



# MARISH

## Academy Trust



# Writing Policy

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# Writing Policy at Marish Academy Trust

## 1. Introduction

At Marish Academy Trust the following statements are central to our view of writing development:

- Speaking and listening with confidence are significant factors in developing effective writing
- Reading and writing are closely connected and mutually supportive; we read as writers and write as readers
- Writing tasks should be modelled through reading activities
- Writing is a craft and most children learn best through their own writing, rather than through exercises out of context
- Writing should be framed within recognisable text-types or genres
- All writing should be designed to meet the needs of real or imagined audiences
- Writing tasks should be prepared through preliminary talk and teachers should model writing for their pupils when appropriate
- Children should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other children both to compose and to revise their writing
- Writing skills can be improved through reflection
- More effective writing is dependent upon increasingly informed grammatical and linguistic choices
- ICT can be used as an inspiring stimulus for writing and to enable children to author their own multimedia texts
- Children should be closely involved in assessing their own development as writers
- The teacher's response to the child's composition (e.g. praising aspects of the content) is crucial in developing confidence and motivation
- The skills of transcription (i.e. handwriting, punctuation and spelling) must be thoroughly planned for and explicitly taught

## 2. Aims of the Teaching of Writing

- To appreciate that writing is a universal method of communication
- To teach writing as a process over which the child has control
- To promote writing for pleasure
- To write appropriately for specific real or imaginary audiences
- To write for a variety of purposes
- To make judgements about the tone, style, format and vocabulary appropriate to the writing's purpose, audience and genre
- To write clearly, legibly and accurately with attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar
- To help children recognise that drafting, incorporating significant revision into their writing and proof-reading are integral parts of the writing process
- To achieve independent writing of a high quality

## 3. Contexts for the Teaching and Learning of Writing

Writing is taught and learnt in specific meaningful and effective contexts. These include:

- Shared and guided reading
- Complementary sentence and word level activities
- Modelled and shared writing
- Guided writing
- Independent or paired writing
- Sharing and reflecting on their writing
- Cross-curricular writing tasks e.g. in project work or science

To support children in the acquisition of writing skills we will:

- Provide frequent opportunities to write
- Promote an awareness of adults writing in a variety of contexts for many purposes

- Provide regular demonstrations of the writing process
- Use the IWB to model, draft and discuss many aspects of writing
- Surround children with a print-rich environment that they have helped to create
- Include examples of children's writing in the classroom to promote expectations
- Reward and celebrate children's efforts and achievements in writing
- Provide children with time to refine their writing through editing and revising
- Provide children with opportunities to share their writing
- Assist children in the setting of personal targets
- Use Literacy target cards linked to the new curriculum to support writing
- Promote taking responsibility for their own writing development
- Provide opportunities to reflect on the writing process
- Teach ICT skills that support effective and efficient electronic communication

Within this writing environment, the close relationship between writing and reading needs to be exploited. We will provide a wide variety of texts which will cater for children's diverse interests and needs, and which will act as a stimulus to their own writing.

#### **4. The Teaching of Writing in the Foundation Stage**

##### Opportunities for 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
- Weekly Big Talk session
- Italk sessions

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.

##### Developing Skills

A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of the fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include playdough, cutting, threading and tracing.

In addition a variety of software is used as a versatile resource to promote these motor skills and the correct pencil grip and formation of letters.

Fine motor skills are also a focus within support groups targeted at specific children.

Gross motor skills are also developed through a variety of physical development activities and opportunities, including PE, as upper body strength is recognised as being vital to good fine motor skills.

##### Writing Development

Initially adults will scribe sentences the children say to accompany their drawings, so that they make the vital connection between speech and writing. Next 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.

