



**Discovery Schools**  
Academy Trust



# Greystoke Primary School

Enabling our children to reach  
their full potential

## **Writing Policy** 2021-22

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## Writing Policy

### Introduction

This policy reflects the school's aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of writing. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. It gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the National Curriculum which sets out the rationale for teaching each area of the English Curriculum and specifies the skills that will be developed for the majority of pupils within each year group.

This document is the outcome of consultation and review undertaken by the English subject leaders, DSAT lead practitioner for English and with the staff of the school.

At Greystoke Primary School, we use the 'National Curriculum for English' (2014) as the basis of our English teaching and learning programme.

### Rationale

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential, role of a primary school.

At Greystoke Primary School, we are committed to nurturing our children to become highly effective communicators in order to succeed in our future world. We have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and is viewed as a key part of learning throughout school life and beyond. The effective learning of English is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p.6. *National Curriculum*) that is needed in society:

*'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.'* (p.10. *National Curriculum*)

## **Aims**

By the end of Key Stage 2 we aim for a child to be able to:

- Write with confidence, fluency and understanding, demonstrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Acquire an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.
- Understand a range of text-types and to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation (becoming increasingly aware of the **purpose** and **audience** of writing).
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical thinking.

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. The National Curriculum 2014, gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key Stage under the following headings:

- Spoken language
- Reading - Word reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription, spelling, handwriting, presentation and composition
- Grammar and punctuation

This policy focuses specifically on:

- Writing – Transcription, spelling, handwriting, presentation and composition
- Grammar and punctuation

*(Policy to be read in conjunction with the school's Reading and Phonics policy.)*

At Greystoke Primary School, depending on the stage of the Learning Journey, writing is taught in a number of ways:

### **Modelled Writing**

The teacher talks aloud the thought processes as a writer themselves. They explicitly and directly model strategies in front of the children, communicating the strategies being used. Teachers may model various writing skills such as vocabulary selection, sentence construction, use of punctuation, paragraphing, proof-reading and editing & improving.

### **Shared Writing**

This is a collaborative approach in which the pupils contribute their ideas and thoughts for the teacher to write. The teacher models and teaches specific writing skills and there is the opportunity for discussion with the class to choose the most effective or suitable ideas.

### **Independent Writing**

Children are given opportunities to apply their understanding of the text-type in their own writing. They are encouraged to plan, draft, write, edit and assess their own work, applying the skills they have learnt throughout the unit of work on that text-type.

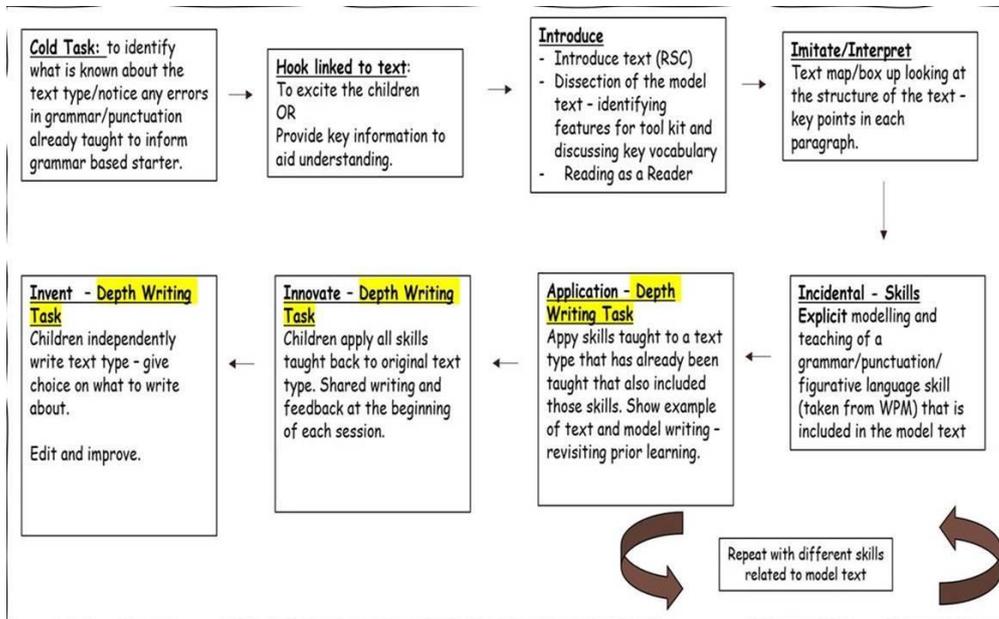
This is commonly referred to as the 'I', 'We', 'you' approach and will be used across the school from reception to year 6.



