Shared writing

Shared writing is often planned into the whole class teaching part of the Literacy session and involves the class composing a text together. The focus may be:

- Sentence structure
- Grammar & spelling skills
- Layout & presentation
- Editing or refining work

This writing will often be linked to a stimulus: a piece of music, a picture or a text, e.g. a poem, non-fiction texts (reports, instructions) or a traditional fairy tale.

If the class were focusing on poetry then the shared writing may be to write a new verse or poem using the structure of a known poem.

If the class were studying instructions, then the teacher may act out a procedure with the class e.g. making a jam sandwich. The teacher, with input from the children, would also scribe the step-by-step instructions, focusing on ordering, numbering, time words and use of verbs.

Guided writing

- Guided writing will often follow shared writing sessions and aims to help children become independent writers.
- The main difference to shared writing is that it occurs in small groups of similar ability children during the activity part of the Literacy session.
- One example of an activity is for the children to discuss a character from a known story and write a character profile. The teacher will particularly focus on the use of interesting vocabulary, punctuation and sentence structure depending on the specific objective.

Independent writing

Being independent means being self-sufficient, unconstrained and self-reliant

For your child to be an independent writer means they are able to write without help from the teacher. They will be confident in their ability and equipped with the skills to write on their own.

We encourage our children to become independent writers by teaching them the skills they need to produce writing on their own. We encourage emergent writing, we teach handwriting skills, teachers model examples of writing and we look at all the different genres. We also teach spelling skills.

Very importantly we share writing and work in guided writing groups to develop skills.

The shared writing activities need to be carefully planned to provide the kind of support most likely to help children towards independence. Shared writing is a preparation for independent writing. The focus of the work in shared writing is continued into purposeful writing tasks through which children apply their new learning. Shared writing sessions are used to support independent writing in a number of ways, for example by providing:

- a variation on a well-known story;
- a writing plan for children to write to. This might be a story but could be a non-fiction plan linked to one of the text types and related to work in other subjects;
- a partially worked text for children to complete or ‘infill’;
- the beginning of a poem in which each line starts the same way;
- outlines of a story plot using, e.g. captions, pictures, arrows, to indicate main incidents in order;
- a bank of relevant vocabulary: words and phrases;
• an outline in note form or as a flow chart for children to expand in full sentences;
• a diagram to which instructions can be added;
• a poem, to substitute new lines;
• questions to form the plan, e.g. an evaluation of a book.

Using this pattern of support, teachers can plan to move children to increasing autonomy in their writing. As they become more familiar and successful in these relatively supported, independent tasks, the props can be removed.

The teacher will model writing behaviours in shared writing which children will emulate when they write independently. Modelling what to do when you ‘get stuck’ is also very helpful. Not only is it reassuring to children to know that ‘getting stuck’ is a normal condition, it gives them strategies for moving on.

**Guided writing** provides an additional support towards independent writing, where the onus is on the children to make decisions, compose and revise their own texts. Guided writing is planned with three major purposes in mind:

• to support children in planning and drafting their own work;
• to revise and edit and evaluate work in progress;
• to provide differentiated support for particular groups:

When a child becomes an independent writer and will happily write on their own there are now many more skills to master. Their written work now needs to become more interesting, sustained, correctly punctuated, spelt correctly, well organised, clear and imaginative. We encourage narrative and non-narrative writing with legible handwriting!!

**Modelling**

Teachers model different types of writing eg. letters, recounts, instructions, poems and stories.

**Modelling a recount**
First the teacher would go over the important features of a recount with the children eg.

• Who went?
• When did they go?
• Where did they go?
• Why did they go?
• What did they do?