## 5. The Teaching of Writing at Key Stage One

### Shared Writing

Through shared writing the teacher demonstrates specific writing skills, sometimes acting as scribe. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing. The teacher may demonstrate writing in a particular genre. Shared writing will teach children how to:

- Develop technical terms and vocabulary for understanding and discussing writing
- Generate imaginative and informative ideas through discussion and questioning, and record these ideas in notes/ plans/ drafts
- Structure ideas in writing through the use of appropriate language, sentence structure, punctuation, sequencing and lay-out
- Develop specific word level skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation
- Refine writing to make it clearer and better suited to its audience and purpose
- Publish and present written texts for others to read and use

### Guided Writing

Guided writing sessions will be used to provide a bridge between shared and independent work. During these sessions the teacher or TA may scribe for specific children or support children writing independently or in pairs. Guided writing sessions may focus on:

- Planning a piece of writing
- Supporting work in progress
- Evaluating and improving writing

### Independent Writing

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing will be transferred into their own writing. The Big Talk session continues through the autumn term of year 1, to be replaced with a Big Writing session on each Friday from the January of year 1. This provides each child with an opportunity to write an extended piece each week and continues through the Primary Phase and beyond.

### Developing Skills

As in the Foundation Stage, software is used to promote correctly formed and increasingly fluent handwriting, including joining from Year 1. Spelling is taught regularly, based on systematic phonics teaching. Basic punctuation is also a particular focus in order to develop this essential skill of effective writing. Motor skills continue to be developed through support groups for those children who are slow to progress.

## 6. The Teaching of Writing at Key Stage Two

### Shared Writing

Through shared writing the teacher will model the writing process, including the children through:

- Demonstrating planning strategies (brainstorming, concept maps, writing frames, story boards etc.)
- Using a familiar text as a starting point for writing
- Teaching the structural characteristics of a particular text type
- Drafting
- Teaching the purpose and use of punctuation
- Demonstrating revision strategies e.g. checking for meaning, reordering to improve structure, rewriting to

- improve clarity or to enrich language
- Demonstrating editing strategies e.g. checking punctuation and spelling

### Guided Writing

During guided writing the teacher as 'expert' guides learners at an appropriate level by:

- Giving feedback on previously composed independent writing
- Modelling how to comment constructively on another writer's work
- Demonstrating a specific stage in the writing process
- Developing or reinforcing skills taught in shared writing

### Independent Writing

During the weekly Big Writing session the children compose without direct teacher support:

- Applying skills learned in shared writing and guided writing
- Revising work in the light of feedback from teachers or peers
- Commenting constructively on other children's writing
- Editing and proof-reading to improve transcriptional features
- Preparing work for presentation

## **7. Other Writing Strands**

### 7a Grammar and Punctuation

Aspects of grammar and punctuation will frequently be taught during shared and guided writing sessions. Attention may also be drawn to specific aspects during shared and guided reading. It will be necessary at times to have a whole class or group session on a particular point of grammar or punctuation, where 'Grammar for Writing' may be a useful resource. Much sentence level work, however, will be taught through text level work to make its relevance explicit.

### 7b Spelling

Through the carefully planned and progressive teaching of spelling, we aim:

- ◆ To encourage children to become confident and competent spellers
- ◆ To teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage
- ◆ To help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learnt

#### The Teaching of Spelling

Children will be taught to:

- ◆ Identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness)
- ◆ Recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/ grapheme correspondence)
- ◆ Blend phonemes into words for reading
- ◆ Segment words into phonemes for spelling
- ◆ Acquire a knowledge of high frequency words
- ◆ Identify onsets and rimes as an aid to spelling
- ◆ Investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules
- ◆ Attempt a spelling before checking with the teacher
- ◆ Identify mis-spelt words in their own writing, keep individual lists and learn to spell these words
- ◆ Develop and use independent spelling strategies
- ◆ Use a variety of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work

At all stages, much useful teaching of spelling on a one to one basis can take place while children write. Teaching spelling patterns at the same time as practising handwriting skills, provides useful reinforcement.

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas for writing scribed by an adult and they may occasionally copy this writing. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record final and medial sounds.

