



The Walter Halls School
Writing Policy

Policy date: 2024/25

Review date: 2026/27

The Intent of our Writing Curriculum

At Walter Halls, we understand that writing is a vital skill that will support children’s learning across the whole curriculum and is the key for every child to reach their full potential. Above all, we want the children in our school to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective writers. For this reason, writing and writing opportunities, alongside reading, are a priority in all classes and we strive to use our writing to communicate effectively for a range of purposes and put vocabulary at the heart of everything that we do.

It is our intention to ensure that, by the time our children leave us, all pupils are equipped with the tools to be able to plan, write and review their independent work and make informed choices to ensure their writing is fit for purpose. We understand the key link between reading and writing to allow for effective **communication**- one of our key curriculum drivers. A significant number of our children enter Foundation Stage with speaking and listening skills that are below chronological expectations and therefore we immerse children in vocabulary-rich material to support the building of confident readers as well as writers. Through building up the children’s vocabulary it gives them the word power they need to become successful speakers and readers as well as confident writers.

Reading into writing also provides children with a world of **possibilities**- the other of our key curriculum drivers. It opens them up to a better knowledge of themselves and the world around them and helps them to be celebrate diversity and represent the Walter Halls values.

Implementation- How is the subject taught?

Early phonics and writing

As part of the Read Write Inc phonics programme, starting in F1, children will begin to write the sounds taught on whiteboards. This progresses to F2, where they will record their sounds on lined paper. In Year 1, children will continue to write the sounds taught and will begin to write words that include those sounds. In Year 2, the children will write and edit sentences. For children who have completed the phonics programme, before the end of KS1, they will learn how to increase their stamina during a weekly speed write. These progression of skills will depend on the stage that they are individually at in the programme.

The Writing Teaching Sequence

At Walter Halls, we understand the importance of aiding children to understand the connection between reading and writing. We want to enable our children to consider the impact our words have on the reader when they are composing a piece of writing- making them real-life authors. Because of this, we have moved away from teaching writing in ‘genres’ and instead focus on each block of writing having a clear purpose- enabling the children to understand: why are we doing this piece of writing?. Each of our purposes contain the phrase ‘so that the reader is’ reinforcing that important connection between reading and writing.

Step 1: Generate a purpose for writing

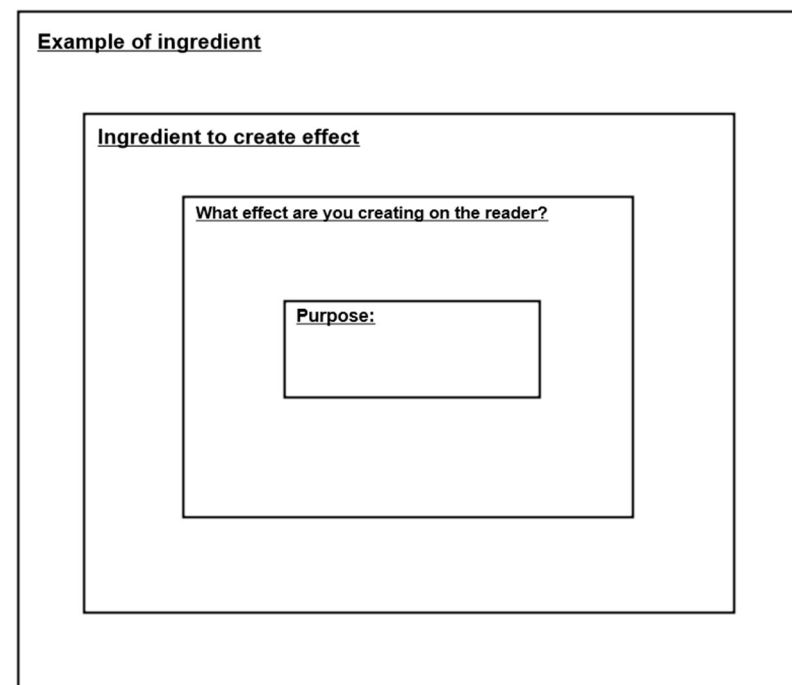
Writing Genre	so that the reader..
Narrative Poetry	is scared laughs cries is excited
Recount	understands sympathises empathises believes you feels nervous for..
Explanation	believes you are the expert learns... understands...
Information/Non-chronological report	believes you are the expert learns to.. understands about..
Instructions	can make..
Persuasion	wants to do.. wants to go.. wants to see..
Discussion	can see both sides

