



Leadership and Management: Writing

Audit which identifies the aspects of classroom practice which leaders should focus upon

Writing was identified as an area of development across the school for the 2014-15 SIP. Despite various strategies over the last few years, which have seen some improvement in writing, attainment in writing continued to be below that of reading and not in line with NA at the lower end of the school. It was recognised that the better the achievement at the lower end of the school, the more chance children had of improving attainment further up the school. Writing historical data:

2013 – 2014 End of Year Data

End Reception

	2013	2014
Speaking	64% (Below NA)	76% (Below NA)
Writing	59% (Below NA)	67% (At NA)

End of KS1

Writing	2011	2012	2013	2014
2C+	80.5 (83)	72.7 (82)	85 (89)	73 (83)
2B+	31.7 (35)	45.5 (53)	66.7 (72)	58 (65)
2A+	17 (19)	24 (28)	20 (21)	21 (24)
3	2.4 (3)	9.1 (10)	0.0	0.0
APS	13.1	12.8	14.9	14.1

*(Excluding the Infant Assessment Class/High Needs Base)
Improvement*

End of KS2

Writing	2011	2012	2013	2014
L3 +	100	100	100	100
L4 +	62.6	79.2	100	95
L5 +	6.3	8.3	31.3	35
L6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
APS	25.1	25.5	28.9	28.8

When children start at Easterside Academy many of them are working significantly below those of their chronological age by 12 – 18 mths. This is more so for ‘Speaking’ and ‘Writing’ strands where children enter nursery with very limited speech, language and vocabulary skills. Throughout school this gap is relentlessly being addressed in order to provide children with the vocabulary and language needed to express themselves both orally and in writing.

Through writing moderation exercises we could see that many children lacked ‘real’ experiences to draw upon, as well as struggling to use ambitious language in their writing. Moderation and monitoring exercises also showed that within some classrooms expectations were higher than others; this was also evident in the use of the marking policy and feed forward comments.

Leadership activity which focus upon making a difference in classrooms

As a SLT we looked at our current writing ‘agreed practices’ and reviewed what key strategies were seen to be working well and having an impact on progress. Some of these included:

- ❖ Talk for Writing
- ❖ Sentence Types



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We then agreed new strategies that would be put in place in order to ensure expectations across the school were high and clear to all; that children were given opportunities to have 'real' experiences in which to motivate write; and that marking was effective and allowed children to improve their work further.

- ❖ Writing Non Negotiables for KS1 and KS2
- ❖ Planned 'memorable' and 'real' experiences
- ❖ Level/Band Up Books
- ❖ Use of the outdoor environment / Learning Outdoors
- ❖ CPD linked to marking policy and marking 'moderation' exercises for all teaching staff

The Early Years Leader and team also identified key areas within their practice in which to improve writing.

We identified a writing target with success criteria for the performance management of all teaching staff. This captured the writing agreed practices including the identified new strategies – these would be developed consistently and progressively across the whole school.

During the year individual teachers also carried out their own writing action research as part of the 'Developing Future Leaders' Course and 'Outstanding Teacher' Course run by the MSTA.

Interventions designed for adults to learn how to do things differently

Before the new academic year started time was given to teams to plan for the new National Curriculum together. We had bought into the 'Cornerstones' curriculum that reflected the academy's philosophy for teaching and learning e.g. provided a cross curricular curriculum through engaging topics we felt our children would love. It promoted the use of 'real' and 'memorable' experiences as 'hooks' and linked with previous strategies we'd used before such as 'Mantle of the Expert.' It promoted the philosophy of forest schools and learning outside the curriculum which we had already started to embed in our old curriculum. Teams planned their 'hooks', 'experiences', 'visits' and opportunities for 'outdoor learning' drawing on recent CPD in this area.

Time was given at the beginning of the academic year for the SLT to go through the writing agreed practices with staff, so that everyone was clear as to the expectations across the school. This was reinforced through the appraisal cycle early on in September. The writing non-negotiables were laminated and displayed in each tables caddy across school and classroom checklists ensured that all 'writing models/aids' were displayed and available to support pupils independent writing as well as getting themselves 'unstuck' or 'improving their work.'

Writing moderation exercises were planned across the year. These involved both teachers and TAs and looked at both Y2/6 and the old NC, as well as the new NC for years 1 and 5. Moderation exercises were also carried out with our English leader, Y2 and Y6 teachers, and the schools within the Discovery Alliance.

Moderation of marking was introduced – in particular for writing. This was carried out again with all teaching staff and looked at how the marking policy was applied effectively for different year groups.

The SLT worked alongside new members of staff and NQTs to ensure writing agreed practices were put in place quickly and used effectively. Teaching staff had the opportunity to observe and share good and outstanding practice in order to reflect on their own practice and improve.