At all times, children are encouraged to develop confidence in their increasing ability to spell independently.

Wow word displays are used across the school to provide a print rich environment which children are encouraged to incorporate in their own writing. Children are also encouraged to 'have a go' at spelling words of which they are unsure. The teacher responds by ticking a correct word or taking the opportunity to remind the child of a spelling pattern/mnemonic etc. for the particular word. From Year 3, as the child's spelling competence develops, use of a dictionary will become more frequent to check spellings; although it is important that the child can use a dictionary quickly and easily, so that fluent writing is not impeded.

From Year 1, weekly spelling lists will be given based on the letters and sounds progression, modified as appropriate for some children. The 'Spelling Bank' is a useful source of words and word families.

### 7c Handwriting

Aims of Handwriting:

- To understand that each letter has only one correct formation and orientation
- To develop a sense of pride, pleasure and enjoyment in their handwriting
- To adopt fluent, legible and joined handwriting
- To adapt lettering styles for different purposes

The teaching of handwriting will follow the pen pals framework. A variety of aides, such as pencil grips and tracing cards, are available to support handwriting in the early stages. As correct letter formation and joining become established, the teaching focuses on consistency in size, shape and general clarity of writing. As pupils' handwriting skills develop, they are given opportunities to write on narrower lined paper and develop skills in using guidelines with plain paper. Once pupils establish a fluent, joined style, they are free to personalise their joined writing.

Children in all years up to Year 2 use pencil. Children in KS2 will be awarded a pen licence, when they have proved they can write in a fluent joined style consistently with pencil, they may use roller balls or fountain pens. Ballpoint pens are not permitted and we discourage the use of rubbers.

Cross-curricular opportunities are used to provide real purposes for using handwriting skills. The motor skills necessary for handwriting will also be developed in Art, D.T. and P.E, as well as in motor skills groups.

Children will need guidance as to the best way to orientate the paper on which they will be writing, particularly if they are left-handed. Left-handed children should sit on the left or beside another left-handed child when paired. In addition they may benefit from the use of a pencil grip.

Particular attention is paid to handwriting in the final draft of a piece of written work, especially in KS2. All pupils should be using joined writing throughout KS2 and are taught to print for a purpose in the Later Years.

## **8. Assessment for Learning**

The purpose of assessment for learning is to ensure that children are involved in their own progress and are motivated to improve their work.

At all stages, children will be encouraged to reflect on their progress and whether they have met their set targets which will also be evident on their target cards, attached to their Literacy books. They will be involved in supportive peer assessment as well as in self assessment.

In the Foundation Stage, the child and the teacher read the work together. The teacher may re-write the child's attempts underneath as a form of translation, but would not correct the actual work.

In KS1, the most effective marking takes place in the presence of the child so that it is interactive. Work is ticked and dated by the teacher as an indication that it has been looked at and informally assessed.

In KS2, some discussion will take place with the child but work will usually be marked without the child present. The marking of children's writing will be targeted and focussed. On the initial marking the teacher will:

- Mark work specifically to the stated learning objective(s)
- Make ticks in the text to indicate where that objective has been met
- Make specific comments at the foot of the text (where appropriate) to praise and/or to target future areas for improvement
- Ensure that this sharp focus allows flexibility for comments on other aspects of the child's work e.g. commenting on handwriting if it is deteriorating or on a child's effort to master a skill previously worked on and noted in earlier marking

Positive reinforcement is conducted through the use of stickers, stamps, individual comments, oral praise or inviting the child to share writing during termly 'Celebration Assembly'. Other appropriate rewards are at the teacher's discretion.

## **9. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Writing is assessed half termly using STA writing assessments sheets approved by Slough moderators and the DfE. Children's skills in writing will be assessed not just in Literacy but across the curriculum.

Pieces of assessed work are retained as evidence of attainment in assessment books and those pieces of writing that have been peer and self assessed in Big Writing will be kept in folders and/or big writing books. Information from assessments is used to inform our planning and to set class/group/individual writing targets.

