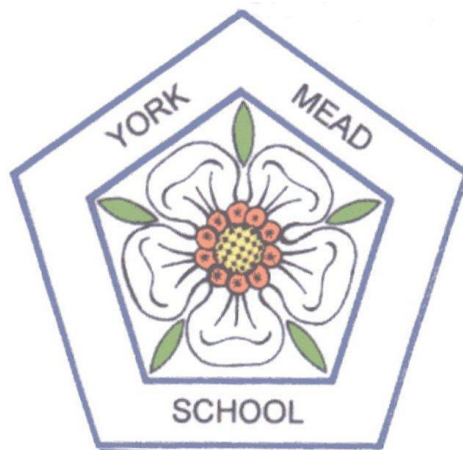


# Yorkmead School



## Writing at Yorkmead

Updated October 2019

Review Date October 2020

## The Yorkmead approach to Writing

At Yorkmead, we believe that the ability to write with confidence and accuracy is an essential life skill. Writing well is the ability to communicate ideas, information and opinions across a wide range of contexts. As a successful writer, a child will understand how to use different genres appropriately, matching them to audience and purpose whilst at the same time accurately using and applying the conventions of syntax, spelling and punctuation. Our writing provision at Yorkmead will equip children with the skills necessary to achieve this throughout the curriculum.

### Aims:

All children should be able to:

- Write with confidence, clarity and imagination;
- Understand and apply their knowledge of phonics and spelling;
- Understand how to write in a range of genres (fiction, non-fiction & poetry) using the appropriate style, structure and features;
- Plan, draft, edit and redraft their work and learn how to self and peer-assess against success criteria;
- Develop a technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their writing;
- Develop their imagination, creativity, expressive language and critical awareness through their writing.

### Implementation:

We follow the National Curriculum (2014) which ensures that a range of genres are covered, including narrative (e.g. extended stories, stories by the same author, myths & legends, adventure stories and traditional stories), non-fiction (e.g. persuasive texts, non-chronological reports, information texts, recounts, reports and letters) and poetry (e.g. rhyme, nonsense rhymes, shape poems, acrostic and descriptive poetry.) Genres are taught and learnt by considering the key aspects of

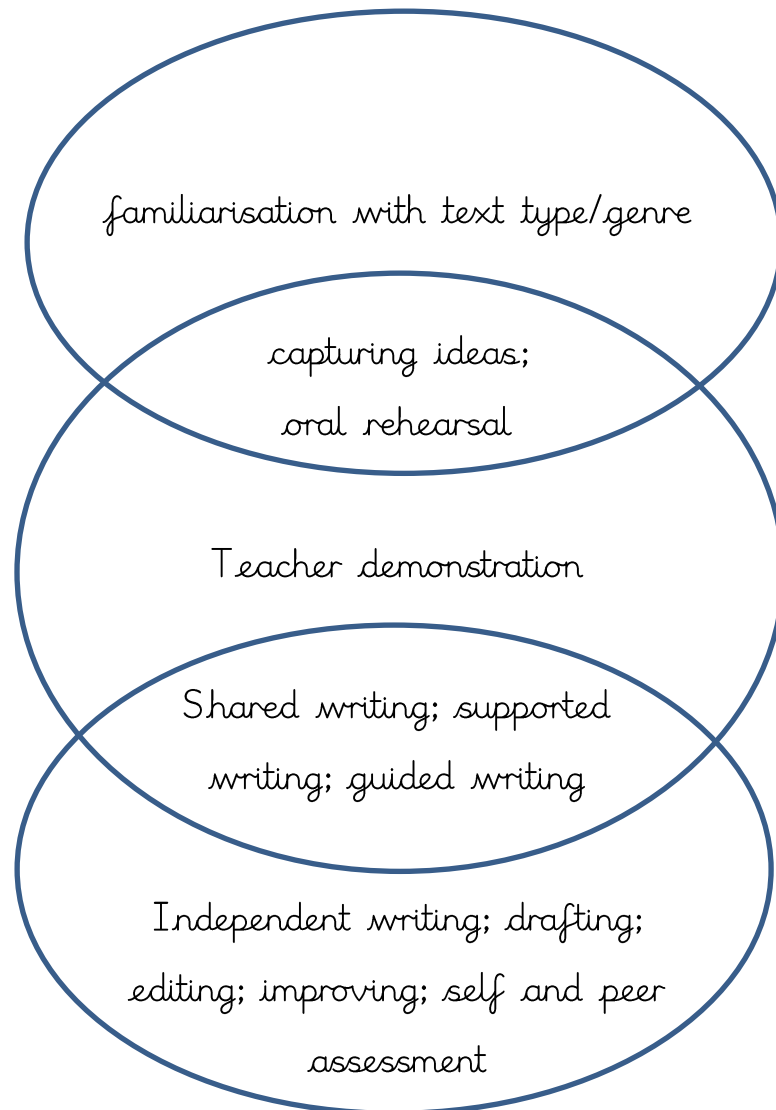
- purpose
- form (organisation & language features)
- audience

