

THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM AT WOODSTOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL: WRITING

WRITING IN OUR SCHOOL

The National Curriculum for England and Wales says that learning to write involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible, joined handwriting. The teaching of writing is broken down into two main areas, transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). Children are also taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing.

Fluent writing depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure). Development of these skills from a very early stage is a key focus at Woodstock Primary School.

Children across the school are experiencing a range of opportunities to develop their writing skills through:

- Explicit teaching of phonics (EYFS & KS1), spelling, punctuation and grammar. Children in the EYFS and KS1 have a dedicated daily phonics sessions, and all children have one spelling lesson and one grammar lesson each week.
- The Talk for Writing approach. Writing across the school is taught using the following structure:
 - ◇ **IMITATION** (Phase One) Children read a model text and discuss its key features. They internalise the text, before reading other texts of the same genre and identifying the key features that they share.
 - ◇ **INNOVATION** (Phase Two) Using the model text as a scaffold, children begin to experiment with writing in a similar style. This may involve writing in a group, with a partner or independently.
 - ◇ **INVENTION** (Phase Three) Children plan and write independently in the style of the model text.
- Focused editing sessions, where children are taught to edit and improve their writing.
- Regular handwriting sessions, where children are explicitly taught the skills they need to develop a legible, joined and fluent script.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S WRITING AT HOME

The development of writing skills is ongoing and goes hand in hand with the development of reading; the more a child reads or is read to, the more experience they will have of written text. Watching you write, whether it be a shopping list, note to the window cleaner or email to a friend, will also help your child to develop a sense of audience and purpose, both of which are central to the national curriculum programme of study.

Your child's journey as a writer can be further developed at home by encouraging any of the following:

- **LOOK FOR PRINT** all around you, for example, road signs, food packets, shops, catalogues etc. Talk about what you see, discussing the audience and purpose of different types of writing.
- **DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS** by practising skills such as cutting, using playdough, using tweezers, using clothes pegs, tracing. This will help children develop the dexterity they will need in order to hold and use a pencil.
- **PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT** by providing children with opportunities to write at home, for example, using magnetic letters or a chalkboard to write family messages, making labels for things around the house, making a shopping list, writing a birthday card.
- **PROVIDE RESOURCES** to make writing fun. All children love coloured pens, sparkly notebooks and novelty pencil cases. Getting them to choose their own stationery can be a great way to engage your child in the writing process.
- **ENCOURAGE WRITING FOR A PURPOSE** by asking your child to write thank you letters after birthdays and Christmas, postcards when on holiday or a menu for a family meal or party.
- **ENCOURAGE WRITING FOR PLEASURE** by encourage your child to keep a diary or write their own story, information leaflet or fact file.
- **PRAISE** your child for their efforts and success rather than dwelling on mistakes. This will help to develop their confidence and foster a love of writing.

USING WEBSITES/GAMES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S WRITING

Oxford Owl contains games and activities to try at home:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/advice-for-parents/fun-ideas-learning-at-home/>

CBeebies gives helpful advice for parents of younger children:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/its-not-just-scribbling-its-mark-making>

The Literacy Trust gives advice on apps available to support the development of younger writers:

<http://literacyapps.literacytrust.org.uk/>

BBC Learning has a range of resources, ideas to stimulate children's enthusiasm to write at home:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/childrens_learning.shtml