knows your point of view

Teachers use the above table, adapted from the Teresa Heathcote 'Teaching the Writing Sequence' training, to choose a clear purpose for the children's writing block. This purpose is shared with the children, placed in the middle of our 'expanded box criteria' (see step 2) and constantly referred back to throughout the writing sequence.

Step 2: Expanded box criteria

Throughout the writing block, teachers will add to this expanded box criteria template that they have up on their English working walls. The purpose is central in the grid, as all the work we will do links back to this. In the next layer, we consider the effect that the piece of writing is trying to have on the reader and one that we will try to replicate in our writing. The layer after that describes the ingredients we will use to create that effect. For example, if a piece of writing is trying to make the reader feel



scared, one ingredient to use might be short, shocking sentences or a variety of sentence lengths. It might also be to consider and select eerie-sounding language and description, or to not reveal much about a character. The final layer displays examples of this ingredient in place, and these are pulled, together with the children, from the model text. Particularly in Upper Key Stage Two, children may keep their own expanded box criterias in their box that they add to throughout the sequence, to aid with the planning of their writing.

Step 3: Importance of the model text

At the beginning of each writing block, teachers will construct a model text that contains the same skills and similar language choices that will be asked of the children in their independent write. It will not be completely identical in content but of a similar nature. For example, in Year 6, the children wrote a set of instructions written in role as the Grinch 'How to Steal Christmas' and the model text was written in role as the Easter Bunny, 'How to Steal Easter'. Together, the children and adults will unpick the model text, analysing authorial techniques that have

been used so that the writing fits the purpose, asking questions such as 'How has the writer made the reader clear that they are the expert?' or 'How has the writer tried to make the reader feel scared in their description?' Wherever possible, we also try to show them live examples of the purpose in action, using extracts from class novels and familiar texts with the children to analyse how published authors have used a particular skill in their work too.

Step 4: Vocabulary

We want our children to develop a wide and varied vocabulary and adopt this in their independent writing. Before a writing block, each teacher will prepare a list of up to fifteen words classed as tier 2 vocabulary and up to fifteen words classed as tier 3 vocabulary. Tier 2 vocabulary are words that the children may have encountered and can be applied across different contexts, but are ambitious vocabulary choices. Tier 3 vocabulary are words that are more specific to the context of the piece of writing and they may struggle to use in a different situation. This pre-prepared list is then shared and the children are immersed in this new vocabulary- told the definitions of each word, tips on how to spell them and given plenty of opportunities to practice using these words in context, with the aim being these are incorporated into their independent writes. Throughout the writing sequence, the children are continuously given opportunities to practice using these words in sentences so that they feel ready to use and apply in their own writing.

Step 5: Build-up of skills

The next step in the writing sequence is to teach children the skills that they will need in order to be successful in their independent write. This will look different in type and length dependent on the children's age and experiences with similar text types. It will consist of a mixture of word-level, sentence-level and punctuation work, where the children will gather examples of these skills and practice using them, ready to incorporate into their own work.

Step 6: Draft

When children complete their independent write, we call their first time of composing their writing a draft. This is always completed in their English books, where they are instructed to complete their work in pencil and leave a blank line in between each of the lines in their book in order to give them adequate space to edit (see next step). They are encouraged to use the expanded box criteria and look back at all of the build-up skills already in their books to aid them with the writing- all the time asking themselves and incorporating their knowledge to ensure that the writing fits the purpose.

