



WRITING at Yarm Primary

At Yarm Primary, our intent is to provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum, which builds on their needs and prepares them for the future. We use a project-based approach to provide an engaging and purposeful context for learning where pupils are encouraged to apply the skills and knowledge in a range of subjects. We place emphasis on mastering key skills to provide a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

As stated in the National Curriculum, pupils should be taught:

- to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions
- to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- to plan, revise and evaluate their writing
- to spell quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters
- to form, articulate, and communicate their ideas to then organise them coherently for a reader
- to acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- to appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage

To implement our offer, we recognise that the writing process is a journey from dependence to independence. Attainment in writing is intrinsically linked to the reading culture of the class and the school and we aim to foster this by ensuring children have experience of sharing reading for pleasure and purpose and opportunities to participate in reading and writing alongside adults. Supported by reading high-quality texts, we believe this ethos will enable children to become increasingly aware of audience, form, voice and written language structures. Please see 'Reading at Yarm Primary' to find out how we promote a love of reading in our school.

Among the first and most important resources that young writers have is a strong foundation of spoken language that leads into a secure knowledge of how quality print works as a means of communication. We ensure this is captured in our curriculum offer throughout school and time is devoted to quality 'talk for writing', especially at the beginning of learning sequences. This includes drama opportunities whereby children may better immerse themselves in a text, rehearse relevant language and develop empathy, inference and deduction skills.

Writing is developed in phases leading to whole-class learning sequences in upper school. We draw on the use of the CLPE 'Writing Scales' to inform our

planning and targeting to support the accurate identification of the needs of all pupils and to plan future steps.

Children across school access timetabled writing sessions. The use of high-quality writing models in all phases allows children to become familiar with specific genres at their level; typically, children will discuss and interrogate these for features so that they will be able to apply these to their own work. The CLPE 'Power of Reading' scheme is used to select class readers: these provide the source for rich writing models. These texts are supplemented by other high-quality reading materials as we understand that engaging writing can only come from engaging and exciting reading opportunities. Building upon this foundation, children typically plan, draft and redraft/edit their work; the use of self and peer assessment being a typical feature across school and one which encourages children to reflect on their next steps as a writer.

There is a strong focus on understanding, gathering and applying rich and sophisticated words and phrases so that children have at their disposal a wealth of vocabulary to apply to different writing contexts. Vocabulary-rich classroom environments are a typical feature across school.

Regular 'Writing Challenges' are an integral part of our approach to writing, providing children with the opportunity to apply skills taught to an independent piece of writing based on an engaging stimulus such as a picture, video or object. There is a strong emphasis on quality over quantity, with children encouraged to carefully consider their language and thematic choices.

Participation in national literary events such as National Poetry Day and World Book Day serve to further raise the profile of writing alongside regular whole-school initiatives and competitions within school. Visits and visitors also give children the opportunity to write for real purpose and we are responsive to current events and celebrations by ensuring this is frequently reflected in engaging writing tasks.

Pupil voice reflects how children throughout school value writing:

"Writing is important because it helps with jobs when you're older."

"I love writing because it expands my imagination and I get to spell new words."

"Writing gives you knowledge and it makes me feel free."

"I like to develop my handwriting and it feels nice to write down my imagination."

At Yarm Primary, we understand that a secure grounding in spelling, punctuation and grammar leads to fluent and accurate writers and regular SPaG practice is incorporated into lessons, with classes typically accessing daily inputs. In EYFS, the foundation for spelling starts with phonological awareness of sounds (e.g. initial, end). Blending and segmenting starts in nursery, first orally then progressing to simple CVC words in Reception alongside the direct teaching of 'tricky words' (Little Wandle). In Key Stage 1, children access spelling sessions focussed on a particular spelling rule and time is also devoted to learning common exception words. In Key Stage 2, children use spelling strategies to explore spelling patterns, common exception words and words linked to their current topic. These topic words are then applied through a weekly dictation so that children appreciate the meaning of words in context whilst also developing stamina for writing. The punctuation and grammar content pertinent to each school phase is taught alongside spelling; regular recapping and retrieval practice ensures that children build upon content from previous year groups so that learning is not forgotten.

We foster great pride in writing at Yarm Primary and aspire to high standards of handwriting and presentation in every year group. Our intent is for children to write legibly, fluently and comfortably. Handwriting is progressive throughout school; in nursery, children use the 'Wiggle and Squiggle' scheme to practise fine and gross motor skills in preparedness for mark-making and printed letter formation. In Key Stage 1, children practise accurate sizing and formation of upper and lower case letters. In Key Stage 2, joined handwriting is expected on the appropriate letters; 'pen licences' may be earned when children are consistently producing joined and legible handwriting.

All children are entitled to access the writing curriculum at Yarm Primary and we therefore strive to remove barriers to transcription. To this end, support is provided in several forms such as computer-based adaptations, scribing and the tailoring of writing tasks to children's needs and interests.

A consistent approach to recording and assessing writing allows for regular moderation across teams, phases and colleagues within the Trust, accuracy of judgement and the sharing of good practice. Feedback at the point of learning ensures that children are clear on their next steps for progress.

The impact of our writing offer at Yarm Primary is that children see themselves as fluent, accurate and creative writers. They are able to match writing to the appropriate audience and write for a range of purposes across the primary curriculum. Children are aware of and can apply the age-appropriate spelling, punctuation and grammar features to their writing and they have pride in presenting their work to a high standard. They understand that writing is a powerful tool for success and enrichment in everyday life, including in a diverse range of fulfilling future careers.