# Mastery Approach to Writing

Greystoke Primary School adopt a 'Mastery' approach to writing, ensuring that children have a cohesive understanding of skills, how they relate to each other and are applied to all aspects of writing. All teachers write a 'model' text that includes all of the skills and common exception words that are being taught.

The sequence of learning for writing is identified below:



Where appropriate, a shortened version of this that may be followed on occasion.

## Cold Task:

This is only carried out at the beginning of a unit if the text type has already been previously taught. This is used as retrieval practise but also to see what the children already know and identify the skills that they are secure with. Any skills missing then inform grammar starters OR if a significant skill is missing, planning would be re-aligned in order to close any gaps and this would become the main teaching point.

## Hook:

A hook will be used to develop questioning techniques and provide a rich opportunity for speaking & listening. EG: a breakfast scene set up for the text Gorilla or a crime scene linked to the True Story of the Three Little Pigs. They are also used to provide children with key contextual information that will ensure that they are able to understand and comprehend the text whilst unpicking new vocabulary in a collaborate, exploratory way.

## Introduce:

The model text is then introduced to the children using a range of drama techniques in order for the children to make predictions, summarise, pick up on key vocabulary and also justify their ideas. Children are then taught any key vocabulary required and this is displayed on the working wall.

Children will then 'Read as a Reader' and answer comprehension questions about the model text. This ensures that the children are able to fully understand and comprehend the model text.

After this, children will then 'Read as a Writer'. In this stage, children dissect the model text, thinking about the grammatical features/figurative devices that have been used and begin to think about why and the impact that this has on the reader. The skills included are then added to the tool kits that are displayed in the classroom. In this stage, the purpose of the text is also discussed, and the children begin to think about who the audience is and why.

### **Imitate/Interpret:**

In EYFS, KS1 and the first term of Year 3, the text is internalised by two key activities – story/text mapping and actions (where applicable). We use these to orally re-tell the story. Story/text maps are a series of images drawn to retell the text, with the punctuation and key vocabulary included; actions being where the children all perform the text verbally with actions to each word or phrase. Both of these assist the children in acquiring new language, understanding its meaning and seeing the pattern and structure of the text more clearly. They encourage children to internalise story language and to be able to regurgitate key elements at a later point, this may be in a different context. By bringing the text to life, the children learn expression and phrasing and begin to visualise how the words are used and why.

The children then rewrite the text using the text map. This reduces the cognitive load required at the first time of writing. Due to the children's familiarisation with plot and character, they can focus all of their energy and attention on spelling, sentence structure and developing a stamina for writing with less pressure. This also has the advantage of a useful assessment opportunity for teachers with regards to spelling and grammar standards.

In KS2 the children will discuss and box up the original text using a consistent template for either a fiction or nonfiction text type, they will take note of each plot point and then split this into appropriate sections, summarising as they record this in their grid for use later at the innovate and invent stage.

### **Skill:**

Children are explicitly taught the grammar, punctuation and figurative devices which have been included in the model text and these are expected to be applied in their final outcome. (See Grammar and Punctuation for a breakdown on how this stage is explicitly taught)

### **Application of Skill:**

Incidental writes are used to apply the grammar skills being taught within a text type that the children are already familiar with. This supports the easing of cognitive load as the children can focus on the skill rather than the rules of the text type. This demonstrates their understanding of the skill in context and 'layers' the skills with others that they will have already mastered. This is usually a 'short burst' write such as a setting description, dialogue, postcard etc.

### **Innovate:**

In year 2 and early year 3, children will use their text maps in order to make changes against the imitation. In KS2, children use their boxed-up plans in order to make these changes against what they have written for their imitation. This allows children to see how you can innovate on an exemplar text and select words, phrases and sentences that really work.