Throughout each unit, the links between reading and writing are made explicit - we read as writers and we write as readers. The progress throughout each unit of work shows the transition between reading as writers (focussing on the structure, characterisation and language features) to writing as readers (word play, describing, composition, planning, editing, redrafting.)

In a nutshell, planning for the learning journey in writing should follow these principles:

stimulate & generate  capture, sift & sort  create, refine & evaluate

The sequence of teaching of writing should generally include the following progression:



At Yorkmead, we will use two clear teaching sequences in order to secure the children's understanding of how to write in different genres.

1. Talk for Writing - This will be used more frequently in Early Years and KS1 and at least once per term in KS2.
2. Cold to Hot Cycle - this will be used when teaching specific genres, both fiction and non-fiction.

When either is used the emphasis is always on securing an understanding of the audience, purpose and form (organisation and language features) of each genre being taught.

## Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Literacy is one of the four specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and it combines both writing and reading.

- Writing - children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.
- Moving and handling - children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

In the Nursery, children are introduced to handwriting through the 'Write Dance' programme. The unique aspect of this programme is the use of music and dance through which children can follow and learn specific movements to develop their physical skills including, balance, coordination, flexibility and stamina.

Before children are able to form letters, they need to learn how to make marks. In the Early Years, mark making and writing resources are available for children to use in every area of the early years provision - including the outside area. Activities are planned daily to develop children's fine and gross motor skills e.g. building wrist strength by twirling ribbon sticks, practising writing patterns with big brushes and water, making letters in the sand or shaving foam and participating in Dough Disco. Dough Disco involves moulding dough in time to music and performing different actions such as rolling it into a ball, flattening it, putting each individual finger into the dough, rolling it into a sausage and squeezing it. This activity helps to strengthen children's fine motor muscles to enable them to develop their pencil grip which in turn will help to develop their writing skills.

Developing the muscles for writing is crucial, particularly for boys. To assist with this, children have the experience of climbing, bike riding, using scooters, using malleable materials, finger and action rhymes. We teach the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow or quick jumpy movements. These all help with the formation of letters when children are ready.

Early reading and writing is taught using synthetic phonics. We follow the 'Letters and Sounds' scheme set by the Primary National Strategy as well as the Jolly Phonics programme/scheme to offer multi-sensory, active sessions with fun actions, stories and songs. The Letters and Sounds programme breaks down how the children learn phonics into phases.

- In Nursery, children work through Phase 1 which supports the development of speaking and listening and awareness of sounds. Children working within Phase 1 will explore and experiment with sounds and words, distinguish between sounds in the environment and phonemes (sounds) as well as show awareness of rhyme and alliteration.
- In Reception, children will work through Phases 2, 3 and 4. Pupils are systematically taught the phonemes, how to blend the sounds all through the word for reading, and how to segment the sounds in order to write words. When teaching a new letter sound during the daily discrete phonics session, the children are given the opportunity to practise the formation of the new letter. This is by 'writing' the letter in the air, on their hands or on a partner's back. They also have the opportunity to correctly form the letter on a whiteboard.

At Yorkmead Primary School, we recognise the importance to take pride in our work, so we have adopted a new cursive handwriting scheme. The cursive style will support our pupils in learning spellings and in developing a neat and legible handwriting style. We use the Letter-join handwriting scheme and pupils are able to practise their handwriting at home by logging on to the Letter-join website on iPads, tablets as well as desktop and laptop computers.

