

**Five Rivers Academy**

**Writing Policy**



**Signed on behalf of Governors.....**

**Date.....**

**Review Date: September 2018**

## Tinsley Meadows Primary School Writing Policy

### Philosophy

Our approach to writing is based on Talk for Writing which is an approach that supports children to explore, through talk and guided practice, the thinking and creative processes involved in being a writer. It is embedded at every phase of the teaching sequence which is structured to include teacher talk, supported pupil talk and independent pupil talk. We believe that Talk for Writing is an approach that goes beyond the development of children's general speaking and listening skills – it allows children to explore the processes involved in being a writer, and extends oral rehearsal so that it becomes a draft for their written pieces. The approach supports the children to move from talk into writing.

### Aims

By the end of Key Stage 2 we aim for a child to be able to:

- Write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Have an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- Understand a range of text types and genres and to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Children must write for an hour a day – this could be in English or topic work and could be split.

### Organisation of Writing/Planning

#### Foundation Stage

In the Early Years, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected in their writing. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities.

Amongst these are:

- Shared writing
- Role-play (e.g. an office or restaurant)
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Making books
- Writing letters
- Menus

Through engaging in these activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English. A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include manipulating play dough, cutting, threading and tracing. Fine motor skills are

also a focus in motor skills groups targeted at specific children. Gross motor skills are also developed through these groups (as well as in PE), as upper body strength is recognised as being vital to good fine motor skills.

### Key Stage One and Two

We follow the Pie Corbett Talk for Writing model to teach a text type whilst also meeting National Curriculum objectives. We believe that *if children can't say it they can't write it*. All writing lessons should be about teaching a genre and a yearly programme includes at least two narrative units and a poetry unit at the beginning of each term. On average the teaching of a text type should last about 3 – 4 weeks. There should be no discrete writing lessons which do not relate to the text type being taught. Discussion/discursive writing is only taught in Y5 and Y6 writing lessons. The structure of teaching a genre is as follows:

- Introduce a spoken WAGOLL of the text type to be written so the children internalise the language structures of the genre – learn it as a class, then in groups and lastly in pairs. Vary the teaching of it by doing activities such as covering up key words. This should never take more than 10 minutes of a lesson. Teacher decides on most of the actions beforehand rather than agreeing them with children so time isn't wasted.
- Learn the WAGOLL off by heart and map it (this WAGOLL isn't written up by the children). The children should produce their own text map after having the beginning modelled by the teacher.
- Do other activities in the first week of a new text type, spoken and written, whilst they are learning the WAGOLL to warm up the text type (e.g. news flash, role play etc., annotating the WAGOLL for specific features – a copy of the WAGOLL which the children have annotated with the key features should be stuck in their books).
- Model planning another example of the text type which the children can innovate on in order to produce their own plan. (innovated written product). You plan and write about volcanoes – they plan and write about volcanoes. You model using your plan to construct a section of the text day by day but the children don't see yours whilst they are writing. Everyone's should be fairly similar but none should be identical as their plans will be slightly different. Constant encouragement must be given asking the children to say what they want to write, write it as they are saying it and then check it – this should be modelled during teacher demonstration and displayed as a reminder. A vocabulary mat should be provided at this stage giving the children basic spellings and pushing them to use adventurous language – we have to put that language in. Before writing children should also practise orally with a partner what they are going to write by using their plan or sentence starters on the board.

- Provide a tool kit for the children to help them with their writing. These need to be individualised rather than photocopied from a book. Toolkits have been provided by the literacy co-ordinators to ensure progression of features however these need adapting to include examples specific to the context that the children are writing about.
- Children now apply what they have learnt to another example of the text. During this stage, the teacher can model a different WAGOLL (e.g. you write about lions, they write about tigers) or you could choose to embed Alan Peat sentence types within some contextualised grammar teaching. They do their own plan and should be fully supported with a tool kit and a vocabulary mat. Before writing they should practise orally with a partner what they are going to write.
- In a child's writing book at the end of the unit there should be:
  - A map of the spoken WAGOLL (not usually a written version)
  - The WAGOLL with a child's annotations picking out key features
  - Some other activities on the spoken WAGOLL/features of the text type (not just copying out features such as causal conjunctions – the learning must be meaningful)
  - An innovation on the teacher's modelled written WAGOLL with a plan (on same subject – you write about foxes, they write about foxes)
  - An independent (invention) piece of work to show the children have applied what they have learnt (you write about tigers, they write about their own animal) with a plan