The teacher guides children through the writing process, modelling through 'shared writing.' This brings all of the skills taught back to the original text type. This is where the children have lots of opportunities to speak and listen, collaborate, develop drama and role play skills and develop the confidence to speak and share ideas as writers. They can all get involved with giving ideas and making suggestions for how the text could be innovated. The children explore other ways of innovating a text, such as genre switching, alternative endings and sequels.

An important part of this process is to provide the children with a clear understanding of how to craft a text. They use what they have identified as features from the shared text and have developed through their imitation. They can also now see how the reviewing and editing process is carried out by a writer.

In this stage, feedback is key and should be given at the beginning of every lesson. If it is noticed by the end of this stage that there is a skill that has not been mastered, then that skill should be retaught before moving on to the next stage.

### **Invent:**

In the final stage, in Key stage two, the learning is then passed over to the children and they can plan and write their own text, using the agreed features (success criteria) as their toolkit, the model text and their 'innovation' as an example of what a successful text should look like. By this point, the pattern of the text will be internalised with appropriate language and sentence types having been acquired.

Some children will choose to stick quite closely to the original text, thinking of a new way of innovating independently, whilst others are now given the freedom to write in the learnt text-type but using their ideas creatively.

The process ends with a 'hot task.' This is where the children can put everything that they have learnt into a final piece of writing in the learnt text-type. They review and edit their own work, reflecting upon how to improve it further.

Children will then publish their work in order to give it a purpose. This may take the form of a class book, a letter to be sent to a person or organisation, a typed document or a piece of work for display.

## **Grammar and Punctuation**

Grammar, punctuation or figurative devices are taught explicitly through English lessons and relate to the text type that is being taught. In order to ensure that children have mastered these skills, they are taught using the STAR structure (See It, Try It, Apply It, Reason It). Reasoning and articulation are used throughout the process so that children demonstrate their understanding of the skill.

**See It:** The teacher explicitly models the skill and explains how it is used (blended learning if appropriate). Children to identify the skills and articulate (reason) how it is used.

**Try It:** Children then practise using that skill only, applying to sentences and articulating their understanding.

**Apply It:** Children then apply what the skill to a text type that has already been taught, as an incidental write in order to demonstrate their understanding of the skill. Children will also need to apply other skills learnt therefore it acts as a form of retrieval practise, as well as allowing them to 'layer' on the new skill. Again, throughout this stage children should be articulating their understanding.

**Reason It:** As well as articulating their understanding, children can also be given explicit reasoning questions to demonstrate their understanding (e.g. Spot the mistake and explain why).

## **Grammar Starters**

Grammar starters will be used to focus on skills that have already been taught (retrieval practice) or on skills that have been identified as needing addressing following previous work produced and this will be indicated on whole class feedback sheets. There will be opportunities for articulation of children's understanding within lesson starters.

## **Cross-curricular Literacy Opportunities**

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make appropriate cross-curricular links so that writing becomes meaningful. They also plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

## **Assessment**

Effective assessment involves careful observation, analysis and review by practitioners of each child's knowledge, skills and understanding, in order to track their progress and make informed decisions about planning for the next steps of learning.

- Assessment is on a continuous basis, taking into account the children's work throughout the year.
- Work is monitored by the class teacher, phase leader, writing leader and SLT to assist in planning for future work to meet the needs of the children.
- Work scrutinies, including moderation, are carried out across the school to track teaching and learning and areas for school development.
- Summative assessment records are interrogated by the writing leader for information and analysis. These are stored on our automated assessment systems.
- Moderation opportunities both within the school and also the wider trust take place termly.

## **SPELLING**

At Greystoke Primary School, we encourage our pupils to think and write creatively, be adventurous with their use of language and to write with clear purpose and for pleasure.

In order for these aims to be realised, it is essential that pupils learn to spell accurately. Children who can spell well feel confident and are able to write with greater enjoyment. We want our pupils to be equipped with a range of strategies for learning spelling and to be able to apply their strategies when spelling words in their independent writing.

### **Strategies for Learning Spellings**

#### **Common Exception Words**

All common exception words are taught explicitly within English lessons and are recapped in spelling lessons. Words are embedded into texts the children learn through English lessons to give them context and purpose, as well as providing children with opportunities to use them. Words are then displayed in the classroom and added throughout the year.

