



Our approach to Writing

Pre-writing skills

Our children start Nursery often working below their developmental milestones with their gross and fine motor development. For this reason, we don't rush children into formal writing. Instead, we spend quality time developing spoken language and pre-writing skills so that the children are ready for writing. Lots of opportunities are provided within provision to develop gross and fine motor control and co-ordination.

English Lessons

In EYFS, and Year 1 children take part in daily phonics lessons following the Little Wandle synthetic phonics scheme. Within each lesson, there is a dedicated writing section. This starts with shared writing, where the writing process is modelled by the teacher. Then, children work in small groups to practise spelling up to 5 words using their phonic knowledge and a tricky word spelling, followed by writing a dictated sentence. Children are encouraged to work as independently as possible. Misconceptions with phonics and spelling patterns are corrected and Incorrect letter formation is challenged.

English lessons are based around a class novel or book. We strive to provide breadth of genres in our English curriculum, so you will see the seven story types covered in classes with an increasing degree of complexity as the children progress through the school. Texts are carefully chosen to ensure we are providing children with the best examples possible for children to learn from. We also choose our texts to include books and authors that the children may not be familiar with, thereby broadening their horizons and providing an opportunity to build some cultural capital.

For each core text, there are clear fiction and non-fiction planned writing outcomes. We cover a range of genres in each class, enabling our pupils to develop a wide variety of knowledge and skills that they can apply to their own writing. Writing is usually planned over a 2-week cycle (sometimes shorter in EYFS). Children will analyse the features of the different genres of writing and how they are suited to purpose and audience and then use this to develop success criteria for their independent writing. Teachers use worked examples, scaffolding and success criteria to enable every child to become authors of their own texts.

Cross-Curricular writing

We don't want our Foundation Subjects to be vehicles for Literacy. Instead, we plan a 'Big Write' at the end of each half-term, during assessment week, where children will produce an independent piece of non-fiction writing, using their knowledge from a foundation subject. For example, in Class 2, the children might write a letter home from a child on holiday 100 years ago.

Spelling

In KS1 children begin to move away from spelling words in a phonetically plausible way and move towards looking more at spelling patterns and rules. Children will begin to use prefixes and suffixes, they will learn to spell common exceptions words and begin to use contracted forms accurately. Alongside this, they will continue to apply their knowledge in relation to phonemes and graphemes and use this to help them spell. Children will be given a list of spellings to learn each week which will be linked to the rule or pattern that has been learned in class that week. In weekly spelling tests, children will be tested on 5 of these words and then 5 random words from previous weeks. Direct teaching of spelling takes place for 10 minutes every day and this is often accompanied by games and online activities.

The majority of children in KS2 learn spellings by working through the National Curriculum Appendix 1, which organises learning objectives and spelling patterns into age related expectations. Each week, a particular spelling pattern (e.g. words ending in -tion or words containing 'ough') will be taught to children in class and the children will be given a list of words including this pattern to learn. Children will practise these spellings in school but are also expected to practise reading and spelling the words at home, in preparation for a spelling test on Fridays. Spelling tests are conducted in the same way as KS1.

In addition to this, we also use Nessy Reading and Spelling. This is an online tool which involves games and activities to support the children in learning their spellings. In a trial of this programme, we found that children engaged with this well, were eager to learn and made good progress.