Ellison Primary Academy
Writing Policy

At Ellison Primary Academy, we are committed to ensuring that children can speak, read and write confidently and fluently to enable them to communicate effectively across the curriculum and beyond.

Intent

We are committed to ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to write for a wide-range of purposes and audiences clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style as required. We encourage children to develop a love of the writing process, a love of language and vocabulary and to enjoy communicating using the written word. Our curriculum is designed to spark imagination and encourage creativity while learning the key skills that enable writing to be accurate and coherent. We support pupils in the development and understanding of grammar and punctuation and to apply these skills effectively in writing across in areas of the curriculum as it vital that these skills are well-established and transferable.

Implementation

English Lessons

English lessons happen daily across the academy. These cover aspects of the reading, oracy and writing aspects of our curriculum. We have a carefully planned writing process which progresses throughout the school. At the beginning of the writing cycle, there is a strong emphasis on immersion. During this phase, there is lots of reading, identifying features, discussion, drama and rehearsal room techniques. This is so that children are immersed in the story, genre, text type and language at the very start of the process. The next phase focuses on GPS and sentence structures needed in the writing unit (see GPS and sentence structure progression documents). This enables children to revisit previously taught skills, practise, develop and reinforce key skills before applying them. The children then plan, draft, edit and publish their writing.

During each phase, there is a strong emphasis on teacher modelling, either whole class, split groups or small guided groups. We also use peer and self-assessment, as well as time to reflect, edit and improve existing work. We believe that this writing cycle with these clear focuses enables writing to be crafted over time and polished to the highest possible standard. Each child in KS2 will have a 'mission critical' during the writing process which is a teacher identified target that must be achieved in the next extended write (published piece of writing). This is a more specific, personal writing aspect that they are focusing on, in addition to success criteria. This is a personalised way for children, or groups of children, to improve their writing and focus on an area that they need.

The vast majority of writing in English lessons take place in the context of high quality, planned and sequenced differentiated texts which link to writing units (see text progression document) or whole school differentiated texts (such as Shakespeare units or New Vic Theatre production stories). The genres and purposes for writing become increasingly wide throughout the school as this allows text types to be revisited and new ones to be introduced at the most appropriate time. Some writing comes from different areas which spark the children's imagination and creativity such as local and national writing competitions, local or national news which are pertinent to the children or other school events. This encourages children to experience writing for different purposes and audiences and instils the importance of writing clearly and accurately.

GPS

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are important part of the curriculum (see spelling and phonics policies). Therefore, skills have been carefully mapped throughout the school (see GPS progression document). As these skills are so vital, children complete a SPaG blast activity to reinforce and revisit key concepts, key language and practise skills that they have been taught. This is so that previous learning is revisited and retained.

Handwriting

Handwriting is another important skill that we teach regularly in separate handwriting lessons. We use rhymes to teach letter formation in EYFS which is then reinforced as part of the Rocket Phonics scheme. In KS1 Nelson Handwriting is introduced. The scheme progressively maps out which letter formations and joins to teach at each stage and children complete handwriting booklets as part of handwriting lessons that are taught regularly. In KS2 handwriting lessons continue using the interactive resources to support the consolidation of letter formation, joins and fluency in transcription. We use the Nelson Primary font where possible for displays and examples and handwriting is reinforced explicitly across the curriculum with teacher modelling playing an important role. Children in Year 5 and 6 all use a pen for handwriting.

Writing across the Curriculum

Writing across all areas of the curriculum is very important. Children are given the opportunity to communicate geographically, historically etc. and children learn what this means in these lessons. Key writing skills are expected and children have access to the resources that they use in English lessons to support them in communicating their knowledge of the wider curriculum.

Learning Environments

Classrooms are language rich to support the writing process and writing across the curriculum. Some ways we achieve this are as follows:

- English working walls which show key words, sentences and examples
- A range of age appropriate dictionaries and thesaurus in classrooms
- Vocabulary displayed for subjects across the curriculum
- Sound mats and a range of word mats available to children
- Ellison Sentence Menus available in classrooms

Around the school we celebrate writing in different ways. In classrooms, we display writing at different stages of the writing process and have a whole school writing display that's shows the progression of skills throughout the school. We also have a writing club that encourages text innovation and creative writing as well as opportunities for children to write as break and lunch times. This helps to promote writing and raise the profile of how important it is.

Impact

Teachers regularly assess children in both a formative and summative way. Using Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies, teachers assess children's ability to communicate coherently, accurately and effectively depending on the purpose of the writing. They assess their use of GPS, and ability to successfully compose a piece of engaging writing. Moderation is a very important part of this and we moderate between class, between year groups, within the Societas Trust (with support of Local Authority expertise), and between other schools to ensure are judgements regarding progress and impact are accurate.

The measure of our curriculum is that children will be able to write for a wide-range of purposes and audiences clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style as required. They will apply their knowledge of age-appropriate GPS skills, different structures and different genres effectively to organise their writing well, using their own imagination and creativity in different ways. When they leave Ellison Primary Academy, children will have the ability to communicate their ideas in writing effectively across all areas of the curriculum.