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and celebrated. As their phonic knowledge increases, so does their ability to write independently. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities and independently apply their phonic skills through role play, creative activities, computing and the outdoor area.

In the Early Years, children learn stories using the 'Talk for Writing' approach so that they become confident in their understanding of story language and structure. In the early stage, the focus is on verbal retelling with actions, and creative responses including role-play. As they progress through Reception, children begin to make changes to nursery rhymes and stories

(Innovate Stage) which prepares them for Year One as well as being able to progress onto the final Create Stage.

In Reception, we use Colourful Semantics to develop the children's understanding of the structure of a simple sentence. We introduce 'Who?' at the beginning of the Autumn Term and gradually introduce the other elements of 'What doing?', 'What?', 'Where?' and 'When?' Visual cues for Colourful Semantics are used in resources, including Smartboard slides, so that children can see and manipulate the parts of a sentence.

## Talk for Writing – the Key Principles

'Talk for Writing' is an oral approach to writing based upon how children learn language – through the imitation, innovation and invention of language. Constant experience of texts, both orally and in written form, help children internalise language patterns. The underlying premise is that the best writers are always readers. T4W can be used for fiction as well as non-fiction. This is how we will use the model at Yorkmead:

### IMITATE

- Begin with a 'hook' experience to engage, excite and immerse the children in the story you are about to read. E.g. making marmalade sandwiches before reading Paddington.
- Use the structure of Hear, Map, Step and Speak when teaching a story or text:

HEAR – tell the story/text to the class.

MAP – draw your own story map for the story (or text map for a non-fiction text.)

STEP – perform the story/text with actions.

SPEAK – tell it in small groups, independently, to a partner or as a whole class.

#### In more detail:

The story can be read in full or part depending on how the text is being used.

Class teachers may need to create a memorable, meaningful version of the story or text-type being taught making sure to build in the relevant structure and language features. This basic model should be pitched just above the children's level so that high expectations are set. This becomes the WAGOLL and basis for the story/text map.

The story/text type should illustrate key features of the story/text structure, especially focusing on the relevant KPIs for the year group. For example, if the focus is on one section of a larger story in order to look at story settings, the example should illustrate the writer's use of vocabulary for effect.

Key features should be colour-coded on this WAGOLL and therefore lead on to the creation of a toolkit which must be displayed on the working wall.



The story/text map and WAGOLL should be annotated to make the structure really clear. This can be done as a boxed up grid or using washing lines, i.e. each section of the map/WAGOLL is hung up with a label to annotate it, e.g. introduction / build up etc.

Punctuation should be added in red so that it stands out clearly.

Actions, including for punctuation, should be created when speaking the story/text.

A variety of games can be used to help the children internalise the text and language structure. For example, babble gabble to say the story as quickly as possible, passing the story around a circle, saying it in pairs like a mirror.

## INNOVATION

This second phase of the cycle involves using the original version as a basis for creating something new. The idea is that the children draw upon the underlying structure and language features of the original model in order for them to create their own versions. Innovate by:

- Substitution

For a story, making a few changes such as altering a character, setting, objects or dilemmas in a story. The plot structure basically stays the same but the plot content is changed,

For non-fiction texts, after learning the structure and language features of a particular text type, the subject content can be changed. For example, if the children have learnt about badgers for a non-chronological report, they can then learn about a new animal for their new version.

- Addition

For a story, adding new things to the story, e.g. speech, description or narration, new characters, new incidents, new objects a character interacts with.

For non-fiction texts, adding new categories of information. For example, adding a new sub-heading for a non-chronological report.

### In more detail:

To assist this and to help children to make connections between different aspects of their learning, teachers can make links with other curriculum areas. This means that they can draw on existing knowledge from science or topic lessons rather than having to teach new information as part of a writing lesson.

The boxed up grid from the original model in the Imitate stage should be used as a basic planner. New information needs to be gathered and organized onto the planning grid. This can be done in a variety of ways, e.g. note-taking from books and internet research, interviewing experts or visitors, watching a film & taking note, use of trips etc.

A new story/text map may be useful but alternatively, post-it notes can be added to the original where changes are made.

Spelling and sentence activities are crucial within this stage to enable the children to have oral and written practice in the language features before writing.