#### **Phonics**

Through a phonics first approach, children are taught spelling rules and strategies for applying these in context. Children working at phase 3 are expected to make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling using the known GPCs. Once children move

onto phase 5 and beyond, they are taught rules, tips and tricks to support which phoneme and grapheme to select and to investigate spelling patterns and anomalies in order to identify and self correct as they write.

#### Homework

Each week children are set a spelling test and words are sent home. In Key Stage 2, these are selected from the appropriate year group wordlists as specified in Shakespeare spelling. In Key Stage one they are reflective of the phonics being taught and the pattern being learnt.

## **HANDWRITING**

The teaching of handwriting is most successful when a progressive and sequential approach is adopted, with each stage of development building on the child's previous experience.

We aim for our pupils to:

- Form all letters correctly, knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- Develop a clear, fluent and legible cursive style of handwriting.
- Take pride in their writing and present work for a variety of audiences to a high standard.

Letter formation and handwriting is practiced daily in EYFS, and at regular slots throughout the week across the rest of the school based on the needs of the cohort. Phonics lessons are used to remind and reaffirm correct letter formation where children are required to practice their letters on their whiteboards. In addition, intervention groups are regularly run to develop fine motor skills and handwriting with the expectation that children from Year 1 will begin to write with cursive handwriting. In EYFS, children are taught to form letters following the correct route but not to join. Recent research has found that the formation of a correctly printed letter is more appropriate for the developmental age and stage of reception children. All children in EYFS and key stage 1 write in pencil. From Year 3 children can choose whichever one they are comfortable with, but we encourage a move over to pens as the children move up the school in order to develop a fluent, mature style.

#### Overview of progression

**Foundation** – Gross & fine motor skills and patterns leading to letter formation following the correct route.

**Year 1** – Beginning to join.

**Year 2 and Lower KS2** – Securing the joins, leading to speed and fluency.

**Higher KS2** – Speed and fluency.

Throughout Year 1 and Year 2, progression in formation of cursive handwriting is taught alongside the teaching of new graphemes for spelling as well as common exception words.

#### **Oracy**

We recognise that Oracy underpins children's development in reading and writing and afford high importance to this through the use of drama, presentations, debates and performances of key English learning. We use a range of rehearsal room techniques to build oracy, vocabulary and creative writing. A range of oracy techniques are used throughout an English unit such as:

Word carpet

Go stop, show me  
Show me word, show me phrase  
Reading to punctuation  
Walking the text  
Reading in different ways to pick up on mood e.g. back to back, loud, whisper

## **DIFFERENTIATION AND INCLUSION**

In accordance with the school's policies on S.E.N.D. and Equality, all children are entitled to access writing at an appropriate level for their age and development. Activities are differentiated where possible, both for the less able and more able pupils. Differentiation is through resources used, the difficulty of the task, support given (including the use of scribes or laptops) and outcome. Notice is also taken of targets within a child's Personal Provision plan. Time is made, when necessary, for pupils to extend their experiences beyond that of the majority of the class by providing further challenging opportunities. All pupils are expected to achieve the highest standards possible regardless of race, culture, gender or disability. Whenever possible, materials and images used reflect a varied cultural dimension, e.g. stories from different cultures or authors from around the world. School staff are fully committed to ensuring all pupils, regardless of their differences, have the opportunity and support necessary to enable them to achieve their full educational and social potential.

## **ROLE OF ADVISORY BOARD**

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to ensure the implementation of the National Curriculum and to review the policy. Additional meetings may be held to discuss English priorities across the school and to gain an overview of the teaching and learning of English.

### **MONITORING OF POLICY**

We are aware of the need to monitor and update the school's Writing Policy on a regular basis, so that we can take account of improvements made in our practice and to changes in assessments, materials and government requirements. We will therefore review this policy at least once a year.

Writing throughout the school, and how it reflects this policy, will also be reviewed throughout the school year in the following ways:

- *School Improvement Partner*
- *Discovery peer reviews*
- *SLT/subject leader work scrutiny*
- *Internal moderation*
- *External moderation*
- *Moderation with other schools*
- *Learning walks*
- *Planning scrutiny*
- *Book trawls*

### **REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed in September 2022 (or sooner, only if national legislation / policy demands it).

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**

**Chair of Advisory Board**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**

**Headteacher**