Mesne Lea Primary School

Working together for individual excellence

Writing Policy

Reviewed By: Victoria Unsworth

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Rationale

At Mesne Lea Primary School, we believe that writing is a powerful tool for thinking, communication, and learning, not just in English lessons, but across the curriculum. Our goal is that by the end of primary school every pupil writes "with clarity, coherence, and purpose" (DfE, The Writing Framework, p.6) and that pupils' reading and writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless to manage the demands of Year 7 and beyond. See: The Writing Framework

This policy is informed by:

- The DfE Writing Framework (2025), which offers simple, practical advice about how to teach writing in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The Strong Foundations in the First Years of School report, which emphasises securing foundational skills in the early years.
- The ongoing Curriculum & Assessment Review, which stresses the importance of transcription (handwriting, spelling) and composition.

Aims

The overarching aim for English in our curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Highlight the importance and value our school attaches to pupils learning English and to developing as young readers, writers and communicators;
- Make explicit our expectations regarding subject outcomes and the performance of pupils as they work towards being KS3 ready
- To ensure that progression is systematic through subject knowledge, skills application and the development of writing styles in our world;
- Clarify how we will assess, record and communicate the performance of our pupils in English as they progress through the school;
- Outline the approach to the learning and teaching of English our school has adopted.

Writing proficiency depends on both composition and transcription. Because writing demands working memory, we must reduce extraneous cognitive load (e.g., fluent spelling and handwriting to free resources for composition).

Roles and Responsibilities

Subject Leader will:

The Writing Subject Leader has the responsibility to take a lead in continuously developing the writing further across the school within the school's development plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect support from the Writing Subject Leader, arising from targets identified in the School Improvement Plan. To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching Writing the leader will:

- Attend subject professional development opportunities as they arise and in the context of the priorities of the whole School Development Plan together with the English Action Plan.
- Identify and source staff training needs arising.

- Arrange for relevant advice and information from professional development programmes, including courses, to be disseminated.
- Where necessary lead (or arrange) school-based professional development meetings for colleagues.
- Review teaching and learning regularly, and support all areas of writing learning required by our pupils.

Teachers will:

- Plan and deliver high quality, sequenced learning journeys.
- Teach the fundamentals of writing related to the children's abilities, identified by Sonar objectives.
- Plan lessons that ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential in writing.
- Expose children to a broad range of writing genres through our writing construct and support them in understanding the genres and replicating their versions linked to our literacy spine.
- Teachers will model and foster a love of writing, books, stories and reading. Through multisensory teaching and the literacy spin children will access age-appropriate texts across a range of genres, styles, and subjects to enrich their learning.
- Support Greater Depth children with challenging texts to read, analyse, and make comparisons to then apply aspects to their own writing.

Support Staff will:

- Effectively support the delivery of phonics.
- Effectively support the implementation of interventions.
- Support with the delivery of writing at all stages within the setting they are in.

What are we aiming for?

Our overall ambition at Mesne Lea Primary School is for 'every child literate', so that each pupil leaves Year 6 able to communicate and express him/herself using written language. To achieve this, our chosen approach for the writing curriculum is through a Literacy spine that links reading into writing with many meaningful connections for the application of these skills across the wider curriculum. We have developed the spine from Nursery to Year 6 to give children experience of many high quality texts with the aim of inspiring them to read and write with enjoyment and purpose. Our spine includes a wide range of texts, such as traditional tales, poetry, biographies, Science-Fiction, and fantasy stories, and systematically develops our children's vocabulary and experience of genres that they need to study and appreciate as part of National Curriculum English. Through stimulating and enjoyable daily writing lessons, our children learn to spell accurately, write legibly and master the rudiments of grammar. We regularly undertake author studies and welcome visiting writers (novelists, journalists, poets) to the school who help to inspire all of our children to aim high.

Our writing curriculum start from Nursery and aims to ensure that:

- Writing is taught in a carefully scaffolded sequence, with each skill building

  cumulatively on prior skills.

- Children should have authentic writing opportunities and chances for

success.

Reception and KS1 are critical for securing foundational knowledge and skills

(communication, language, transcription). Schools should not introduce complex

writing tasks prematurely.

By the end of Reception, all pupils will be able to:

- Use their bodies through the Squiggles scheme help the children develop the motions they need to learn to form letters first through large dance movements and then onto paper
- Use Dough disco as a programme to build up finger muscle control which will enable the child to manipulate their fingers
- Use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.
- Write some irregular common words through short, scaffolded writing tasks
- Write simple phrases which can be read by themselves and others through oral composition before transcription
- Form letters accurately through frequent handwriting sessions
- Develop their hand/pencil grip so it can help them be transcribe letters and words through taught sessions

By the end of KS1:

- Pupils will be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation with a continuation on transcription focus
- Introduce simple paragraph
- Teach sentence structure (SPAG) explicitly
- Pupils will be beginning to understand how writing can be different from speech.
- Pupils' spelling of common words will be correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt.
- Pupils will spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling through scaffolded teaching
- Pupils will use discussion to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Pupils will be able to write letters correctly through focused handwriting sessions.

