

Askwith Primary School

Writing rationale

Our curriculum offer for English begins in Early Years. 'Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021

Across all year groups, our children will produce many different genres and forms of writing including:

'... well-structured formal expository and narrative essays; stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing; notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations; and a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters.'

The National Curriculum, 2014

Intent

At Askwith Primary School, we adopt a determined approach to writing so that all children, including SEND, EAL, PP and vulnerable pupils, develop fluency and automaticity and meet the expected standard in all aspects of English. Our writing curriculum is rooted in the knowledge and skills pupils need to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life, addressing social disadvantage and ensuring all pupils build the cultural capital to be educated citizens. It provides deliberate, natural links across the curriculum so that writing is meaningful and creative.

Our planning, teaching and assessment are informed by the nine principles of cognitive science (Daniel Willingham). We identify the 'must haves' - knowledge of grapheme-phoneme relationships, word knowledge, knowledge of composition and transcription, and a positive self-image as a learner—and the 'could dos'—systematic phonics, explicit writing lessons, retrieval practice and interleaving. The curriculum is intentionally sequenced from EYFS to Year 6 with clear endpoints. Substantive knowledge includes transcription (phonics, spelling, handwriting, grammar, structural and linguistic features) and composition (planning, drafting, revising for audience and purpose). Disciplinary knowledge is the ability to evaluate and edit, to "write with the ear" for coherence and effect, and to apply substantive knowledge flexibly in new contexts.

Implementation

In Early Years, writing begins with transcription foundations. Fine-motor development is prioritised in Nursery through daily adult-led focus tasks (tweezers, scissors and manipulatives). In Reception, letter formation is introduced through our SSP, Phonics Bug; daily phonics includes accurate grapheme formation. Handwriting sessions are taught daily (beginning with pre-writing skills such as Write from the Start, then letter families), with explicit teaching of posture and pencil grip. Irregular and decodable words are taught in

alignment with Phonics Bug using varied media (whiteboards, magnetic letters, pencils). Dictation is used deliberately so that words, phrases and sentences align with the phonics progression.

In KS1, daily phonics continues (20–40 minutes, revisit/teach/practise/apply), alongside daily handwriting that reinforces current graphemes and daily spelling lessons when appropriate. Dictation continues in Year 1 (teacher- or peer-led) and transitions to oral composition and independent sentence writing in Year 2 as pupils move through Phase 6.

In KS2, daily handwriting and spelling lessons continue. Spelling follows a weekly sequence—revisit/recap, teach, practise/apply—with daily review of two prior words. Instruction references phonology, graphology, orthography and morphology (and etymology where relevant). Pupils use strategies such as pyramid words and colour coding, and dictation provides structured practice. Weekly spelling checks are low-stakes and formative.

Composition is built from strong oral foundations. Oral composition is taught daily through storytelling and aligns with our communication, language and oracy curriculum. In the first autumn term, we teach structure, grammar and language using high-quality, familiar texts for writing. From spring, fiction, non-fiction and poetry are taught explicitly; knowledge of structure, grammar and language is embedded through these genres and purposefully applied across the wider curriculum (e.g., diary writing in history). In line with the Writing Framework, cohesive devices are explicitly taught and revisited—beginning with simple conjunctions, pronouns and adverbials in KS1, progressing to a wider range for clarity and flow by the end of KS2.

Every lesson incorporates retrieval practice and interleaving so that knowledge moves to long-term memory. Teaching uses explicit modelling, guided practice and carefully chosen stimuli from high quality texts. Adaptive teaching supports access and maintains challenge: visual scaffolds and sentence stems, chunked tasks, vocabulary pre-teaching, oral rehearsal, word banks and, where appropriate, adult scribing or keyboard alternatives.

Writing draws on class texts, topic vocabulary and the language-rich environment in every classroom (tier-2 and tier-3 vocabulary, "What Do Words Mean?" displays and weekly vocabulary sessions).

Reading underpins writing; see the Reading rationale for phonics, fluency and literature.

Impact

Impact is measured through ongoing questioning, live feedback, retrieval checks, low-stakes quizzes, cold and hot writes and end-of-unit outcomes. Pupil work evidences increasing fluency in transcription (legible, consistent handwriting; accurate spelling; secure grammar) and growing sophistication in composition (clarity, cohesion, control of form for audience and purpose). The majority of pupils achieve age-related expectations; gaps are identified quickly and addressed through targeted support. Endpoints are reviewed termly to ensure pupils know more, remember more and can do more, and that they are well prepared for the next stage, including secondary English.

Inclusion

We maintain high expectations for all pupils and remove barriers through a graduated approach in partnership with the SENCo. Same-day intervention addresses forgotten or insecure knowledge. Where needed, pupils access phonics boosters, precision practice of target spellings, additional dictation, guided sentence combining and scaffolded planning or editing frames. Adaptations (visuals, simplified vocabulary, chunked instructions, additional adult support) ensure access without lowering challenge.

Personal Development & SMSC

SMSC in English is driven by literature choices for class stories and writing stimuli, including Global Theme and "Four Rs" texts. These texts expose pupils to diverse cultures, traditions, beliefs, moral issues, societies and communities, creating safe opportunities for discussion, empathy and reflection. Writing tasks foster voice, agency and respectful debate, and purposeful non-fiction writing links to British Values and citizenship.

Leadership & Professional Development

Subject leadership includes learning walks, book looks, moderation and pupil voice. Book scrutiny secures consistency, progression and alignment with the writing rationale. Staff receive ongoing CPD on phonics and spelling, modelling and feedback, cohesive writing, and cognitive-science-informed practices (retrieval and interleaving). Regular coaching and moderation improve accuracy and shared expectations.

Enhancements

A rolling programme of enhancements raises aspiration and cultural capital: publishing and display of writing, contributions to school/community newsletters, author workshops and participation in competitions such as the Wharfedale Festival of Performing Arts. These authentic audiences motivate refinement, resilience and pride in craft.

Writing Priorities for Improvement 2025-2026

Intent	Implementation
<p>Further develop all pupils' understanding and application of cohesive devices across the curriculum to impact the quality of composition with particular focus on increasing the number of pupils who achieve greater depth in writing, lowest 20%, disadvantaged and SEND pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers to analyse 'The Writing Framework 2025' collaboratively • Complete all audits to identify any areas of further development • Identify progression of cohesive devices across school • Review and amend grammar and composition progression document • Review and amend progression of genres document • Review all LTPs for grammar, punctuation and composition including texts for writing and cohesive devices • Amend writing rationale

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase new texts for writing based on review• Frequent book looks (as part of drop ins) to ensure cohesion is taught and applied in all writing (including across the curriculum) consistently• Updates and changes to be presented to governors• Continue to monitor writing lessons (including book looks and discussions with pupils)• Review and amend essential knowledge overviews for genres for spring term• Frequent book looks (as part of drop ins) to ensure cohesion is taught and applied in all writing consistently when introducing specific writing genres• Review and amend essential knowledge overviews for genres for summer term• Plan writing enhancements for summer term (e.g. writing showcase for parents) |
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Reviewed September 2025