

Hollin Primary School



Writing Policy *November 2023*

Rationale

At Hollin Primary School we believe that English skills are vital to the development of our pupils, so that they are well prepared for future life. Good writers are able to effectively communicate ideas, opinions and information and understand how specific characteristics of writing can be used across a wide range of contexts. Our aim is to deliver a rich and inspiring English curriculum, in order for our pupils to develop the knowledge and skills that they need in order to become confident and effective communicators, in the outside world.

Aims and objectives

Our aim is to deliver a rich and inspiring English curriculum that continually builds on knowledge and skills, for all of our pupils, from Nursery to Year 6.

At Hollin Primary, our aim is:

- To provide regular opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes and audiences
- To learn and accurately apply the conventions of written language and grammar
- To be able communicate effectively, using the written form
- To have a good understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and be able to apply this to their writing independently
- To create an interest in words and their meanings in order to broaden vocabulary
- To create writers who can plan, draft, edit and improve their own writing

Teaching and Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

In our Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils learn to write discretely through literacy and phonics lessons. Writing is also promoted through enhancements to the provision, focus child (child initiated learning) and motivating Rainbow Challenges. Teachers plan meaningful activities and enhancements based on the interests of our pupils and quality texts, whilst ensuring links to the Literacy objectives in the Development Matters document. Children learn through play, speaking and listening activities, teacher modelling, group work and self-direction. Within the Foundation Stage, both the indoor and outdoor environment include resources to support mark making, drawing, pre-writing patterns and writing. We provide regular opportunities for children to see adults writing and encourage children to experiment with writing themselves. Staff members involve themselves in the children's mark making by modelling the process and by helping them to order their thoughts.

Daily Funky Fingers sessions in both Nursery and Reception develops children's fine and gross motor skills. Representational drawings, pencil control and scissors skills are accessed and tracked termly throughout the department.

Once letter sounds have been taught during daily Read, Write, Inc (RWI) phonics lessons, children are encouraged to write the sounds they can hear. This encourages our pupils to see the link between reading and writing, and then begin to write words and sentences using the sounds that they know. They also begin to spell simple common exception words (*Red words*) correctly as they practise them in phonics and other writing activities. As our pupils progress through the systematic, synthetic phonics scheme, this becomes evident in their independent writing.

In Reception, as phonics and writing skills develop, pupils are encouraged to '*Fred talk*' and '*hold a sentence*' to support them in forming and writing their ideas. '*Fred talk*' is based on a frog character from our RWI phonics scheme. Fred can only talk in sounds and he supports our pupils to recognise the sounds that they can hear in words for both blending (reading) and segmenting (writing). Hold a sentence is a process used in RWI phonics to support writing sentences. It teaches children to remember a whole sentence in their head before they write it down with the correct punctuation and spelling. By 'holding a sentence' pupils also have the opportunity to orally rehearse their sentence, before putting pencil to paper. Teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 continue to actively encourage the use of the 'Fred talk' and 'hold a sentence' strategies as a key element of writing.

Teachers in Year 1 make effective use of the pupils EYFS assessment data, to plan next steps, ensuring a smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum to the National Curriculum.

Key Stage One and Key Stage Two

At Hollin Primary, we plan and deliver daily English lessons for every year group, based on objectives from the National Curriculum (2014). Children build on previous knowledge and skills set out in The National Curriculum for their individual year group.

We recognise that there is a wealth of research to show that one of the most effective ways to become a good writer is to be an avid reader; to unpick language from books and to use this as a model for producing quality writing. Teachers devise plans for delivering a rich and inspiring English curriculum, through the use of quality texts. At the core of our English curriculum, we offer our pupils the opportunity to engage with a wide range of high-quality texts, to enjoy and study. Each book is used to develop vocabulary, grammar and punctuation skills and to explore the structure of writing across different genres.

We endeavor to use a range of strategies to teach writing including; teacher modelling, guided writing, using drama and stories to stimulate ideas for writing and giving children exciting and purposeful reasons to write. Throughout the academic year children will be

given opportunities to write a range of purposes and across a range of genres including; poetry, non-fiction and narrative.

We believe that there should be opportunities for writing for a range of purposes, across the curriculum and not just limited to English lessons. We therefore continue to have high expectations of the written work children complete in every subject.

In Key Stage Two, teachers plan for writing using objectives from the National Curriculum, whilst considering the following 7 step model:

1. Planning
2. Drafting
3. Sharing
4. Evaluating
5. Revising
6. Editing
7. Publishing

Each step is explicitly modeled by the teacher through focused teaching, before pupils attempt them independently.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is taught in line with The National Curriculum (2014). Each year group, from Year 1, uses the National Curriculum (2014) to identify the terminology and skills needed to be taught during the year.

