



2018 - 19

How we teach writing

Aims:

- To promote and nurture a shared love and understanding of writing through meaningful contexts.
- To develop an imaginative, inventive and creative approach to writing across the curriculum.
- To establish suitable yet high expectations for teachers and pupils.
- To promote continuity of planning and teaching writing across the school.
- To ensure children are able to write in a variety of styles and forms with an awareness of purpose and audience.
- To develop teacher and pupil subject knowledge to enable children to use grammar and punctuation accurately.
- To ensure children produce engaging, effective and well-presented written work
- To establish a consistent and effective approach to spelling to secure progress across the school.

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Aims and vision

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Vision

At The Palmer Academy, we believe that promoting a love of writing and nurturing children's sense of themselves as writers is imperative. Writing is a key part of the English curriculum and along with reading, speaking and listening, it makes a significant contribution to the development of children as creative, enthusiastic and independent thinkers and learners. We strive to provide children with stimulating, purposeful and inspiring contexts in which to become innovative writers.

Teaching sequence and units

Teacher planning and toolkit:

- Plan backwards – teachers should identify the expected outcome and have an understanding of what they want children to produce at the end of a unit.
- Identify the audience and purpose for the children's writing – examples could be writing a prequel or sequel, changing text types (for example changing a story to a newspaper) or changing the viewpoint of a piece of writing.
- Decide upon a meaningful context that can be used as an engaging stimulus for your children's writing. Examples could be: basing writing on a trip or visit or creating a scenario in school such as a missing poster or a video clip.
- Identify the key learning objectives – analyse previous writing and what the children's targets are in terms of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.
- Elements of GPS (grammar, punctuation and spelling) that children need to cover in this text type. (see appendix for progression of skills and glossary)
- Identify or write an appropriate text to act as a model for the children's own writing – for KS2 this could be a different but similar context to encourage children to think of their own ideas. For example, if writing non-chronological reports about dragons

provide a model with sophisticated vocabulary and an abundance of the focus grammatical features about a different creature.

- Identify a good number of quality texts that will help familiarise the children with that text type.

Week 1 – Immersion and imitation

Engaging the children in the text type

The first week focusses on triggering excitement about the text type and ensuring that children are familiar with the genre through exploring lots of different examples. There should be a large focus upon speaking, listening and oracy where children are encouraged to comment and review different examples of the text type or even the text in a different form (such as a theatre production).

The following are exemplar activities that you could use:

- Hook the children into their writing by using: film clips, mock scenarios, real life contexts or topic based contexts.
- Explore the text type for pleasure – compare, contrast and appraise different examples and get children thinking about the structural and grammatical features.
- Explore and identify features of the text including the structure (this will form the success criteria for the unit)
- Link to reading – read the modelled text using shared read or paired reading and follow with comprehension. This will enable the children to analyse the language choices and structure.
- Inferential challenge – provide children with a cloze procedure with key vocabulary and allow them to experiment with synonyms to broaden vocabulary choices (“What word would you use and why?”)
- Magpie ideas from exemplar texts for the working wall to use in shared, guided and independent writing.
- Pick apart the text and ensure the children are confident when identifying the features and sentence structure.

Learning the text

The purpose of learning the text is to learn the structure of any given text, the language rhythms and the patterns that it involves. This provides children with an engaging vehicle to learn features of text types.

Ideas to help get the text into long-term working memory:

- All together as a class – KS1 may adopt this strategy others can use objects or sounds as well as actions
- In pairs and threes – stand and face each other and recite
- Perform to another class or in assembly
- Word by word or sentence by sentence

- Create a story map to show a visual representation of the text
- Silently – actions only
- Games

This process can take up to a week. However, it is down to the teacher’s discretion as to when they feel the children are confident.

Week 2– Skills based week

The second week of the unit is where the children need to be explicitly taught the skills they need in order to be able to create an effective piece of writing. This involves teaching grammatical features and vocabulary and also boxing up the modelled text to give more understanding of the structure.

Planning and boxing up the text

This part of the unit is to facilitate the writing process by providing the children with necessary tools.

- Identify the underlying sequence of the text.
- Identify key elements of each section and work with the children on imitating sentence patterns.
- Box up the text and capture the overall structure by picking out key elements. Children in the older years need to be able to do this themselves as this is another way of them learning the structure of the text.
- Teach grammar features in isolation here – sentence level, punctuation level and grammar
- In the third column of the box it up plan children should make a small change to the ideas taken from the text to make them their own – you can model this to the class and create a class box it up plan.
- Differentiate through the extent of scaffolding and modelling.