By the end of LKS2

- Pupils will be able to draw upon and build on basic skills from Nursery, Reception and KS1
- Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly. Their grammar and punctuation will be broadly accurate.
- Pupils will be able to display correct spelling of most words taught so far and should be accurate and they should be able to spell words that they have not yet been taught by using what they have learnt about how spelling works in English.
- Pupils will be able to demonstrate an enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, will support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their comprehension.
- Pupils will be able to enhance the effectiveness of their writing as well as their competence by editing and proposing changes to vocabulary, spelling and grammar.

• Pupils will be able to use the approach of Thinking side and writing side to aid their writing development.

By the end of UKS2 pupils will be able to:

• Write with sufficiently fluency and effort for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7 across all subjects and not just in English.
• Develop composition, cohesion and varied sentence structures
• Reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar and authorial voice.
• Consciously control sentence structure in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are.
• Understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. This involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.
• Discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study.
• Display a confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language which is extended through public speaking, performance and debate.

Non Negotiables

• Writing book for all children Reception – Yr6
• Handwriting books for all children Year 1 – Yr6
• Phonics and Reading skills books Green for Reception – Y6
• Writing is an integral part of all subjects and evident in all subjects at least once across a half term.
• Independent writing to be assessed once every half term against the set criteria using AIR

How will we do this?

Early Writing in Nursery, teachers will plan dough disco and squiggles sessions that develop the children's physical development and mark making as well as letters and numbers and shapes. Teachers in Reception and KS1 will follow the systematic phonic scheme Read Write Inc. to teach children their phoneme – grapheme correspondence, as well as the children's blending skills. The transition of hold a sentence will be used in Reception and Year 1 Autumn term and move into fluency of writing. The children will be taught in small groups of similar phonic decoding abilities daily and each phonic session will follow 'revise, teach, practice, apply; structure. Children in Early Years and KS1 draw on known experiences and retrieval skills, the development of spoken language and preparing sentences verbally before writing, planning through images and actions and producing written narratives as an intended outcome. The RWI strands of 'hold a sentence', 'build a sentence' and 'using Fred fingers to spell' are also reflected within whole class English lessons as well as during wider curriculum subjects.

Our Writing Construct

Teachers will use the school's writing construct to plan meaningful writing sessions that will increase the children's love and consolidation of writing skills linked to our literacy spine.

The construct is designed to support children's link between reading and writing, exposing them to a variety of genres, where core writing skills can be explored, analysed and used to build children's knowledge of writing in a meaningful way.

Teachers will plan a series of meaningful sessions that will show a cumulative progressive scheme. Children are taken on a writing journey using books from their year groups Literature Spine, which have been carefully selected to interest and challenge pupils and are linked to the schools termly core question, to help support learning and application across the curriculum.
Grammar and Punctuation National Curriculum objectives are weaved into English learning journeys, giving them a real purpose and context for learning.

To allow children to write for a real purpose and audience, learning journeys are carefully planned from exploration of texts and writing styles to application of their learning.

During English learning journeys pupils will:

- Be exposed to a range of vocabulary and have opportunities to use them.
- Have access to a range of reading materials linked to the genre or curriculum area they are writing about (differentiated to meet the needs of all learners)
- Be exposed to a range of different skills needed for the text following the process of teach, practise, apply.
- Plan, write, edit and improve their own writing
- Study and write a range of different genres
- Perform their writing to a range of different audiences
- Develop their spelling, grammar and punctuation through planned lessons, linking where possible to the book or text they are studying in detail.
- Develop their proof reading and editing skills through one to one writing support and whole class feedback

Learning journeys are assessed against The Writing Moderation Toolkit, that supports are related expectations for each year group and each term. Teachers use AIR to support teaching and learning of writing and to ensure application of core composition, grammar and punctuation and spelling are applied. Over the course of the year, teachers will then revise previously taught concepts, and teach and apply new learning to the writing journey.

Through reading and writing children from KS1 to KS2 will be able to close gaps and embed previous term/year group skills to demonstrate the build-up of writing application across the course of each week, each term and each year.

Spelling and Handwriting

At Mesne Lea Primary School, we follow the RWI phonics Scheme and Spelling Shed to support children's knowledge and formation of letters and words and their meanings. These skills are embedded from the very beginning of a child's reading and writing journey ensuring a consistent approach to spelling. Children in Reception and KS1 are encouraged to read and spell the common exception words for their year group and teachers use the Spelling Shed scheme, from Year 1 to plan teaching and learning of words throughout the school. Regular monitoring of the spelling and reading of words for each year group takes place and children can practise these at home with their parents using the Spelling Shed website. Children in Y1-6 have a three timetabled spelling slots weekly.

Spellings are recorded in a spelling book and can be recorded using the Spelling Shed Hive Game tool. Children in Year 1- 6 have three sessions a week for handwriting. Children are taught the cursive handwriting style of joined up handwriting in which the letters are connected to help children write faster. This takes place from Year 2, when children are deemed to have the correct letter formation to move on to this cursive style of handwriting.