Shared Writing is a key component in this stage as it is used to refine text. Teachers should always know where the shared writing is going (having a pre-planned composition is vital) so that specific teaching points can be made, again linked to the KPIs.

Teachers should involve the children in the composition process. Again, class composition should be at a level just above the children's writing stage to raise expectations etc.

Shared writing can be developed over several days focusing on different aspects of the story/text at a time. Comparison of ideas should be actively encouraged in order to illustrate the effectiveness of each and therefore help the children to judge which ideas work best.

During shared writing, plenty of opportunities should be given to pause to re-read as this helps children to hear where editing is needed.

Teachers can deliberately build in typical weakness in order to open up discussion and highlight learning points to be made.

Opportunities for independent practice should be given within this stage. For example, if a shared writing experience has focused on writing dialogue between two characters, children could then be asked to write a new conversation between the characters so that they can practice what they have just shared together.

## INVENTION

Invention is the independent application of the skills and structures previously learnt.

For fiction, this allows the children to invent their own stories.

For *non-fiction*, this allows the children to tackle the same text type, but within the context of their own chosen topic, or one applied from elsewhere in the curriculum. The latter allows the children to revisit text types over time.

The use of shared or guided writing is still important, especially where specific gaps persist from the innovation stage and need special emphasis.

Children should be guided through the process of inventing by:

- Gathering ideas - include reflecting on ideas and selecting those which have merit
- Planning by boxing up - organizing content into paragraphs
- Drafting and crafting sentences
- Editing - re-reading and polishing

## Cold-to-Hot Writing Cycle

This cycle begins with the children writing 'cold' in a particular genre, moves on to the teaching and rehearsal of specific skills and features necessary for the children to secure that genre, to them finally being able to independently apply the newly acquired skills in a 'hot' write.

The advantage of using this approach is that:

- a) the progress from a cold to hot write is clearly evident;
- b) teachers can address key learning gaps which are evident in cold writes;
- c) there is a clear progression planned into the skills and techniques taught for genres across year groups.

1. **COLD WRITE:** In the week before a new genre is being taught, the children write in that style with minimal input about features etc. Some initial stimulus is given but the emphasis is on assessing the children's skills at writing 'cold' in a particular genre. This needn't be a long piece of writing - perhaps 20-30 minutes depending on age, with some brief planning time beforehand in KS2. This is an ideal opportunity for class teachers to assess gaps in learning which will then inform the planning process.

2. WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) is shared with children and used to identify features of the genre. It is essential that WAGOLLS reflect the Writing KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for a year group. The findings of this are used to generate posters for the working wall which clearly specify:

- Purpose
- Form
  - Organisation (how it is set out etc)
  - Language (tense, formal/informal, style of openers, types of conjunctions etc)
- Audience

Throughout the unit, the toolkit for each aspect needs to be added to the working wall and regularly referred to.

3. **STIMULUS, GATHERING of ideas & PLANNING** for writing. This may be as part of the class text, a visual stimulus (e.g. Literacy Shed), a real-life context from a trip or event etc. Key vocabulary and development of word banks is essential at this stage.
4. **WARM WRITING: TEACHER MODELLING & REHEARSAL.** A variety of techniques are used to model good practice in writing (see list below) and to develop their understanding of how to write in a particular style. For example, greater emphasis may need to be put on modelling how to write an effective introduction to a report, or a story opening/ending etc. The focus will vary depending on prior teaching focus and what key issues arose out of their cold writes.
5. **HOT WRITE:** Children begin to write independently with a first draft, based on either shared or independent planning. They can draw on new skills and aspects of writing they rehearsed earlier in the WARM WRITE stage. This can then either be edited in part or edited and totally redrafted.

Eventually, the more this cycle is used, the more independent the children will become in confidently writing across a wide range of genres. We anticipate that after some time, the HOT WRITE section of the cycle should be applied away from the point of teaching. For example, after a shared planning stage, teacher modelling leading into independent rehearsal (WARM WRITE) the children should then be able to plan, draft and redraft in the same genre up to two weeks after the initial teaching input.

Upper KS2 should also revisit genres throughout the year so that they are applying their knowledge of genres without the need for the full cycle to be taught again.

