

Writing at SMAB



Intent

Our English curriculum at St Michael at Bowes CE School (SMAB) develops a range of skills, with our aim to teach pupils to be linguistically confident and to access all opportunities available to them. Where possible, we make cross-curricular links to make learning more enjoyable and relevant. We want children to experience the enjoyment of English and develop a sense of curiosity about the subject. Language is vitally important and the Writing and Reading Subject Leads are continually focusing on closing the 'word gap' in order to help increase every child's cultural capital.

Teaching

Most writing cycles across the school will last for three weeks and over this time, we aim to make lessons immersive with first-hand experiences to support learning across the curriculum. One of the most important elements of the cycle is the purpose for writing; having a reason to write helps pupils to focus on the audience, applying the features of that text type in order to have the desired effect. The stimuli for writing include focus texts, topics from History and Geography, videos, drama, music and art. Pupils are taught the key grammatical structures and forms in the context of their writing. All cycles will involve deconstructing a text similar to what they are writing in order to understand the structure, vocabulary, register and style of a wide range of genres for a variety of subjects, purposes and audiences. They are encouraged to write at increasing length to build stamina and focus.

Spelling is taught weekly in every class. The focus of sessions is keywords from the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 spelling list that come from the National Curriculum as well as year group specific spelling patterns and rules. Classes will look at only 2 or 3 words per session using a range of strategies so that they understand and can use the words confidently.

The LetterJoin handwriting scheme is followed across the school. Handwriting is taught weekly and there is an emphasis on children developing consistent handwriting using a neat, joined, cursive style which is practised and evident in all books across the curriculum.

Flexible groupings are used during lessons e.g., ability and mixed ability groups, paired work, guided and independent work and whole class work.

In addition to children building evidence of their writing skills for moderation and statutory assessment at the end of the key stage, there is also an intention that they become confident and competent communicators in writing for life beyond SMAB.

Planning

- The school has a detailed curriculum map which indicates the genres and topics that are covered throughout the year.
- Teachers meet weekly to detail the sequence of lessons and teachers are encouraged to adapt the planning to suit the needs of their class (children who are new to English, SEND etc.)
- Teachers use the National Curriculum to ensure that all areas of SPaG are covered across the year.
- A planning overview, on an Interactive White Board is completed for each topic taught, indicating objectives to be taught, a section of Grammar revision and key vocabulary.

The three-week English cycle will include:

- A hook – a real purpose for writing which is revisited regularly so that pupils understand why they are writing.
- Immersion into the topic or genre. This could be through drama, art, music, a trip or a mixture!
- A lesson focused on the features of the genre to help pupils make their writing effective.
- A lesson focused on deconstructing a text similar to what they are writing in order to understand the structure, vocabulary, register and style of a wide range of genres for a variety of subjects, purposes and audiences
- A planning lesson (if applicable) where pupils rehearse ideas orally and in written form before they begin the writing process.
- Initially, there will be drafting of up to two paragraphs before it is evaluated and edited, linking back to the reason for writing.
- A reading comprehension that is linked to genre of the outcome.
- A SPaG focused lesson on a year group specific area that will support their writing.
- Across the remaining time in the cycle, there will be further drafting and editing.
- Finally, all English work will be published and presented (this could be in a variety of ways).

Resources:

- The school provides pencils and handwriting pens for pupils.
- Opportunities to use word-processing technology on Chromebooks and iPads.
- Handwriting books with guidelines if needed alongside interactive whiteboard resources and practical resources to support the development of handwriting.
- The exercise books used in all subjects have appropriate line spacing to facilitate the development of the correct size, formation and orientation of letters and organisation of written work.
- Our school has a number of books to support learning, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Working Walls:

- The English working wall is intended to provide a resource to encourage children to apply their SPaG skills, use specific sentence structures and vocabulary in their writing.
- The working walls complement the use of modelled and guided writing in the sessions and provide a reminder to pupils of the features of the text type.
- WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) elements of displays provide examples of excellence in children's writing to showcase expectations for handwriting and presentation as well as for outcomes in terms of genre features, vocabulary, structure and organisation

Assessment

Formative:

- AFL is used within each lesson to establish next steps for pupils.
- Writing is checked by the teacher and children are conferenced with during the writing process to editing and re-draft their work.
- Pupils are taught the skills to self and peer assess their writing and it is expected they become more independent as they progress through the school.
- Spelling and SPaG is monitored and assessed in writing tasks.

Summative:

- In Year 6, children's writing is both internally and externally moderated using the statutory assessment framework.
- Spelling checks are incorporated into spelling lessons once every three weeks.
- Year 3, 4 and 5 complete a SPaG test each term to assess progress and identify gaps in learning.
- Year 6 sit a statutory end of key stage SPAG test.

Marking and feedback

All work should be marked according to the school marking policy by using

- Peer and self-assessment
- Oral feedback
- Children use a **purple pen** to show response to adult feedback and **green pen** for self and peer assessment.

Monitoring

Monitoring is undertaken by the subject leader and SLT during the school year. This will include:

- Learning walks during English, writing-specific lessons.
- Regular book looks in English books as well as writing across the curriculum.
- Conferencing with pupils and discussions about what they have written, including pupil interviews.
- Regular moderation within year groups, across lower school and upper school and with external bodies such as other schools, moderating teams from the STA and Local Authorities.