



## Writing Policy

This Policy forms part of the English Policy and should be read in conjunction with that and the other specialist English Policies and the Alternative Communication Policy

The Programmes of Study for English (2000) state that "Teaching should ensure that work in speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated."

### Principles

1. Writing may be defined as the making of marks which have meaning invested in them. All pupils at Beacon Hill will be able to take part in this learning process. Mark making is a skill which can be developed across the curriculum.
2. Writing involves children exploring experiences in both a physical and cognitive way. Making a link between the physical and cognitive is a vital part of the child developing the ability to write effectively. Children can develop writing schemes.
3. There should be a whole school common consistent approach to handwriting. This involves standardisation of teaching and standardisation of teacher writing wherever children observe it (such as on display and on children's work and symbols printed on the computer). At school we have agreed to adopt the cursive letter style given in the Additional Literacy Support materials.
4. Writing is a functional activity and should be taught in this way. Writing should always be for a purpose as far as the child is concerned. Whatever is written should be read by someone and meaning demonstrably conveyed.
5. Children should observe teachers writing on a daily basis. The school should be a rich writing environment. This should include comment or a symbol on children's work.
6. As children progress developmentally, grammatically correct expression, accurate spelling and conventional punctuation become fundamental. Pupils should learn to organise their writing and to plan draft and revise.
7. ICT provides an essential access to writing. Pupils should be able to write beyond their actual physical means i.e. using word processing skills

### Aims of Writing

To develop the ability to communicate meaning through the choice of written words.

To develop pupils' understanding of why and how people write. To understand the value of writing as a means of communication (which involves remembering, communication, organising and developing ideas and information).

Writing should be a source of enjoyment and achievement.

To develop the ability to write each letter of the alphabet, to string letters together to make words to use simple words and short phrases to communicate meaning, to develop these skills through overwriting, copy writing, non-direct and independent writing.

To develop legibility and accuracy and during the process of development, incorporate grammatical structures and punctuation.

To write in simple forms for different purposes.

To write in response to a variety of stimuli, stories, poems, classroom experiences and personal experiences.

To develop and experience the physical activities which are a precursor to the development of writing.

### **Links to School Aims**

Beacon Hill School and Specialist College for Business and Enterprise is a community:

- *That has high expectations for continuous improvement in order to raise standards for pupils*

The skill of writing is an important one and every child needs to develop this ability if at all possible. The continual raising of standards, which this aim refers to, must also include standards in the teaching of writing. Raised standards in writing, through SMART target setting and individualised teaching, will improve pupil access to many areas, and so it is important to the whole quality of education at Beacon Hill School.

- *In which all partners include, involve and inform each other*

Beacon Hill School works closely with both parents and external agencies, including speech and language therapists and teachers for the visually/hearing impaired, for the benefit of the pupil. External agencies are involved, where appropriate in target setting and reviewing to ensure consistency between approaches.

- *That actively develops parental partnerships for the benefit of the pupils*

As with all work in school, parents can assist in the teaching of writing in many ways. Writing is a valued skill in our community and parents are very keen to help their children acquire this skill.

- *That positively promotes and encourages independence, confidence and self advocacy.*

The skill of writing is highly valued in the community and our older students are therefore very keen to develop this. Any achievement of this raises their self esteem, and also their ability to express their own thoughts and choices.

- *That values communication and provides the time and opportunity to make it effective*

Writing is recognised as an important method of communication within Beacon Hill School. Time is spent with pupils on an individual basis, as well as in group settings, to develop the skills in writing.

- *That extends inclusion within and beyond the school*

Writing is a skill valued both in school, and in mainstream settings. The ability to write enhances pupils' ability to mix in the community and inclusion placements, and facilitates access to outside opportunities.

- *That gives pupils the skills and opportunities to make informed choices*

Writing is a vital skill for all pupils to develop, particularly older pupils, in order that they are able to make choices, developing their own independence and self confidence.

- *That celebrate achievement for all*

The achievement of success in writing is valued in school and in the community. Success is celebrated in class, and in department assemblies.

- *That works in a creative and enterprising way to fulfil these aims*

Beacon Hill School recognises that children learn in different ways, and will respond to some methods of teaching better than others. Staff use a range of strategies including multisensory methods, in order to teach the skills involved in writing.

## **Guidelines**

### **Curriculum and Teaching**

- Pupils' access to writing will not be restricted solely on the basis of gender, race or ability.
- Through planning and teaching strategies, including the use of ICT, PECS and visual structure, provision will be made to ensure that children with ASD are given equal learning opportunities in this area.
- For pupils with ASD; visual structure, symbol/word timetables, PECS, communications devices are used in the teaching and learning of writing.