## Teaching Strategies for Writing

### Modelled Writing

The teacher talks aloud through the thought processes as a writer. They have complete control over the writing and make explicit the structure, language features, spelling and punctuation of the text type as appropriate. Slow writing could be used as a very structured approach to modelled writing - see below.

### Shared Writing

This is a collaborative approach where pupils contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to select the most appropriate. The teacher needs to give reasons for the choices made. Added into this, you can use Paired or Group Writing to add into the final piece of shared writing where pairs or groups can be given specific criteria for GPS or specific content from a plan to include. Group work is useful for example after a shared introduction: groups can each be given pointers to write for a different paragraph so that when the work is combined it makes a complete piece of writing.

### Guided Writing

Pupils are grouped by ability according to their target needs and the teacher works with each group in rotation during the week so that every child partakes in guided writing over a week or half term. The task is carefully selected to provide an appropriate level of challenge and will focus on a particular aspect of the writing process as opposed to writing a complete piece. Tasks may include the processes of planning, drafting and editing pieces of writing. Teachers choose a target for each group based on an assessment of their individual needs and previous writing. TAs can also be used to lead guided groups.

### Slow Writing

This is a really useful technique to use in modelled writing but can then be used as a follow-up activity for children to complete in groups, pairs or individually. The purpose is to slow children down in order to get them to carefully consider each sentence they write, making each sentence different in style and structure.

### How?

Use a topic/image/song as a stimulus and ask the children to write a set number of sentences which meet the criteria given. They should also double-space their writing so that, once written, they can go back and edit and redraft. Example criteria could be:

1. Your first sentence must start with a present participle (that's a verb ending in 'ing')
2. Your second sentence must contain only three words
3. Your third sentence must contain a semi-colon
4. Your fourth sentence must be a rhetorical question
5. Your fifth sentence will start with an adverb
6. Your sixth sentence will contain a simile

The criteria you choose should obviously fit in with what you've taught and can be varied and differentiated. Ultimately, by Years 5 and 6 the children should be able to select their own slow-writing prompts and be independent in choosing a range of sentence styles to make their writing varied and interesting.

The purpose of having to slow right down is to encourage the children to think about their technique. Generally speaking, pupils find it straightforward to write what they want but it's much harder for them to think about how they're going to write it. This process forces them to concentrate on the how instead of the what.

Once they've finished they get to improve - this is where the double spacing is useful. The children should interrogate every single word and consider whether there might be a better word. They look at every sentence and ask could it begin differently? Should it be longer or shorter? Are they absolutely sure it makes sense?? Is there variety?

Take a look at <http://www.learningspy.co.uk/featured/new-twist-slow-writing/> for further explanation.

### Independent Writing

All children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text type in their own writing. This is vitally important if children are to develop their skills as writers within different genres. Independent writing is a vital assessment tool as it provides teachers with

essential information about gaps to teach towards. It is perfectly acceptable for the children to have access to items on a working wall, word banks, dictionaries and thesauruses during independent writing as this is part of normal everyday classroom practice.

### Editing and Redrafting

These skills need to be gradually built up over the year so that by the end of a year, children are able to independently edit and improve their own work. Along with sentence specific issues, the children should also consider looking at the paragraphs and think about how they link: do they flow logically? Does each paragraph pick up where the preceding one leaves off?

Suggestions for a progression in teaching these skills might include:

### EDITING

- a) Shared and or guided editing of teacher-prepared work which contains errors of specific type, e.g. spelling, tense, punctuation etc.
- b) Guided editing of the children's work, again focussing on one aspect to edit, e.g. spelling, punctuation, vocabulary choice etc.
- c) Peer editing of each other's work as above.
- d) Self-editing of own work - building up from small sections to whole pieces, with suggested guidance prompts but which are not too specific

### REDRAFTING

- a) Shared and or guided redrafting of prepared sentences and or paragraphs, according to suggested guidance prompts, e.g. you need to think about correctly punctuating/correcting spelling/using more adventurous vocabulary etc.
- b) Guided redrafting of children's sentences/paragraphs focussing on variety of aspects and expecting it to be rewritten in part.
- c) Peer redrafting of each other's work as above.
- d) Self-redrafting of own work - building up from sentences to small sections/paragraphs to whole pieces.