Children in Reception are taught the spellings of common exception words (*Red words*) and words containing GPCs that they have learnt. Children in Year 1 continue to learn common exception words, in addition to the words set out in the National Curriculum. As children move into Year 2 and through to Year 6 they continue to learn spelling rules and spellings set out in the National Curriculum.

Pupils in Year 2 to Year 6 take part in a weekly spelling challenge from September onwards. These spellings consist of common exception words for each year group and words containing spelling patterns (*as documented in the National Curriculum appendix*) To ensure transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage is smooth, Year 1 take part in a weekly spelling challenge, from the Spring term onwards.

Spelling Superstar awards

Each half term, two pupils in each class from Year 1 to Year 6, are nominated to receive the '*Spelling Superstar*' award. Class teams choose two worthy recipients for a range of reasons, including; effort with spelling, engaging positively with weekly spelling challenges, for having an improved spelling score. Reasons given by class teams are not limited, to ensure that all pupils are inspired to strive for this award. Half termly recipients of the 'Spelling Superstar' award are shared and celebrated in an assembly at

the end of the half term. Additionally, recipients are shared and celebrated on our school website and via the social media platform, X. We have a prominent display dedicated to our '*Spelling Superstars*' which is updated to reflect our current recipients.

Punctuation and grammar

The National Curriculum is very explicit about which grammar and punctuation elements and aspects are to be taught in each year group, as documented in the National Curriculum appendices. Teachers at Hollin are familiar with the specific objectives for their year group and endeavor to look for opportunities to find examples of them during both the reading and writing processes, to ensure it is meaningful for our pupils.

Teachers offer opportunities to develop knowledge and skills of grammar in both discreet lessons and within English lessons.

Learning environment

At Hollin Primary, we pride ourselves on creating a language rich learning environment that is meaningful for our pupils. Staff consistently model speaking, reading and writing in Standard English and look for ways to develop and broaden vocabulary.

Displays in classrooms support pupils in developing their independent writing skills, by including elements of the following; terminology, word banks, quality examples, examples of pupils' work and working walls to support the current quality text and genre. Word mats that include words linked to topic or common exception words are often available for our pupils, predominantly in Key Stage One. Dictionaries and thesauruses are accessible from Year 2 onwards, to support independent writing skills.

We endeavor to look for ways in which to showcase writing and to give our pupils a sense of pride and to strive to write for a purpose. There are prominent displays around school that support us in showcasing writing.

Handwriting

An effective approach to handwriting is based on a style that is quick and easy to learn. It should be neat, legible and fast. At Hollin, we follow the *Achieving Excellence in Handwriting* scheme to teach handwriting for pupils from Reception to Year 1. The ISHA handwriting scheme systematically shows the progression of letter formation from basic formation with joining strokes through to full joining. The handwriting style taught through this scheme is based on a semi-cursive style. It is simplistic, but very clear and achievable. Our aim is that by delivering discreet handwriting lessons, it will support our

pupils in committing transcription skills to muscle memory, in order to free up working memory to develop composition and content.

In Reception, pupils focus on learning the mnemonic which accompanies the grapheme-phoneme correspondences in our systematic, synthetic phonics programme (*Read, Write, Inc*) to support them in the early stages of their handwriting. They are introduced to other aspects of our handwriting scheme, including 'pinchy parrot' to support pencil grip and the line guides. At Hollin, we aim to discreetly teach handwriting in year groups 1 to 4 at least twice a week, and where appropriate within Year 5 and Year 6.

The scheme works with 'letter families' in mind, grouping the letters depending on where they start. The letter families we teach at Hollin Primary include;

Family 1: The Straight Line Family (*i l t j*)

Family 2: The Coathanger Family (*c o a d g q e*)

Family 3: The Bridge Family (*h b k p*)

Family 4: The Zig Zag Family (*v w*)

Family 5: The Smile Family (*u y*)

Family 6: The Misfits (*s f x z*)

Effective teaching of handwriting can be supported and achieved through good quality modelling. Teachers at Hollin Primary demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly. Teachers regularly observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly and offer support, where appropriate.

Teachers follow the scheme and use their professional judgement to progress through it at a pace that is appropriate to the needs of their pupils; focusing on areas that need further improvement or advancing at a quicker pace. Peer assessment and self-assessment is encouraged throughout handwriting lessons and children are encouraged to take ownership of their handwriting book.

Funky Fingers

In our Early Years classes, pupils access daily activities to support with their fine and gross motor development. Our teachers are well trained and recognise the fundamental importance in developing these skills, in order to support emergent writing and future writing skills. Children require progressive development in their hands to enable them to grasp and hold things and we recognise that like other muscles, we must train and strengthen them.

In Nursery and Reception, our teachers plan a series of fun activities throughout the week, and offer a discreet daily 'Funky Fingers' activity, to support our pupils in building their upper body (*gross motor skills*) and finger/hand strength and control (*fine motor skills*). Additional opportunities for developing fine and gross motor skills are planned and offered as enhancements within the provision.