Learning environment at the end of phase

A checklist of what you may see in your classroom at the stage of the writing process.

- Story/ text map
- Written version of the text
- Vocabulary wall
- Boxed up plan
- Co-construct toolkits on how writers create an effect to support writing
- Useful sentence structures and imitated sentences from the modelled text.

Week 3: Invention, editing and improving

The final week of the unit is where children now write their own version of the text using all of the building blocks provided. This is a scaffolded process through modelled and shared writing.

Shared writing

- Always use the box it up plan when modelling to the children. Teachers must model how children are to use their plan when writing.
- Model writer talk – the creative thought processes as you compose
- Focus on the key aspects of writing you want to develop – e.g fronted adverbials, expanded noun phrases, dialogue (these will have formed your success criteria throughout unit)
- Model progress – the things that will move their writing forward e.g cohesive devices and dialogue.
- Be selective – don't model everything at once – you have a go and then they have a go.

What shared writing should look like in a lesson

- Start by demonstrating but quickly involve the children
- Accept suggestions but don't be pushed off plan – have a “save it” box for ideas that they may want to include in their own writing.
- Don't worry about spelling and handwriting – keep the focus on effect of writing – can model editing process later in unit.
- Always encourage aspirational vocabulary – make this the focus and give rewards to children who have used these words in their writing.
- Push for better ideas – can children use whiteboard/ build on each other's ideas
- Pace; keep it moving – have an idea of what you want the shared write to look like before the lesson – this will ensure that you include all of the relevant features.
- Model re-reading to the children to check effect and 'flow' as well as accuracy and meaning.

Reluctant writers

At times the children may not always respond to the new shared write and you may have to make the unit last slightly longer – especially in earlier terms. You may need to repeat parts of the unit in small groups focussing on elements such as sentence composition and basic punctuation.

Try:

- Small group modelling using example sentence starters and imitated sentences from the modelled write.
- Provide new stimulus' e.g word mats/ photos to generate further ideas
- Draw a new story map for the new shared write
- Slow write – a step by step of what to include in each sentence
- Start with children up levelling sentences using different word classes – can they modify the noun by adding an: adjective, adverb or fronted adverbial.
- SEN can use Clicker 7 for the transcription process.

Editing and improving

The final part of the unit is where children are able to edit and improve their own work. The starting point for this would be for children to re-visit their steps to success and use this as a checklist for their writing.

Lesson starters:

- Up levelling vocabulary using the “Swap Shop” game – can children swap one of their words for a more aspirational choice.
- Punctuation text marking – children to read a piece of text and create their own symbols for where they pause, add emphasis or change the tone of their voice. This activity will help children to spot punctuation errors but also help them with their reading fluency.
- Vocabulary analysis – children are to “pick apart” words by looking at the root word, drawing on their prior knowledge of subjects relating to that word and also thinking of synonyms and antonyms. This activity will help them when editing their language choices.
- Marking a piece of work themselves – children margin mark a piece of writing using the steps to success from the unit to ensure they have included all of the relevant features.

The editing process should be completed in purple pen so that the teacher can differentiate between teacher and pupil marking. Teachers should model the editing process to the children and this could be done using the visualizer. It is down to the teacher’s discretion as to whether they want the children to edit a whole piece of writing or just a section based upon the children’s knowledge and understanding.

Moderation and cross curricular writing units

Moderation

Consistency within year groups and ultimately across the school is obligatory. To achieve this The Palmer Academy values the importance of cross-moderation. This ensures that all teachers have the same expectation of writing across the school and a secure understanding of the progression of skills throughout the key stages.

Moderation should be completed across year groups once every term against the progression ladders and writing frameworks. Subject leaders will conduct half - termly book looks to ensure that there is a growing consistency across the school.

The moderation process will enable teachers to review the B1 writers and to identify gaps alongside the PiXI GPS testing programme, The National Curriculum, the progression ladders and the writing frameworks.

Cross curricular writing

As a starting point for moderation, around two weeks after a writing unit is complete, year groups should plan for children to create the same text type but in a different context. This piece of writing should not be as scaffolded as the original piece but should still allow children to use all of the tools that were provided with (for example: working walls, flip charts or word mats). By creating the same text type in a different context, teachers will be able to moderate this piece and clearly see whether sufficient progress has been made.

Marking and feedback

Marking should be in line with the marking policy. A deep marking process should take place for every completed piece of writing using the steps to success from the unit and the writing framework. Margin marking should be apparent in all books to make it easier for GPS features to be identified. Ensure that read and respond comments always move the children's learning forward or ensure that relevant verbal feedback has been given.