## Non-negotiable Expectations for Teaching of Writing

### INDEPENDENCE

- Independent writing should cover a range of subjects, not just within English lessons, and so, for example, may include shorter pieces in RE, Science, Topic. This is to ensure we develop the children's ability to write in cross-curricular ways and maintain standards of high quality work throughout the curriculum.
- Clearly indicate Independent pieces of writing used to inform teacher assessments each half term by adding 'Independent Writing' or 'IW' to the margin where the children write the LO. This is to distinguish between these assessed pieces of writing and other independent writing opportunities which were part of a lesson but may have followed some scaffold or guided support.

### STORY MAPS, TOOLKITS & WAGOLLS

- Story Maps developed with the children should always be on display and referred to throughout a Talk for Writing cycle.
- The TOOLKITS should be used to identify and specifically teach the key features of fiction and non-fiction genres so that children have a clear understanding of the purpose, audience and form (language and organisational features) of different text types.
- The use of WAGOLLS (What A Good One Looks Like) is essential and should be analysed to help children then apply the learnt features to their own writing.
- Story Maps or 'Writing Toolkits' of the identified features as well as the WAGOLL should always be on display on English working walls in every classroom to support the current writing unit. These should also be referred to throughout teaching.
- Planning templates should be used to aid the planning process of writing -this will help to structure the children's writing.

### DRAFTING, EDITING & REDRAFTING

- Writing Journals should be used regularly for first drafts so that children have regular opportunities to re-draft their work. This should include cross-curricular

writing. All work in journals should be marked, especially first drafts. Teachers should ensure there is evidence of some form of editing or redrafting taking place once a week. As the academic year progresses in all years, and throughout the year in Upper KS2, greater evidence would be expected. Teachers should plan for one piece of totally redrafted work once per half term.

- Initial editing within first-drafts and redrafting of sections/whole pieces are to be done in handwriting pen in KS2 so that they are easily identifiable in books.

## GRAMMAR

- GPS should be taught as a focus once per week so that the Grammar focus for the week is relevant to the content and style of genre being taught and relevant to the independent writing they will be doing that week.
- The Medium Term Plans for Grammar should be used to aid progression of skills.
- Teachers should also address on-going issues in GPS which they pick up on in daily marking.

## SPELLING

- Spelling should be taught discretely as part of Grammar lessons in KS2 and as part of Phonics in KS1. Children should be taught to know and understand the spelling rules and patterns for their phase as well as a range of strategies to help them learn their spellings. Poorer spellers should be given spellings from the previous year group. If a spelling pattern/rule is introduced on a Monday, then additional practice using taught strategies should be given as early morning work in 'Busy Books' in order to embed the learning. To assess spelling well, children should be tested weekly in spelling test books, but then given review tests 3 weeks to test the 3 previous week's spellings. These reviews should be done in the back of English books and they will therefore provide valuable evidence for assessment against books targets. Class teachers should record their ongoing spelling scores in a document provided in the Spelling folder.
- Years 1 to 4 should also complete simple dictation sentences (as per their KPI objectives) to assess spelling competence.

## HANDWRITING

- We use the cursive script from Letter Join's Handwriting scheme, beginning in EYFS.
- All written work should be completed in pencil, with handwriting pens used for editing and presentation purposes.
- Handwriting should be taught at least once a week as part of a discrete lesson, with children completing their work in specific handwriting books appropriate for their key stage.
- Children should be taught to form each letter in the different letter families.
- Further opportunities should be given to practice handwriting every week. For example, early morning 'Busy Book' work or spelling activity sheets generated on the Letter Join website.
- In addition, to continuously reinforce the value and importance of letter formation and joining, children should complete a daily handwriting practice by introducing a letter/join of the day at the start of English lessons. The children should write this along one line at top of piece of work beneath date and LO. Support staff can support weaker hand writers as part of small group intervention work during assembly

## WRITING MODERATION

- Writing moderation should be a regular part of our assessment process. Staff should spend first part of PPA each week reviewing the previous week's writing outcomes in order to moderate as a year group and then address any common misconceptions or gaps in learning. SMT will also ensure that there is termly Phase, Key Stage or Whole School writing moderation planned into the academic year. This will sometimes be conducted with other schools in the area for staff professional development.

*Writing Working Party Team, October 2018*