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Taught Writing Policy

**Aims**

We aim to enable our pupils to write confidently and independently for a variety of purposes and audiences by building on children’s prior knowledge.

**Taught Writing**

A **whole school approach** to writing is used in order to ensure children are learning skills in a planned and progressive way which builds on their prior learning. Taught writing should be a collaboration between children and teachers.

* Teachers and children have to be clear about the **purpose and audience** when writing.
* **Learning intentions and success criteria** should be shared/co create with children at the start of each lesson. Each child should have the **LI and differentiated SC in their writing jotter**.
* The children are encouraged to write for a purpose in different genres. Children will explore a genre over a series of weeks, so that they can build skills, confidence and independence. This also allows teachers and children to assess improvement over time.
* There should be a weekly taught writing lesson in a **‘taught writing’ jotter.**
* All writing should be **dated** (a date stamp can be used in P1-3) and the learning intention and success criteria should be included with the writing. These will help children self and peer assess and will aid teachers when providing feedback.
* Teachers have to **model** and teach children how to self and peer assess.
* There should be opportunities for children to work in groups, partners and individually during the writing session.
* Opportunities for the children to share their writing with a wider audience should be sought.
* Opportunities are provided for children to familiarise themselves with a range of writing styles and genres. This is planned into blocks of time so children have adequate experience.
* We have a **Progression Planner** to ensure all **writing genres** are taught over a level. These are:
* Narrative
* Instructional
* Information/report
* Persuasive writing
* Recount
* Explanation
* Poetry

Children should have opportunities to write on a **daily basis.** This includes writing activities linked to reading and listening and talking. Examples would be:

* Read to write activities with initial sounds, phonemes and words
* Dictated sentences
* Short Burst Writing
* Note taking
* Writing in free writing jotters
* Active spelling
* Magpieing vocabulary
* Comprehension tasks
* Grammar
* Punctuation

**Talk for Writing**

At Gartconner, the skills of writing are taught through **Talk for Writing**.

A key feature of Talk for Writing is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through ‘**talking the text’** first.

Throughout the school we use Talk for Writing to help our children develop their vocabulary and writing. The children listen to stories and texts, **imitate** stories and texts, **innovate** on them and then **invent** their own.

**The Talk for Writing Approach**

The Talk for Writing approach enables children to imitate **orally** the language they need for a particular topic, before writing their **own version.** The key phases are:

1. **Baseline Assessment – The Cold Task**

* Each unit begins with an initial assessment of what the children can already do in the form of **‘a cold task’ usually carried out a week before unit begins.**
* The aim of the cold task is to see what children can do independently, without teacher support so the teacher can work out what to plan to teach the whole class.

1. **The Imitation Phase**

* The unit begins with a creative **‘hook’** which engages the pupils with a sense of enjoyment, audience and purpose.
* The teacher then introduces a **model text**, supported visually by a **story map** and **actions** to help the children recall the story and internalise the text. In this way the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down.
* Once the children can ‘talk the text’ they are in a position to read the text for vocabulary and comprehension purposes. This stage could include a range of reading-as-a-writer and writing-as-a reader activities, such as boxing up the text and co-constructing a toolkit. For younger learners this could involve using a story mountain to model story structure.

1. **The Innovation Phase**

* Once children are familiar with the model text, they then start to **create their own versions.** As a class and then individually children change the text map using post it notes and orally rehearse what they want to say prior to writing.
* Shared writing then takes place to help the children write their own versions by **“doing one together”** first. The children then create their own versions and the teacher assesses the work and plans next steps.

1. **The Independent Application Phase – The Hot Task**

* The final phase is when children repeat the initial task and apply independently what has been taught and practised over the unit.
* The final piece is known as **‘the** **hot** **task**’ and should clearly show progress made across the unit. At the end of the unit, the children’s work should be published or displayed as it is important to provide children with a purpose for their writing.

Classes will have a particular **plot** to focus on during each unit. This could be a:

* Warning tale
* Journey tale
* Wishing tale
* Defeat the monster tale
* Finding tale
* Character flaw

**Writer’s Toolkits**

A Writer's toolkit is a space where children can store their writing tools, in the form of **words or phrases** which can then be used to help them write successfully. These are often recorded on a large sheet of paper and displayed on the class washing line. A toolkit could contain:

* Sentence openers
* Vocabulary
* Structure
* Grammar
* Punctuation
* Endings

**Toolkits should be co-constructed with the children** from the children’s reading of the model and other texts.

Here are a list of **suggested toolkits** that are available for each primary stage:

**Fiction:**

* Characterisation toolkit
* Suspense toolkit
* Description toolkit
* Openings and endings toolkit
* Setting toolkit

**Non - Fiction:**

* Instructional toolkit
* Recount toolkit
* Information toolkit
* Explanation toolkit
* Persuasion toolkit
* Discussion toolkit

**Short Burst Writing**

* Short-burst writing is used as part of **warming-up a unit** within Talk for Writing to practise key areas such as character and setting description.
* It should be **short** (about one paragraph).
* The idea is that children should be **writing daily** and exploring and practising the language needed for their writing. Short burst writing might involve starting with an image, object or clip, followed by a brainstorm of ideas and then shared writing and independent writing.
* A short burst piece of writing could be drawn upon later when writing a narrative piece.

**Class Washing Lines**

* Washing lines are used in classes across the school to display what has been learned during a unit of writing. They act as a **reminder** and **resource** for children’s learning so when the children come to write they have models and words and phrases to support them.
* The teacher only displays what will help the children achieve and the display needs to be **legible.**

The line could contain:

* Class story map
* Model text
* Writing toolkits
* Story Mountains/ Boxed up Plans
* Useful vocabulary
* Shared writing

**Spine Novels**

* The aim of the reading spine is for every child to experience the pleasure and challenge of great literature. It gives the children exposure to more challenging books and writing from a variety of authors.
* Our school has a **‘reading spine’** set up for each class that includes core picture books, novels and poetry to be shared. These are drawn upon and referred to whilst writing is taught and are often paired up with the genre of writing, so that the children are constantly drawing on quality models that they will begin to know well.

**Magpie Jotters**

* During the innovation stage the children are encouraged to take ideas from their surroundings and note them down for when they come to write. Each child should have their own ‘**Magpie Jotter’** in class which they can use to collect interesting words, sentences, phrases or ideas which they may have heard or read.
* The children should be encouraged to continually take notes, jotting down words and phrases that might be used when they come to write. Independent writing should follow this.
* In infant classes a shared whole class magpie jotter might be used and written in by the teacher with the children’s ideas.

**Assessment**

Assessment is based on **how much and how well** the children have achieved their differentiated success criteria.

* At the start of each writing unit, pupils will complete a **‘cold piece’** to demonstrate their current knowledge of the genre.
* This is marked against the set success criteria using formative assessment, highlighting **strengths in green** and **areas for development in pink** to allow pupils to understand their next steps.
* Targets for the unit are also set from this piece of writing. At the end of the writing unit, pupils will complete a **‘hot piece’** to demonstrate skills gained. In the early stages of Primary 1, the assessment could focus on the oral retelling of a story using their story maps as visual aids.
* Children should receive timely oral and/or written feedback about their writing and offered next steps to help improve their writing.
* Children should assess their **own writing or a peers** using the agreed success criteria.
* Two stars and/or a wish are effective ways of teachers writing feedback. It is important to take time to allow children to review their feedback, so that they can talk about improvement in their writing and become adept at identifying their own next steps.
* Opportunities should be given to children to **self-edit.**