Moderation is achieved through agreements with teaching partners, comparison against exemplification material (DfE moderation or in house examples), staff across the trust and, if necessary, following discussion with the literacy coordinators for the trust.

Standards of achievement in writing by all our children are constantly monitored and reviewed by class teachers in conjunction with Teaching Assistants, the literacy coordinator, INCo, phase leaders, deputies and head teacher.

### **9.1 Target cards**

Each child receives a target card, each half term, with specific targets related to word, sentence/text, and punctuation, specific to the year group they are in. The teacher will also personalise these target cards taking into account the next steps for children's learning. The child and their teacher will assess their work against the targets continuously in any piece of written work and targets marked off once they have been met.

### **9.2 Literacy overviews**

All Literacy planning is linked to the Sue Rogers framework where the objectives for each genre of work are specifically linked to the new national curriculum. Each module of work is assessed and reviewed by the class teacher to ensure full coverage of the new curriculum.

## **10. Literacy and Information Communication Technology**

At Marish Academy Trust we use I.C.T as an integral part of our literacy teaching and learning. We believe that:

- The IWB provides a range of opportunities and software for stimulating literacy teaching and learning
- Literacy work should often be linked to software that aids specific literacy skills
- Computer activities provide opportunities for discussion and reflection
- Children develop their literacy skills as they work in other curriculum areas, e.g. as they find information through the use of electronic encyclopaedias and websites, taking notes for future use
- The use of I.C.T can stimulate reluctant readers and writers
- Word processing is a valuable tool to enable children to redraft, revise and present their work
- A balanced writing curriculum will include opportunities for children to read and write using ICT as well as written texts. Progression in this area is built into the ICT schemes of work.

## **11. Differentiation**

We offer every child access to the English curriculum at the appropriate level, ensuring that children who experience difficulties with any aspect of writing are identified. If necessary, they will be placed on the SEN register and a CAP or SNAP will be written containing specific targets. Support strategies and materials are introduced according to individual needs across the school.

More able children will be identified and enabled to progress at a level appropriate to their ability. Their success will be celebrated by, for example, submitting their work annually to be included in a published anthology of children's writing.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

At Marish Academy Trust, we celebrate diversity through recognising our children's skills and knowledge and by the study of material from a variety of cultures. Texts used will represent all cultures in a positive light and will show both genders in a range of roles.

The interests of both boys and girls will be taken into account when selecting materials to support the development of writing.

Many bilingual children bring to their writing a great depth of appreciation of language and an ability to use it flexibly and creatively. This will be encouraged, supported and celebrated.

We recognise that children for whom English is an additional language may have specific and important needs that must be addressed, including access to bilingual resources. Our language support staff may focus on those children for whom writing is a particular target for development.

## **13. Parent Partnership**

Many children come to school with an understanding of some of the purposes of writing and with experience of drawing, colouring and mark-making as a precursor to legible writing. These experiences are valued by the school, and parents are encouraged to exploit their children's interest by including them in activities such as writing shopping lists and post cards. Guidance about correct letter formation is given to parents of children in Reception and Year 1.

Later, parents are encouraged to participate in their children's writing development through the Talk homework activities, spellings and collecting and writing wow words in meaningful sentences. Children in later years are given homework tasks which require research and presentation, and parental support is encouraged with these activities.

## **14. Conclusion**

Writing is an essential life skill, both for children's future progress in school and for their ability to fulfil their ambitions and potential in adult life. We aim that children leaving Marish Academy Trust should have received a firm

foundation in the essentials of writing. They will have gone on to develop fluency and individual style whenever possible, together with enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction in their achievements.

### **15. Governing Body Approval**

This policy is reviewed by the whole staff team trust wide and Strategic Board on their recommendation.

Version	Approved	Next Review	Comments
1.0	September 2012	January 2014	
2.0	December 2014	December 2016	