

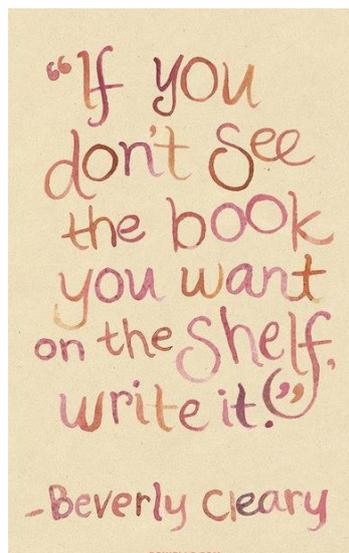


Our vision is a nurturing community that expects respect, encourages creativity and embraces aspiration.

Our school provides a broad and balanced education that is relevant, engaging and challenging whilst meeting the needs of our pupils. It aims to furnish them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they will need in preparation for their future lives, to be respectful, caring, creative and ambitious citizens in our local and global community.

WRITING AT SANDFORD

Writing has an important place in education and in society. It is an essential skill and the ability to write with confidence and accuracy is a tool which will support a child through life. It is our intent that our children understand the social functions of writing in order to use different genres of writing appropriately by considering its purpose and matching it to its audience. Through our teaching of writing, we intend to impart pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need in order to reach their potential as individuals.



HOW DO WE TEACH WRITING?

At Sandford, we believe writing is both an essential skill for success in the wider world and an art form. Therefore, we make our teaching of writing as resourceful as possible, as well as rigorously teaching the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The creativity within our learning means that our children are exposed to English as a subject that spans every other topic, rather than as an isolated lesson on the timetable, with skills being shown in a contextualised environment where possible, providing further meaning and purpose. For example, the children may write: letters home in the role of a soldier in Roman Britain; postcards home describing the climate of a country they are 'visiting' in geography; accurate and well-labelled posters in science and reasoning in maths. We also try to create as many real-life situations for the children to practise writing skills. For instance, application letters for school council roles and thank you cards to visitors.



Talk4Writing

We use the Talk4Writing process to deliver our English lessons. This is an engaging teaching framework developed by Pie Corbett, supported by Julia Strong, which is based on the principles of how children learn. The Talk4Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully. The key phases of the Talk4Writing process, as outlined below, enable children to imitate orally the language they need for a particular topic, before reading and analysing it, and then writing their own version.

1. BASELINE ASSESSMENT – THE 'COLD' TASK

Teaching is focused by initial assessment. Generally, teachers use what is known as a 'cold' task or a 'have a go' task. An interesting and rich starting point provides the stimulus and content but there is no initial teaching. The aim of this is to see what the children can do independently at the start of a unit, drawing on their prior learning. Assessment of their writing helps the teacher work out what to teach the whole class, different groups and adapt the model text and plan.

2. IMITATION

The teaching begins with some sort of creative 'hook' which engages the pupils, often with a sense of enjoyment, audience and purpose. A model text is pitched well above the pupils' level and has built into it the underlying, transferable structures and language patterns that students will need when they are writing. This is learned using a 'text map' and actions to strengthen memory and help students internalise the text. Activities such as drama are used to deepen understanding of the text. Once this has happened, the text will be analysed for vocabulary, structure, writing techniques and specific grammatical patterns, with periods of short-burst writing to practise these.

3. INNOVATION

Once students are familiar with the model text, then the teacher leads them into creating their own versions. A new subject is presented and the teacher leads students through planning, either with changing the basic map or creating a simple plan that follows the pattern. Shared and guided writing is then used to stage writing over a number of days so that students are writing texts bit by bit, concentrating on bringing all the elements together, writing effectively and accurately.

4. INDEPENDENT APPLICATION AND INVENTION – THE 'HOT' TASK

In the third phase, children will apply independently what has been taught and practised. Before this happens, the teacher may decide to give further input and rehearsal. Students are guided through planning, drafting and revising their work independently. The final piece is used as the 'hot' task, which clearly shows progress across the unit. The independence of writing is gradually increased as the unit progresses and as children move further up the school. When children are first taught a text type, they will co-construct the toolkit to help them understand the ingredients to consider. As they progress up the school, these toolkits should travel with them so that, year-on-year, they are refined as the pupils develop their skills. Over time, they should internalise these toolkits so they select appropriate features automatically and no longer need a visual support to scaffold their writing.