Then she would discuss the importance of time words eg.

```plaintext
first
then
next
after that
finally
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As she writes the teacher might demonstrate some or all of the following:

• including information about who, when, where, why and what?
• using capital letters and full stops
• using a range of time words
• using interesting words and descriptions
• re-reading her writing to check that it makes sense
Different Genres

There are 6 different types of writing that we commonly use at school.

1. Information texts:
   - The children write information texts by writing facts about a topic, drawing and labelling pictures and adding captions.

2. Recount
   - The children learn to write a clear introduction which gives the information when? who? where? why? and what? The children use time words to explain the events that happened in sequence. The children then conclude the recount by adding a personal comment about the experience.

3. Instructions
   - When writing instructions, the children need to include a title, a list of what is needed and then clear, concise, numbered instructions, each instruction starting on a new line. We encourage the children to use time connectives when writing instructions, e.g. next, later, after that.

4. Report
   - A report tells you what something is like and does not necessarily follow time order. It is clear and factual and has a purpose.

5. Story
   - During story writing we encourage the children to use descriptive vocabulary in imaginative and interesting sentences. We also encourage them to use a clear opening, a middle and an end.
   - We read good quality fiction to the children to stimulate their imaginations.

6. Poetry
   - We use poems as a structure for writing our own by substituting ideas. Writing poetry gives an opportunity to develop the children’s descriptive vocabulary.

How we teach handwriting

- In Nursery and Reception the children do lots of patterning work using a variety of medium. We continue doing this into Year One (and beyond if we feel this would benefit certain children.) The children either trace over or copy patterns and have the opportunity to use a wide variety of pens, pencils, felt tips, paint and chalk. Sometimes the patterns will be in the shape of a picture to make the activity more exciting.

- We also practice the correct formation of individual letters using a multi-sensory approach. The style of handwriting we use at first is called Sassoon Primary Infant and some of the letters have flicks to make them easier to join later.

- When the teacher first introduces a letter she demonstrates the correct formation of the letter using a picture card which helps the child remember the letter. Each letter also has a sentence describing how to form it. e.g. slither down the snake for ‘s’. Then the children are encouraged to write the letters in the air with their ‘magic’ pencils saying the sentence as they do this. When the children practise their handwriting they might trace over letters and words or copy the words underneath or from the whiteboard.
In Year Two we begin teaching the continuous cursive style of handwriting. We practise forming the cursive letters in letter families or groups.

They are:
- straight letters: l, i, t, u, y
- 2 o'clock letters: c, o, a, d, g, q, s
- tunnel letters: r, n, m, h, b, p, k
- odd letters: f, e, j, v, w, x, z

With this style, all the lower case letters start on the line and each word is written without taking the pencil off the page. With practice this helps speed and fluency. The descenders have loops to distinguish them from ascenders and the children are less likely to reverse letters because they don’t take their pencils off the paper between letters. The spaces between words also become more distinct.

Continuous cursive can also be an aid to spelling as each word is one movement and the children develop a motor memory of letter patterns, which helps them to spell common words and common spelling patterns.

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**Foundation and Year 1**

**WRITING CHART**

Useful for the orientation of letters and the position of ascenders and descenders.

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abcde
fghijkl
mnop
qrstuv
wxyz
0123456789
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Handwriting Year 2

- The straight letters i l t u
- The 2 o'clock letters c a d g q s
- The tunnel letters n m h b p
- The top joiners o r n w
- The square letters x z
- The odd letters f k j y e
Handwriting

c ccc o ooo co
a aaa ca sa ac
d add dad add do
g ggg ga go dog
s sss so sa sad
q u qu quo quad
l ltt to cat sat
l ll log old cold
i it is sit dig
u us dug dust quit
n nnn in tin sun
m mmm most mum dim
h hhh him has hold
b bbb big bad but
p ppp put pad pin
r  mm  rim  dirt  stir  
e  eee  see  eat  beat  
k  kkk  kite  make  like  
v  vet  van  have  live  
w  was  with  went  saw  
j  jet  jump  jam  jog  
f  for  fam  from  off  
y  yyy  yes  you  yellow  
z  zzz  zoo  zip  buzz  
x  fox  box  axe  six
Handwriting

Aa April August Alwyn
Bb Berkshire Ben
Cc Candice Connor Courthouse
Dd December David
Ee England Emily
Ff February Friday France
Gg Georgia Gordon
Hh Harry Hannah
Ii India Ireland
Jj January June July Jack
Kk Kieran Katie
Ll London Lewis
Mm Maidenhead May March Monday
Nn November Nicky
Oo October Oscar
Pp Pakistan Peter
Qq Queen Elizabeth
Rr Rosie Robert
Ss September Sunday Sam
Tt Tuesday Thursday
Uu Uncle Tom
Vv Vanessa Victor
Ww Wales Wednesday
Xx Xavia
Yy Yolande
Zz Zac Zachary
**Spelling**

In the foundation stage the children take part in lots of activities to develop their speaking and listening skills. These are very important because they pave the way to making a good start with reading and writing. We do this by:

- joining them in their play and talking with them
- reading stories and discussing them
- teaching the children rhymes
- playing rhyming games

We teach the children that each letter of the alphabet makes a certain sound. As we introduce each letter the children practise writing the letter either in the air, in sand, on another child's back, on whiteboards or on paper.

We teach the letters systematically in this order:

- s a t p i n (lots of simple words are made from these letters eg. sat, sit, tap and pat)
- m d g o c k
- ck e u r h b
- f ff l l ss j
- v w x y z zz qu

When the children are ready, we teach them to blend the sounds in order to read words eg. m...a...n. We encourage them to segment a word into sounds when they are writing.

We ask the children to count how many sounds they can hear in a word and hold up a finger for each sound eg. t...a...n is 3 sounds, so we hold up 3 fingers and point to each one as we say the sound. The children have a go at writing simple 3 letter words using whiteboards. They also practise spelling words using magnetic letters.

Later on the children are introduced to 2 letter graphemes (a grapheme is a letter or group of letters that represent a sound.)

The word fish has 4 letters but 3 sounds f...i...sh. We teach these in the following order:

- ch sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo
- ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er

A word like rain also has 3 sounds r...ai...n.

We continue to practise reading and writing words with these sounds as well as revising and practising previous spelling patterns.

The next stage is teaching the children how to read and write 4 letter words which either begin with 2 consonants eg flat and stop, or end with 2 consonants eg went and sand. We then begin to teach the children alternative spellings for sounds eg:

- ay a-e eigh ey ei
- ea e-e ie y ey
Useful Literacy Websites

Direct link to National Curriculum for English

Direct link to the learning objectives for Literacy from the Primary Framework

ICT games (originally on the Toftwood Infant school website)
http://www.ictgames.com/

BBC website - Oxford Reading Tree Games
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/magickey/adventures/index.shtml

BBC website - Starship Games
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/index.shtml

BBC website - Words and pictures
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/

BBC website - Dynamo's Den
http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/dynamo/den/index.shtml

BBC website – Key Stage 1 Literacy Bitesize games
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy/

Crickweb
http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks1literacy.html

The official Dr Seuss website
http://www.seussville.com/

The official Roald Dahl website
http://www.roalddahl.com/