their writing. This idea (developed by Literacy Shed) gives children a structure to base sentences around. It helps with cohesion which is an essential ingredient for effective writing.

- **D**escription	Sentence starts with adjectives
- **A**ction	Sentence includes several verbs
- **D**ialogue	Sentence is direct speech
- **W**here	Sentence starts with an adverb/preposition of place
- **A**dverb	Sentence starts with an adverb of manner
- **V**erb	Sentence starts with a verb
- **E**stimate of time	Sentence starts with an adverb/preposition of time
- **R**hetorical question	Sentence is a rhetorical question
- **S**imile or metaphor	Sentence includes figurative language
- **!** exclamation or onomatopoeia	Sentence includes an exclamation or an onomatopoeia

Cross-curricular writing opportunities

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Examples may include scientific, geographical or historical writing, procedural or evaluative writing in D.T. books or longer reflective responses in R.E. books.

Assessment and moderation

Children are expected to assess their writing at an age-appropriate level. Children in EYFS are guided to do this with an adult to begin but become increasingly independent throughout their time in the Reception class. In KS1, children check for errors with spelling or punctuation and are guided to think about word choice within their sentences. Throughout KS2, children are taught to self-assess and peer-assess more thoroughly – they will check for errors but will also think about how to improve sentence structure, cohesion and reader engagement.

Writing is assessed by adults regularly. Every piece of writing is assessed - either during writing or at the end of a piece - using written or verbal feedback. Written feedback follows that described above. Once a term, writing is more formally assessed against year group objectives. These objectives are similar in style to the Teacher Assessment Framework that was in place for Year 2 and is currently in place for Year 6. Every year group has their own set of objectives to assess against – covering key

parts of the year group curriculum including planning, content, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting.

In the Autumn term, the whole school completes a writing task (using the same text and generating broadly similar but age-appropriate writing outcomes). For children in EYFS, this might be adding labels to an illustration whereas for Year 6, this might include writing a full story or letter, for example. Teachers assess these pieces of writing and use a selection of them with the assessment guidance mentioned above for a whole school moderation exercise. This provides staff with the opportunity to discuss writing with colleagues, discuss whether a child's writing meets current year group expectations, it builds confidence in teacher judgements and provides the opportunity to discuss next steps in learning. In addition, any issues which are common within several year groups can be identified and actions can be taken to find a solution. Our implementation of DADWAVERS! was originally because a common 'next step' of varying sentence structure was identified in KS2.

In addition, each staff member also attends moderation sessions throughout the year with colleagues from other schools working in the same year group. Again, these sessions provide staff with the opportunity to discuss writing with colleagues, discuss whether a child's writing meets current year group expectations, it builds confidence in teacher judgements and provides the opportunity to discuss next steps in learning.