Each term sees a different fiction or non-fiction focus, which is followed across the whole school. This provides the opportunity to build on knowledge and grammar features from previous years, as well as ensuring continuity with our writing expectations and moderation. There is an important emphasis on modelling writing and teachers will frequently demonstrate their own writing skills with the class.

Handwriting is taught regularly at Sandford and reviewed constantly. High expectations of presentation of work and letter formation start in Ashton, where letters are initially taught in isolation and shown in a printed format. As children develop their phonetic awareness, a cursive style of handwriting is encouraged and modelled by teachers. As a school, we follow the Penpals handwriting scheme, with dedicated lessons to teach letter formation and joins in each class. In Dabinett, children can be awarded a Pen Licence if their presentation is consistently neat.

WRITING IN THE EARLY YEARS AND KEY STAGE 1

Children are taught the key principles of writing through Talk4Writing, in order to lay a solid foundation for developing their skills later on. Children are taught to apply their knowledge of phonics to help them spell accurately, and to structure their work, whether it be fiction or non-fiction writing. We believe that effective storytellers become effective story writers.

In addition, specific skills appropriate to their year group will be taught explicitly. (For example in Year 1, children will also learn about what a letter, word and sentence are, capital letters, question marks, past tense and adjectives.) By the end of Key Stage 1, children will have been taught the fundamentals of punctuation and grammar, to build up a technical knowledge bank in preparation for Key Stage 2.

WRITING IN KEY STAGE 2

Each class continues to follow the expectations within the National Curriculum and builds upon the foundations of Key Stage 1. Specific skills are taught explicitly appropriate to the class and year group – this has been structured carefully with our split-age classes in mind.

Children will continue to be exposed to the same high-quality texts and are expected to work through the Talk4Writing cycle with greater skill and fluency, allowing them greater opportunities to innovate and invent on the chosen text type. As they progress through the classes, children will have a larger 'toolkit' bank to draw upon and their writing across the curriculum will demonstrate this writing knowledge.

Dabinett will also have specific Grammar lessons to ensure all aspects of the National Curriculum expectations have been covered, in preparation for the end of Key Stage SATs.

HOW WE ASSESS WRITING

Verbal feedback and 'live' in class marking are used as a key aspect of our formative assessment of children's writing, ensuring the best possible progress. Alongside this, self and peer assessments are used to allow for greater responsibility and the opportunity to reflect and engage with the success criteria 'toolkit' for the specific text type. The 'Hot Task' at the end of a Talk4Writing unit is used as a means to show progression during that specific element. This is used in conjunction with our data tracking system, Insight, where there are objectives for each area of English to assess the children against. We grade them using the levels of Working Towards, Expected and Greater Depth.

Children in Year 6 are also part of a writing moderation, where class teachers assess their writing at the end of the Key Stage as part of SATs. These benchmarks are set out in the National Curriculum and are part of a nationally recognised process, which is also used to aid transition to Key Stage 3.

HOW WE HELP CHILDREN WHO FIND WRITING DIFFICULT

Throughout a writing unit, children will have a range of support of differing levels. This could be word mats and additional resource prompts to additional time or differentiated outcomes. All children will be able to complete some form of the task set

as the Talk4Writing approach provides many opportunities for imitation before independent innovation. The 'Cold Task' also allow teachers the opportunity to find the gaps within children's writing skills and lessons are planned in response to this, with focused interventions taking place when required.

HOW PARENTS AND CARERS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH WRITING

Experiences outside of school can have a huge impact on a child's ability to retain the knowledge they learn in school and to encourage a natural interest towards writing. Working alongside, showing enthusiasm and being active in learning are all ways to support a child's writing. The more others see them as a writer, the more they will believe it too. Reading and exploring areas of interest will provide more opportunities for children to stimulate their imagination and improve their vocabulary. Any form of writing, whether shopping lists, instructions, holiday diaries or mark marking in sand/mud, will benefit a child's writing ability.

HOW WE CELEBRATE WRITING

Children's writing is acknowledged and praised in many different ways, including Work Marks and recognition from their teacher and other members of staff. At the end of a Talk4Writing unit, work is celebrated with some form of published work – for example, as a class book or a display piece of work or performance in assembly.

Where possible, authors are invited in to demonstrate to children the writing process and lead workshops to help creativity and enable children to see themselves as writers.

**"WRITING
IS THE
PAINTING
OF THE
VOICE!"**

VOLTAIRE