## **Polished Pieces**

At the end of the invention piece, children should be given the opportunity to peer or self-assess their writing against the toolkit. Their work is then marked by the teacher who will provide scaffolded comments and a wish to indicate how the child could edit and up-level their work. Following this, the teacher should model how to edit and improve a section of text using an example written by one of the children in the class – anonymised. The children will then have time to respond to the marking in their writing book and can make changes in a purple 'polishing pen' before they write a final polished version of their invention into their Polished Pieces book. It is vital that the children don't just see this as a copying up exercise whereby they copy up their invention piece with corrections. They need to be encouraged to actively up-level, restructure or embellish what they have already written.

## **Support in writing**

Writing

- During warm up writing activities children should be given, where possible, three levels of prompts. These consist of general prompts for the higher ability, more directed questions for the middle ability and sentence starters and questions for the children who really struggle/new arrivals.
- During the planning of the innovation and invention stage support is given as appropriate. At times no support, other than seeing a plan modelled, may be appropriate for the high ability.
- During all activities children must have a contextualised spelling mat plus a tool kit during the innovation and invention stage.
- Adults should be directed to the children they are supporting in lessons so that when needed children can articulate sentences first to an adult.
- All adults should be extremely active in lessons and not sat down with one child or a small group of children.

### Topic

- Writing activities in topic should usually be supported by three levels of prompts. These consist of general prompts for the higher ability, more directed questions for the middle ability and sentence starters and questions for lower attainers. Recounts after a visit should be carried out in topic work. These must be stimulated with small photographs in the margin, taught with a wagoll and a vocabulary mat.
- We aim to make the writing look as varied as possible and bear that in mind when designing prompts.
- At times it may be appropriate for new arrivals to have a simpler task in order to express their geographical and historical understanding.
- Adults should be directed to the children they are supporting in lessons so that, when needed, children can articulate sentences first to an adult.
- All adults in lessons should be extremely active and not sat down with just one child.

### Writing on white boards in topic and writing

- If children really struggle with writing or grammar and need a lot of help in order to formulate a sentence it may be appropriate for a child to write their sentences on a white board first. This should never be so an adult can simply correct it and then it be copied up without any teaching.
- When a child has written something on a board, the opportunity should then be taken to give the child formative feedback to encourage them to improve it. Examples of appropriate things to say to a child who has written on a board would be: 'Can you change the verb so it is more powerful.' 'How do sentences usually start and finish? Can you change your sentence?' 'That sentence doesn't make sense. Have another look and I will come back to you.'

- When a child's work is marked, it should be annotated to indicate that the child has written on a whiteboard first and received feedback from the teacher or teaching assistant.
- If a child rushes, it might be appropriate for them to draft one or two sentences at a time on a whiteboard but this would be for them to check themselves in order to amend it and would not be reviewed by an adult. This tends to slow children down and make them take more care.

## Presentation

- All writing should be done in pink writing books with a guideline. Children must be encouraged to keep these books neat.
- Polished pieces must be completed in a separate pink book labelled as 'Polished Pieces'. This book will progress with a child through school.
- Any work on paper such as plans or text maps must be stuck in neatly by an adult – cut down or folded not sticking out.
- Worksheets must never be used for writing work.
- If a child is not applying what they have learnt in handwriting and not joining letters, they should be told this is unacceptable and help with handwriting given at break time – joining is expected as it frees up working memory to concentrate on more difficult aspects of writing.
- An adult's handwriting must be neat and model what we expect from children.