Writing in other subject areas

Writing contributes to many other subjects, as a form of communication, and we value the importance in giving our children the opportunity to apply and use their writing skill across the curriculum and in real life contexts. Therefore, links are made in other subjects for pupils to develop, use and apply their reading and writing skills to demonstrate their learning throughout the curriculum. Our children are given the opportunity to read, research and present across all curriculum areas, at every stage of their education. Reading and writing is at the core of our school's ethos and vision statement and are key to our children succeeding in all areas of the curriculum.

Assessment of Writing

A summative assessment about the pupil's knowledge and understanding of the different areas of the writing curriculum is carried out every half term. This assessment is conducted through the completion of the Insight online assessment tool, which provides age and stage appropriate performance descriptors allowing the teacher to assess each pupil as whether they are Below, At or Above the age-related expectations for their year group. Each assessment is shared with the Head Teacher and the Writing Subject Leader, and a summary data form is created for every year group. The assessment completed at the end of Summer 2 is shared with parents in the form of an end of year report.

The summative assessments should be used in conjunction with intelligence gained from formative assessment of pupils, as to whether the pupil has achieved the expected level of attainment detailed in the performance descriptor, exceeded the expectations or has yet to reach the anticipated level. Evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform this process including:

- Interaction with pupils during writing sessions and related questioning.
- Day to day observation.
- Practical activities such as planning, drawing and writing ideas.
- One to one phonics assessments with the pupil.
- Phonics screening checks (half termly)
- End of genre writing assessment, using the Teachers Moderation Toolkit. Teachers will highlight areas of success within the pupils writing, which are used to inform achievements of objectives on Sonar.
- Summative Reading and SPAG tests are administered in line with the Assessment Yearly Overview.
- Children will compete an assessed independent write at the end of each term that ticks off age related writing targets at Age Related Expectations and Greater Depth.

Children working at greater depth

Working at greater depth means a child has mastered the learning expected for their age and stage, and is therefore able to delve into it in more detail. Children who consistently work at greater depth are confidently able to deal with increases in the complexity of how a subject is presented.

Some of the characteristics of a child who's working at greater depth include:

- Working independently
- Applying what they've learned in one area of a subject to other areas
- Applying their knowledge consistently, confidently and fluently
- Being able to explain what they have been doing to others, including teaching other children what they have learned.
- Make comparison and apply up-levelled writing skills to their age-related expectations.

By the end of KS1 reading, children who are working at greater depth can:

- Use the full range of punctuation taught at key stage 1 mostly correctly
- Spell a greater range of common exception words and beyond
- Spell most words with contracted forms
- Add suffixes to spell most words correctly in their writing, e.g. –ment, –ness, –ful, –less, –ly
- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in most of their writing.

By the end of KS2 Writing, children who are working at greater depth can:

- Manage shifts between levels of formality through selecting vocabulary precisely and by manipulating grammatical structures
- Select verb forms for meaning and effect
- Use the full range of punctuation taught at key stage 2, including colons and semi-colons to mark the boundary between independent clauses, mostly correctly managing shifts between levels of formality through selecting vocabulary precisely

Equal Opportunities

SEN

EFF research EEF has found that to get the best outcomes for children with SEND schools need to do the following:

- Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception
- Build a holistic overview of the child's needs through regular assessments
- All pupils have access to high quality teaching and use a flexible approach to the children's needs
- Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small group and 1:1 intervention
- Work effectively with teaching assistants
- Early Identification of barriers to writing
- Use DfE audit tools such as "Keeping up from the Start"
- Scaffolded tasks with sentence starters, word banks, writing frames
- Collaboration with SENDCo
- Maintaining high expectations for all

Pupils with difficulties in learning to read or with Special Educational Needs have their needs identified promptly and interventions provided that will accelerate their progress. Progress is measured and tracked to ensure they are catching up with their peers. In KS1 for example, additional teaching and support is provided through 1:1 reading with an adult and daily phonics interventions/tutoring sessions. In KS2 additional teaching is provided through regular 1:1 reading and writing with an adult, prior teaching of key vocabulary to support children's understanding and application.

EAL

Pupils that join our school with English as an additional language will be integrated into everyday school life from day one. Pupils with EAL will promptly be assessed on their present skills and knowledge of English to inform the program of learning that will follow. If required, a daily phonic intervention is implemented.

How do we know it is working?

- Regular monitoring ensure fidelity to the policy
- Book monitoring will show that all teaching and learning outcomes are at a 100 percent good standard or better.
- Book monitoring will show that teaching and learning outcomes are at 50 percent outstanding and that children are engrossed in the subject of Writing, and know and remember more linked directly to the intent.
- All monitoring shows that theory and intent is being implemented as planned by the subject leader and the writing construct is clearly having an impact on progress.
- Pupil voice and surveys show that there is an increase in the number of pupils engaged in writing.
- Monitoring and pupil voice will show that staff know which children are engaged in the writing process.
- Book looks and Pupil voice inform intended outcomes.