Handwriting pens

At Hollin Primary we strive for our pupils to take pride in their writing and take ownership of their books. With this in mind, pupils in Year 3 upwards are invited to write using a handwriting pen, in all subjects, except Maths. Pupils are encouraged to write neatly and ensure the presentation of their writing is of a high standard.

Assessment

Summative Assessment

At Hollin Primary, a range of ongoing assessment techniques are used within lessons to support pupils in developing their writing. These include:

- Providing a clear learning focus
- Using the visualiser to display work and highlight specific areas to the class
- Giving verbal feedback to individuals during the lesson
- Highlighting to the pupil, through discussion and feedback in books (*where appropriate*) errors in basic skills, for example spelling and punctuation
- Peer and self-assessment

Formative assessment

In Nursery and Reception, our pupils are assessed against objectives in the Development Matters document. Progress is recorded and evident within observations saved on Tapestry, and through pupils Learning Journey workbooks, in Reception.

Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are assessed against the Hollin Primary writing standards, to help teachers form judgements and to measure progress. The standards are progressive from Year 1 to Year 6 and include year group specific objectives from the National Curriculum. Where pupils are working below the expected standard for their year group, teachers use their professional judgment and pieces of writing to ensure pupils are assessed accurately against standards that are appropriate.

Our class teachers are well trained in making accurate use of assessment to plan the next steps for our pupils. Teachers at Hollin Primary regularly take part in writing CPD, including writing moderation exercises across the PiraMidd collaborative.

The progress that pupils are making in writing is reported, shared and discussed with members of the senior leadership team (SLT) in the Autumn, Spring and Summer term during pupil progress meetings. During these meetings, challenges to learning, intervention and individual next steps are discussed to ensure our pupils achieve their end of year target.

Big Write

From Year 1 to Year 6, we call assessed pieces of writing 'Big Writes'. Big Writes are showcased within a dedicated folder that progresses through the school with the pupil.

Year on year, this folder encompasses additional pieces of writing in order to showcase the progression of skills.

Writing portfolios

In Year 5, our pupils transition from 'Big Write' folders to 'Writing Portfolios' as a way of showcasing their work. We endeavor to promote a purpose for writing and do this through actively showcasing our writing in an organised and neat way.

Feedback and marking

Whole Class Feedback

Whole class feedback books are completed from Year 1 to Year 6, in English lessons. (*See Feedback and marking policy*) During and after a lesson, the teacher looks through the pupils' books for common misconceptions and errors in basic skills. Teachers use the marking codes on each piece of work to show it has been checked and note any parts of work that are worth sharing as good examples. Whilst looking through the books, teachers make notes on the key messages to feedback to pupils at the start of the next lesson using the whole class analysis grid.

Marking in Practice

At Hollin Primary School, at the earliest, appropriate opportunity, teachers will review pupils' work, so that it might impact on future learning. When work is reviewed, it should be acknowledge in books using our marking codes (*See Feedback and marking policy*). All work children complete will be looked at, however there is no expectation for written comments in books, but this can be used when appropriate. When identifying specific success, teachers will use pink pen. If a comment or code is made, this should also be written in pink.

When identifying an area for specific improvement, teachers will use green pen. If a comment, code or spelling correction is made, this should also be written in green. When appropriate, children will neatly and legibly mark or edit their work using a different coloured pen, pencil or highlighter.

Big Write

When reviewing the children's 'Big Write' piece of writing, teachers will annotate the work using the marking codes. There will be a maximum of two identified strengths and one area for development (2 Stars and a Wish) for each pupil. These will be written in the appropriate colours of pink or green on the success criteria attached to the front of the piece of writing.

Common misconceptions, mistakes and errors in basic skills will be recorded in the Whole Class Feedback book. Feedback given to pupils will be in line with content and expectations of our English curriculum.

Moderation – PiraMidd and LA

Teachers at Hollin Primary regularly take part in writing CPD, including writing moderation exercises across the PiraMidd collaborative and the local authority. These exercises offer the opportunity for our staff team to meet with other professionals to ensure a level of consistency for writing, and to ensure the accuracy of assessment.

Monitoring and evaluation

Action planning and monitoring is a continuous process at Hollin Primary and the English team regularly monitor the teaching and learning of writing at Hollin, to ensure writing is planned and delivered well across school. An English subject action plan is devised, actioned and monitored each year.

Through pupil voice, we continually look for the best ways in which to inspire, develop and support reading for our pupils.

Policy Review

This policy sets out the procedures agreed by the school to ensure a consistent and impactful approach to writing. This procedure has been agreed by the staff and Governors in November 2023 and will be reviewed in line with the school's cycle of policy reviews.