# Writing at Robin Hood Junior School

## Our Teaching Principles

Our aim is for all pupils to write **coherently** and for **purpose**, utilising a **rich vocabulary.**

We aim to ensure all pupils:

- Can write a grammatically correct paragraph which is punctuated accurately, with correct spelling and cursive handwriting
- Can write for purpose and for a reader
- Can make appropriate and ambitious language choices

## Transcription

Pupils are supported to develop their spelling and handwriting in the following ways.

**Handwriting**

- We use the Penpals Interactive scheme to teach and consolidate handwriting. In LKS2, children have whole class handwriting lessons and in UKS2 pupils are mostly supported through interventions. The Penpals font is also used when creating child-facing resources, to maximise pupils' exposure to the letter formations and ensure consistency throughout the school. The Penpals scheme has also been adopted by Robin Hood Infant school, which will support transition.
- We support pupils to develop the physicality required for handwriting, such as core stability, sitting positions and correct pencil grip. Each whole class handwriting lesson begins with a physical warm up focusing on both gross and fine motor skills.
- Additional support for handwriting may include handwriting frames, pencil grips or shaped pencils, fine motor skill activities or the 'Write from the Start' intervention scheme. Children who find handwriting particularly challenging may also learn to touch-type so that they can draft their work electronically then focus on handwriting when publishing.
- All staff have received handwriting training (Sept 2019) and know how to seek advice and support.

**Spelling**

- **Word Lists:** We expect pupils to learn the word lists for Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 at home. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in learning these spelling through spelling tests, adjusting and personalising word lists for individual pupils as required. In Year 3 and 4, the word list spellings have been divided into the two year groups. Pupils can practise their weekly spellings using Readiwriter, which can be accessed at school and from home.
- In Year 5 and 6, pupils are tested 'cold' at the beginning of the week to generate a baseline score and then again after a week of practising the spelling words. Those who achieve full marks on a Monday are given higher level extension/vocabulary enrichment spellings.
- **Spelling Rules:** Spelling rules are taught through discreet, whole class sessions. Coverage of spelling rules is in development. Currently, Year 3 and 4 share the rules for LKS2, Year 5 cover most of the rules from UKS2 then pupils consolidate these in Year 6. When pupils join us in Year 3, we assess whether they are using phonics accurately to spell. If additional support is required, this may come in the form of whole class phonics with a focus on spelling, or individual intervention.

## Composition

In each unit of writing, pupils will start by reading and **analysing high-quality texts** as models of the writing purpose. This supports pupils to understand the structure, style and language choices appropriate to the purpose. During these reading sessions, pupils will also be exposed to new vocabulary which they will be able to use in their final piece of writing.

Pupils are then guided and supported through the four stages of the writing process below. Each stage of the process has equal importance and allows pupils to focus on one skill at a time.

- **Planning:** This may involve a combination of approaches, including note-making, drawing, idea discussion and oral rehearsal.
- **Drafting:** This stage gives pupils the freedom to explore their thinking and make ambitious vocabulary choices. The focus here is on writing for purpose and a reader.
- **Editing:** Firstly, pupils 'fine-tune' their writing by ensuring that it is grammatically correct, accurately punctuated, and spelt correctly. Secondly, pupils 'up-level' and improve their content, vocabulary choices and sentence structure.
- **Publishing:** This stage is where pupils demonstrate their cursive handwriting.

To support individual or whole class needs, pupils may go through some, or all, of these stages with peer or teacher support. They may also use

## Vocabulary

We believe that vocabulary is a key factor in a pupils' success in writing. High level vocabulary is not something that all of our pupils are exposed to in day-to-day life, so we acknowledge the need to teach vocabulary explicitly, in the following ways.

- By identifying and clarifying new vocabulary during reading sessions.
- By planning specific vocabulary for a unit of writing, and teaching these words in engaging ways, e.g. Call my Bluff.
- By clarifying words before reading sessions, so that pupils already have experience of the word when they read it in context.
- By displaying new vocabulary and their definitions in the classroom for pupils to refer to, ensuring words on display are also given in context.
- Staff know that for a word to be embedded in a child's vocabulary, they must see it in context 12 times. Therefore, we give pupils the opportunity to revisit new vocabulary as often as possible.

## Punctuation and Grammar

- Pupils are taught the punctuation and grammar features for their year group, as per the Skills Progression Grid.
- This is taught and developed in a range of ways, including explicit teaching, shared writing, pair tasks and teacher feedback.
- Pupils are also exposed to more formal types of SPAG questions through practice papers, in preparation for SATs.

## SMSC in Writing

**Spiritual:** Throughout the writing process, pupils have the opportunity to develop their own beliefs and reflect on those of others. This is particularly true of genres such as first person narrative or persuasive writing, which encourage pupils to 'put themselves in someone else's shoes'. In doing so, they have cause to examine their own beliefs as well.

**Moral:** Pupils are often exposed to moral issues through writing. This can be done overtly, such as writing a persuasive letter about social or environmental issues, or more subtly, for example through discussion of how a narrative might end or the choices a character could make.

**Social:** Firstly, lot of collaborative learning happens during the writing process, which develops a range of social skills, from turn-taking to offering constructive advice. Secondly, because there are so many elements to Literacy, we have an opportunity to build pupils' self esteem in one area and recognise the impact of effort, before moving on to the next.

**Cultural:** We develop pupils' cultural understanding and appreciation through writing genres. For example, when considering a characters motives and actions, pupils are encouraged to think about what that character has experienced in their life. Pupils also learn about the cultural diversity we have in the world through the texts that they analyse as part of each writing unit.

# Reading at Robin Hood Junior School

## Assessment

Children's writing is assessed by teacher assessment. Staff consider and triangulate the following areas, across at least two recent and independent pieces of writing. Each year group has an assessment grid which staff use to support their judgements.

- Does their writing make sense? Is it written for purpose and a reader? This must be considered first, before referring to SPAG elements of writing.
- Does the pupil demonstrate a secure grasp of the grammar features for their year group?
- Is their vocabulary rich and varied? Have they applied new vocabulary taught in lessons? Do they draw on words and phrases from their own reading?
- Do they demonstrate secure application of spelling rules and word list spellings for their year group? If this is not available or appropriate to the writing genres assessed, refer to the pupils' performance in spelling tests.
- Do they have a level of cursive handwriting appropriate for their year group?
- Do they have any elements which may be considered a 'weakness'?

Staff regularly moderate within year groups, and across year groups where appropriate, to ensure consistency in judgements. Staff also moderate against exemplars in The Writing Toolkit books. Year 6 staff regularly moderate writing within clusters across the borough and attend annual moderation training.

## Initiatives/Training 2021-22

- CPD in working parties for Year 3 and Year 4 focusing on supporting pupils to plan their writing (Autumn Term)
- Introduction of planning for mastery in English using Hamilton Scheme of work (Spring 1). This will be an ongoing project for staff and planning will begin in Spring 2.
- Bob Cox High Quality Texts training, attended by Y5 and Y6 year group leads. Ongoing until May 2022.