## Assessment

- Pieces of work must be marked using the agreed symbols to give children continual feedback (see assessment policy).
- Marking should give scaffolded comments throughout the writing process, on a daily basis, to enable the child to improve their work. E.g. add an adverb here, use a causal conjunction, change this sentence opener.
- Work **must** be given a wish at the end of the innovation and invention pieces. The wish at the end of the innovation stage should be genre specific (Next time, remember to write your newspaper report in the third person) whereas the wish at the end of the invention piece should be grammar specific (Make sure you use a determiner before a noun).
- Polished pieces should be marked with a positive comment at the end of the piece.
- All children are given a target in writing at the beginning of the year which can be adjusted throughout the year as appropriate.
- Each term a child receives a step in writing. This is entered on our STAT and is analysed termly by SLT.

- Every child has an individual tracker (based on STAT online) for writing which should be updated on an on-going basis for writing. This is the class teacher's method for tracking the progress of each child.
- Moderation will take place termly and at pupil progress meetings to ensure consistency.
- All new arrivals, without English, are assessed after two weeks by TAs trained in assessment. At Tinsley Meadows, assessments are carried out by SO in Y3/4 and KP in Y5/6. This takes place with BZ in KS1 as part of her teaching.
- Pupil progress meetings take place each term with SLT and timetabled time or NQT and teach first time is used for these.
- All grammatical and spelling mistakes should be picked up on. If children are correctly supported with and encouraged to use a vocabulary mat this shouldn't be an issue.
- Running marking – during lessons, teachers and other adults should have a black pen and be pointing out, with the correct marking symbols, corrections which children can make on the spot. This is excellent formative feedback and should be accompanied with scaffolded comments to make the children think such as: 'Think which word is missing here.' 'What's wrong with the punctuation here?' 'Can you change that so it makes sense?' 'What's wrong with the tense there?'

## **Grammar/Alan Peat Sentence Types**

Grammar is taught contextually and the grammar which is suitable for a genre is identified on the writing subject grid. In years one to six, this takes place between two to three times a week and is directly linked to the writing which is taking place in that genre.

During modelled writing, use of correct grammar must be continually modelled e.g. 'Let's see if I can use a more powerful verb here.' 'Let's think of an adverb sentence opener to make the writing more interesting.' 'I am using a past tense verb because recounts are generally written in the past tense.'

The Talk for Writing approach is also supplemented by the use of Alan Peat sentence types with the aim that the children will build up a bank of sentence types which they can draw upon when appropriate. Age and genre appropriate sentence types have been identified in the 'Progression in Sentence Types' document saved on the network. Appropriate sentence types should be incorporated into oral WAGOLLS and teachers should model using the different sentence types when modelling how to construct a piece of writing during the innovation and invention stages.

## **Inclusion**

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in writing tasks according to their individual abilities. SEND children are given sentence starters and vocabulary mats to structure their writing. Extra oral rehearsal and key visuals should be given where necessary. Speaking frames are provided on flipcharts to structure pupil talk and oral rehearsal of sentences. If necessary, as discussed above,

children are allowed to write on whiteboards so that individual feedback can be given on their writing. Gifted children are pushed to extend their writing as far as possible.

## **New Arrivals**

Children who are new to English should be provided with key visuals to enable them to access the necessary vocabulary. Adaptation of the task should be made when the whole class task is inappropriate for new arrivals. In the three classes which are specific to new arrivals, a more functional bespoke literacy curriculum is followed.

## **Year Six**

In year six, the invention stage should be completely independent so that it can be used as evidence for teacher assessment. If a child is not able to write independently, they are given appropriate support. Any support should be noted in their writing book to show that is a supported piece of writing. Once the children have completed their invention piece, it is marked at the end of each paragraph (according to government guidance) before the children peer assess their work. The children then redraft their work in their 'Polished Pieces' book.

## **Staff Support**

All planning and resources, including contextualised grammar, are checked by two members of staff who are responsible for overseeing the curriculum across school. is given and staff helped to change resources where needed.

Team teaching and observation of other staff are arranged in order to develop staff practice.

## **Future Plans**

During this year we want to incorporate Alan Peat text structures into our talk for writing model so that our pupils become more familiar with how to structure and organise different genres.

**Review Date:** July 2018