Step 7: Edit

Arguably the most important part of the writing sequence, the edit gives children time and space to consider changes to make their writing better. Teachers will model and facilitate this tricky skill by either editing onto a child's work or on an example write they have completed, under a visualiser, which every class has. This time is also a perfect opportunity to share fantastic examples of drafts or children applying a skill in practice. Editing is seen as a collaborative skill, where both children's peers and teachers can suggest ways to improve their writing. Initially, editing will focus on grammatical and punctuation errors, with the next stage concentrating on changes and edits to make the writing better suited to the purpose, all the time considering the impact we are having on the reader. All edits will be shown in blue pen and there is ample space to make changes with the lines that have been left during the drafting stage.

Step 8: Publish

To support our children in taking pride in their independent writing, and sometimes to help the writing to be more appropriate to the purpose (for example, copying up a letter to be sent to the recipient), we always publish our work. Usually, this will be done in their English book and all children in KS2 will use a handwriting pen. We like to give our children the opportunity to make their own choices around their publishing and add some creativity to their work- using colour, bubble writing, boxes with illustrations or other choices that are appropriate for the writing block that has been completed.

Grammar

Grammar has been carefully mapped out across school, in line with the National Curriculum expectations, and an assessment document has been made for each year group. This demonstrates that we are building on our knowledge from the previous year group, as it contains a box with the previous years' terminology in, whilst also ensuring that we are covering the expectations for each year group and the entirety of the National Curriculum. We assess the children's grammar ability at the end of each term- we understand that in order for our students to be competent writers and to communicate effectively, they must have a secure knowledge of the grammar that underpins their writing.

Year 4 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar objectives

Word level	I know the difference between plural and possessive -s I can use the Standard English forms of verb inflections instead of local spoken forms (e.g. <i>we were</i> instead of <i>we was</i>)*			
Sentence level	I can use noun phrases expanded by addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases* I can use fronted adverbials*			
Text level	I can use paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme* I can choose my pronouns and nouns carefully within and across paragraphs to aid cohesion and avoid repetition*			
Punctuation	I can use inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech* I can use apostrophes to mark plural possession* I can use a comma after a fronted adverbial			

*indicates that the statement also feature on writing KPLs.

<p>Last year's key terminology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preposition, • conjunction, • word family, • prefix, • clause, • subordinate clause • direct speech, • consonant, • consonant letter • vowel, • vowel letter • inverted commas (or 'speech marks') • determiner • article 	<p>Year 4 key terminology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determiner • pronoun • possessive pronoun • adverbial
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Handwriting and presentation skills are of high importance to us as they help the children to be more fluid and confident writers. The handwriting and presentation policy clearly shows the expectations for each year group. We celebrate improvement in handwriting through a termly headteacher’s award and each class has a frame, which displays a great example.

Children who are below age-related expectations

At Walter Halls, we are determined that every pupil will learn to write, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. As a result, we recognise the importance of supporting the children who are below age-related expectations. For children that are working below their key stage requirements, teachers plan these students’ work to match the objectives on the corresponding pre-key stage standard, tailoring the teaching and learning to match the child’s needs, whilst linking learning, wherever possible, to the topic of the current writing genre of their class. A portfolio of their work is kept and compiled throughout the year to ensure that we are evidencing the steps of progress that these children are making against their objectives. As part of pupil progress meetings, which take place half-termly, we meet to discuss the progress of these learners and form an action plan to support these children to meet their targets.

How is the content chosen?

Teachers in each year group are given the choice to choose the purpose for each piece of writing that their class will complete, and at the start of each term, they will add these purposes onto their medium term plans. They carefully consider the ‘Key Performance Indicator’ objectives for their group and ensure that children are given a range of opportunities to meet each objective throughout the academic year. Wherever possible, the writing blocks will be closely linked either to the novel that the particular year group is reading, or the history or geography focus for that half term so that links and connections are being made to our wider curriculum.

The Learning Environment

We recognise that school is often a child’s first encounter with the written form in the wider world and that print gives meaning. Displaying signs and symbols in the Early Years gives children the opportunity to read for meaning and then apply this in their written work.