- Through planning and teaching strategies, including the use of ICT, sensory programmes and physical experiences, provision will be made to ensure that children with PMLD are given equal learning opportunities in this area.
- The Primary Framework for Literacy provides a detailed basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the Programmes of Study for Reading and Writing. There will be a daily literacy lesson.
- Experiences in the Foundation Stage in Communication, Language and Literacy will link to Key Stage 1 teaching of writing with appropriate planned transition.
- To develop the physical awareness associated with letter formation pupils will use the Handwriting Without Tears scheme. This will be progressed through the Key Stages with the use of streaming.
- We will provide age appropriate stimuli for writing whatever the pupils' technical writing ability.
- Forms of writing should include:- Diaries, Stories, Letters, Recording, Instructions, Lists, Captions, Notices, Plans and Poems.
- Writing will be closely linked to reading. At school reading may begin through symbol recognition so opportunities for writing should follow this, (e.g. through the use of ICT, Narrative to support story structure, or in support work of specific schemes such as Jolly Phonics or Letter Land). Stamping and cut and paste activities should be regarded as forms of writing as should PECS. When a child begins to establish a sight vocabulary of words in reading they should begin to attempt to write using letters.
- The range of readers for whom pupils write should include their teachers, their family, their peers and themselves. They should write from personal experience, to record classroom activities in response to a wide range of texts, and for their own purposes. Teachers should actively look to further this range. The topic provides one effective way of doing this, as do educational visits. Pupils should be taught a range of purposes for which people write, and when at the relevant stage of development experience writing in these forms.
- Teachers should on occasion help pupils to compose at greater length by writing for them, as a model (as in shared writing).
- The extension of pupil's language vocabulary and the development of their interest in words and meanings are parts of the programme of study. Learning of words with similar meanings and learning opposites are specifically mentioned. Pupils should be encouraged to play and experiment with language.
- ICT should be used to extend written work and make it functional e.g. sending faxes and emails.
- Secondary age pupils and those at Post 16 will use words/symbols to make choices, contribute to Annual Reviews and Careers sessions. Writing is, therefore, a key/life skill and will be used to aid these contributions.
- Parental involvement is welcomed but needs careful monitoring to ensure that the child does not receive conflicting advice from school and home.
- As stated above the teaching of writing should be in a standard form throughout the school. An objective should be that pupils can write each letter of the alphabet correctly.

- The "strands" of writing taken from the New Primary Framework for Literacy:  
*Strand 5 - Word recognition: decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling)*  
*Strand 6 - Word structure, spelling*  
*Strand 9 - Creating and shaping texts*  
*Strand 10 - Text structure and organisation*  
*Strand 11 - Sentence structure, punctuation*  
*Strand 12 - Presentation*
- For children at early stages of development scribble writing is an important stage of development. Children's scribble should be valued, displayed "read" and invested with meaning. The differentiation between print and pictures, drawing and writing can be made at this stage.
- Pre-writing activities should occur to support children's learning. This should include fine motor pencil grip and control exercises, specific practice related to Handwriting without Tears and prepositional work and adjectives (up, down, across, straight, long, fat etc to assist understanding of instructions for letter formation).
- The alphabetic nature of writing should be taught. Individual letter sounds should be taught and distinguished for the child. They should be able to discriminate between letters and words and name each letter and give the sound it represents. For younger pupils the Jolly Phonics Scheme can be used, for older pupils Alphabet Arc may be used.
- Pupils should learn to write their own names independently.

### **Assessment/Accreditation**

- Writing activities will be assessed and recorded regularly. They may form an important part of an individual's IEP.
- The percentage of time spent on writing will differ for all Key Stages but will reflect the importance of this area for all pupils at school.
- Students at KS4 and Post 16 may receive Accreditation in the areas of Literacy and Communication.
- Rates of learning will be variable but will be valued individually.
- Teacher assessment will form the basis of each pupil profile. Achievement in writing will be recorded in end of Key Stage Records of Achievement.
- Levels of attainment will be recorded for individual pupils using PIVATS through to NC Level 4.

### **Resources**

- Teachers should ensure that there is a range of appropriate writing materials to meet the needs of individual children - chunky pencils, grips etc. An Occupational Therapist can advise.
- Resources in school will assist continuity and individual progress.
- Resources for the teaching of writing will be distributed throughout school to support the principles and guidelines within this policy. These will include: Primary Framework for Literacy, Makaton symbols books, pre-writing sheets, teaching manuals, Narrative packs and resources, Handwriting without Tears resources and Alphabet Arcs.