

Writing Curriculum Rationale – Stilton Primary Academy

At Stilton C of E Primary Academy we encourage our children to be curious learners, as we believe this is key to learning across the curriculum.

Within our writing curriculum we aim to:

- create an engaging curriculum, which inspires a love for writing based on audience and purpose;
- provide children with the essential tools in spelling, grammar and punctuation, to support their own independent writing;
- challenge and encourage children to use their curiosity and imagination to create their own writing;
- support children to become independent writers with an understanding of the writing process such as planning, editing and redrafting
- promote a love of reading high quality texts, with a view of broadening children's reading experiences of themes, genres and text types, (in support of writing).

'Fluent writing depends on transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition, which involves knowledge about the topic and discourse knowledge about how to write effectively' (Ofsted Research Review Series – English 2022). We believe that underpinning all learning with background knowledge supports children whilst on their writing journey. We have adopted a curriculum, which is specified, sequenced and valued and promotes the over-learning of knowledge, which supports children's own ideas and understanding. We help support and guide our students to use this knowledge to support their writing, especially when developing their authors' voice. Having a background knowledge, not just of concepts, but of foundational writing skills supports cognitive overload and enables the child to focus on their own ideas and thoughts and how to interweave these (syntax).

Writing Transcription

We explicitly teach spelling and handwriting within our curriculum. We support our pupils by using a cohesive approach to spelling, using the same approaches to phonics and spelling patterns across the school from EYFS to Year 6. This creates consistency for our pupils, and allows them to make links to previous learning through the use of a shared lesson structure and shared language.

We deliver daily phonics and spelling through a high quality phonics programme (Read Write Inc) and consistently implement it to equip children with the skills they need to decode and become fluent readers and confident spellers.

Transcription skills are taught daily from Reception to Y6 and are an important focus in Reception and KS1. Children begin phonics in Reception by the end of September and are taught to write each letter sound, moving onto digraphs and then spelling dictated words and sentences. Handwriting and spelling is modelled and supported explicitly in teacher led sessions and as children in Reception develop their writing skills they are encouraged to use them independently in their playing and learning.

We believe that learning to read is key to academic success, and this is supported by research by the EFF (Education Endowment Foundation). Phonics teaching is recognised as an important component in the development of early reading and spelling skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The EFF considers phonics to be one of the most secure, and best evidenced areas of pedagogy. Studies have shown that an effective SSP programme has a positive overall impact (+5 months). Our reading and spelling curriculum, supported by the Read, Write, Inc programme, ensures that children have daily opportunities to: read for practice, read for meaning, read for

pleasure and use their phonic knowledge to spell words independently, not only in spelling/phonics lessons, but across the curriculum in all subjects.

Writing Composition

Writing is probably the most complex process that we ask children to perform. Our approach to teaching composition looks at reducing the cognitive overload for pupils by completing spaced learning, explicit teaching of grammar and punctuation, retrieval practice and time to plan, edit and redraft. In our writing curriculum, the content comes either from the class text, texts that offer coverage for cultural capital or a previously taught PKC unit. The text types are identified, introduced in a specific sequence, and revisited regularly, so children learn the structures to automaticity. We use a consistent planning frame for narrative and non-fiction writing (from Year 1-6) and the grammatical structures and punctuation are taught in a carefully planned sequence and revisited regularly to ensure they are embedded in long-term memory. We complete this through our specified units within year groups, as well as short daily spelling, grammar and punctuation revision activities in each class. The National Curriculum (2014) focuses on writing for purpose. In our school, we look at six purposes for writing: recount, report, instructional, explanation, discussion, and persuasive texts. The purposes are revisited throughout the child's writing journey, so that when they come into UPKS2, the children can focus on authorial intent, rather than the foundational skills needed for the text type.

Within our text choices for our purposes for writing, we look at different text types across the school. These have been chosen with the National Curriculum, core text choices and cultural capital for our children in mind. These are introduced in various year groups and can be seen in more detail within the reading and writing canons.

Within the KS3 English National Curriculum (2013) it states that 'Teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words...and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language'. Throughout our pupil's journey at school, they are introduced to a variety of vocabulary in our writing lessons (as well as in other areas of the curriculum). This allows our students to begin their understanding of 'relationships between words' and the reasons these are chosen. Focus is on the use of figurative language across year group progression, to support our pupils' transition from KS2 to KS3. This not only supports their understanding of these concepts, but enables them to use this knowledge in their own writing. As mentioned earlier, they are revisited throughout their time at Stilton Primary Academy, so that we can reduce the cognitive overload for children within writing sessions.

Planning:

Our writing units and lesson structures are all planned with the idea of consistency across the school. Teachers follow a similar lesson structure throughout the school, which follows experience days (immersing the pupils in a theme/ concept), sentence stacking sessions (which support SPAG), sentence type focuses, features and text structures and planning/editing and drafting sessions, which enable pupils to understand the writing processes. Units are carefully chosen around core texts from our reading canon, as well as those which refer back to prior knowledge and understanding from subjects across the curriculum. As a school, we explicitly model the foundational skills for writing (from how a simple sentence is formed) as well as the grammar and punctuation as outlined in the National Curriculum (2014). Our lesson structures follow an approach, which limits the child's cognitive overload. 'In presenting material, teachers should pay attention to the 'cognitive load' it presents: limiting the number and complexity of new elements; breaking complex

ideas or procedures into smaller steps...' – (Great Teacher Toolkit). Our structured sentence lessons are organised into three learning chunks, which allows for a smaller sequence of delivery. It has been organised in this way so that 'short burst' chunks of learning can be used to avoid overloading of a pupil's working memory. This increases the likelihood of material being retained and also enables pupils to revisit certain aspects and applying them in different contexts. Children are given key grammar and punctuation lessons alongside these, where more explicit teaching is needed, but we believe that teaching grammar as part of the writing lesson supports those connections between vocabulary and syntax. Sentences are modelled by the teacher and the children have chance to work collaboratively to complete further examples, before having independent practice within each lesson. The shared ideas focus on 'completing an incomplete sentence, expanding sentences or combining 2 or more sentences ' (Ofsted Research Review Series – English 2022), supports children's learning by reviewing and practising previously taught/new skills and how these are then transferred into independent writing. Consistent pictorial or plot based planning tools are used across the school, to again reduce cognitive overload and provide the children with prior knowledge of a range of text types. Once a text type is taught, we should not need to revisit this year after year. Using a shared language for planning and structuring across the school enables the children to focus on the aspects of composition rather than worrying over the features and layout each time. Children are given time to plan their writing, with a focus on vocabulary, ideas and grammar and punctuation they want to include. They are then given time to draft their work (written independently) and to edit through a 3 part sequence: revise, rewrite and reimagine. This includes editing for punctuation and missed spelling words; rewriting to make sure a sentence makes sense and redrafting to add more ideas to their writing to improve this.

Key elements to our writing curriculum:

- Consistent approach to phonics, spelling and handwriting across all year groups.
- Writing is looked at through purpose/audience and genre, with grammar and punctuation revisited to create automatic in writing.
- Consistent approach to the teaching of writing in lessons, across the school.
- Curriculum is mapped out for progression and in-line with Key Learning indicators to support teaching of misconceptions and gaps in knowledge for all pupils.