Classrooms and all school areas should provide a vocabulary-rich environment to promote the importance of writing and language choices that can be made. Each classroom has a writing or English working walls to capture and celebrate the writing journey throughout a genre. On this wall, there should be an abundance of vocabulary for the children to access. You may also see evidence of word, sentence and text level work and examples useful SPaG tips and a model text for reference. Lower down the school, the classrooms have displays with graphemes to support the teaching of phonics and spelling. In addition, pupils will

also see writing celebrated around school. We have carefully mapped out vocabulary in wider curriculum subjects to enhance the children's written outcomes. Therefore, on these wider curriculum display boards, you will see a range of vocabulary and knowledge.

Around school, displays are regularly updated and reflect the value we put on our written outcomes. This includes a handwriting display, mapping out the skills children acquire as they move through school and a 'wonderful writing' display clearly showing the progress children make during the entirety of their time at Walter Halls

Handwriting

As a school we recognise the importance of enabling children to write fluently from the earliest opportunity. It is a skill that is fundamental to good progress and learning. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Therefore, we place a high importance on the explicit teaching of handwriting skills on a daily basis and we use a continuous cursive script at Walter Halls.

The advantages of using this script is that it gives children flowing movements and patterns that are key for successful handwriting. It allows children to produce letters in one, fluid movement that allows them to learn and produce correct letter shapes. Because the flow and movement of the writing goes from left to right, children are less likely to confuse the letters b/d and p/q as well making clearer distinctions between capital and lower cases letters. Having a continuous and fluid motion also increases writing speed and spelling.

How is handwriting taught?

Handwriting is taught daily in school and is recorded in books. For children in F2/Year 1 this is recorded in a handwriting book and for all other year groups their handwriting practice is recorded in their English books to ensure consistency between handwriting and written work in English and will be taught at the beginning of an English lesson where possible.

Lessons will follow a set structure:

- Posture check: feet flat on the floor back straight and touching the chair **(BBC)**
- Gross and fine movement warm up
- Teacher modelling, demonstrating formations, air writing practice, talking through the process, encouraging children to verbalise the process.
- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then applying to various tasks

Literacy calendar

Throughout the year, significant literacy events are celebrated and promoted across school. These include World Book Day and National Poetry Week and displays can be seen around school, promoting our enjoyment of these days and the work that the children have produced.

Impact

How do we know that our children are making progress/how do we assess writing?

As a school, we use a rigorous process of assessment to ensure that our children are making progress. These include:

- **Termly SPaG NFER tests** in Y3-5 and past SATS papers in Year 2 and 6. These have clear tracking tools, linked to the assessment foci that give us precise information on how the children are performing against the curriculum content domains and help us to identify gaps and plan accordingly moving forwards.
- **Termly assessment capture:** We input a level for the children onto SIMs once a term, using our KPIs. Following this, we hold pupil progress meetings with phase leaders where children who need extra support in order to ensure good progress are identified (if not already) and a plan of action is devised to ensure these children are on track to meet age-related expectations, or an expected level of progress.
- **KPIs:** Each year group has a set of Key Performance Indicators that have been formulated from the National Curriculum objectives, to include the spelling and grammar expectations. Each piece of independent writing is

assessed against this criteria, building up a portfolio of evidence over the year. Each class teacher will secure a level judgement based on this evidence

- **Moderation:** Once per term, we hold phase moderation meetings. The focus of this can vary based upon findings from the data analysis and the needs of the cohort. This is a helpful process which ensures that we are held accountable for our judgements and that writing assessment is consistent across classes.
- **Writing exemplification portfolio:** We continually build a current portfolio of writing exemplification, showing what we judge to be a secure and greater depth level writer in each year group and across different genres. This mirrors the exemplification documents released by the DfE for end of KS1 and KS2 expectations and helps us to know that we are assessing accurately and supporting teachers to target areas for development.
- **Role of the English Leader:** Throughout the year, leaders in school have a carefully planned out monitoring schedule where we do the following to ensure the standards of teaching and learning in reading are high across school:
 - conduct learning walks;
 - do lesson drop-ins;
 - carry out pupil interviews;
 - take in exercise books for monitoring throughout the year.

These monitoring exercises inform future areas for improvement and the impact of new initiatives. Staff are keen to act quickly on any feedback given in order to ensure they are providing children with high-quality teaching.