We also linked with Key Stage 3 at Kings Academy in order to observe teaching practice and help secure Level 5's at the end of KS2.

New practice and provision in classrooms



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Observations and monitoring of practice and provision in writing across the school identified a number of key things emerging:

- ❖ Expectations were higher across the school and more consistent.
- ❖ Pupils and teaching staff referred to the writing non-negotiables in lessons and pupils applied them. This was seen in the presentation and quality of the written work produced.
- ❖ Children used a variety of resources around the room and in the caddies to support their writing as well as improve it. This included using the 'level/band up' books to improve choice of vocabulary and the 'Sentence Type' wall to ensure varied sentences. Children were seen to want to do this independently.
- ❖ Classrooms continued to be consistent in the resources / aids we'd identified as being effective in supporting writing.
- ❖ Outstanding progress was observed where the outdoor environment had been used to develop and introduce new vocabulary, as well as a strategy to motivate writing. An example of this would be when the Year 3/4 SEN class were taken into the woodland area to discover a land of sweets and chocolate! Through the environment that had been created, new vocabulary and language was discovered and modelled, that children then put into poems the following day. Without this 'real' experience that captured the children's imagination, it is unlikely that the children would have been so successful in the language they used within their poems.
- ❖ Marking was more consistent across the school and the introduction of the 'green pen' to respond to marking, encouraged both teacher and child to ensure this happened. The non-negotiables again came out through this, as teacher's high expectations in spelling and choice of vocabulary was again evident. Feed forward are developing – this continues to be an area of development within the school.
- ❖ Teachers reported that children's motivation to write had increased, due to the 'real' and 'memorable' experiences they were providing linked to new, very engaging topics/themes. Working also in a much more cross-curricular and creative way also enabled staff to get children to write in a context they enjoyed and for a 'real' purpose.
- ❖ All staff were following the agreed writing practices across school. Observations with the Head Teacher and Local Authority showed that these were embedded through whole school practice and progression could be seen from nursery to Year 6.

Improved outcomes for children

Through our observations of the children in the classroom, and teacher and pupil feedback, we believe substantial improvement has been made in improving the quality of teaching in writing and we can see the outcomes of that improvement in both the progress the children are making, and also in the end of phase attainment.

We observed confident writers that were well equipped with scaffolds and frameworks which enabled them to produce sustained pieces of quality writing. Both quantity and quality has improved.

Improvements

(Excluding the Infant Assessment Class/High Needs Base)

End of Reception

	2015
Speaking	77%
Writing	72%

End of KS1



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Writing	2015
2C+	76 (88)
2B+	62 (72)
2A+	24 (28)
3	0.0
APS	14.78

End of KS2

Writing	2015
L3 +	100
L4 +	97
L5 +	39
L6	0.0
APS	-

100% of pupils made expected progress in writing at the end of KS2, and 46% made better than expected progress. This was also an increase from the previous year which had been 37%.

At the end of KS2 both reading and writing matched at 100% making expected progress and 46% making better. Again at Level 4 both subjects matched at 97% and at Level 5 36%. This is an improvement on previous years where reading attainment was much higher than writing.

The gap at KS1 for 2B+ writing narrowed by 7% and put writing at NA for the first time (without IAC). In all year groups across the school progress in writing matched that of reading.

Enquiry into and reflection upon what difference it makes and where to focus next

On reflection the focus on how we teach writing at Easterside Academy couldn't have come at a better time with regards to the new curriculum re-write and our outdoor learning development. These elements of our SIP gave great motivation and context for writing that was evident in pupils work and from what they said. The introduction of the writing non-negotiables really set the goal posts for the high standards we wanted from every member of the teaching staff and pupils themselves. Everyone knew what was expected of those basic writing skills and presentation and again this was reflected in the writing outcomes across the school. The level/band up books gave pupils a tool to improve their use of vocabulary and the focus on the marking supported this improvement.

Stepping back and looking at what we have achieved we are also able to identify what we need to do in 2015-16 to sustain this progress and outcomes. These include:

- ❖ Introducing a 'Project Book' rather than a separate English and Topic book. We hope this will encourage pupils to understand that the expectations for writing are not just within the English lessons but also across all subjects, including their topic work. It will also allow for further cross curricular work.
- ❖ Continued whole school focus on marking and feedback. Although this has improved considerably it is something that we recognise as having great impact on pupils progress and attainment when done effectively. This coming year it will also form part of our appraisal targets and monitoring focuses. Book scrutines will look at how marking has been used to improve writing and make progress evident in books.
- ❖ Ensuring that all groups of children are suitably challenged in order to take their learning to another level.