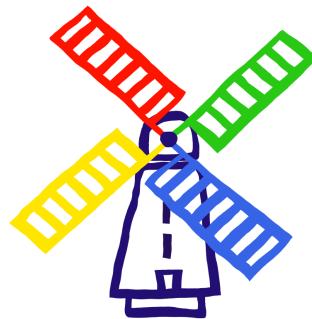


# Writing Policy

Unity  
Trust  
Courage  
Curiosity  
Respect  
Kindness



A community for learning. Raising expectations. Fulfilling high standards.

Policy Revised: **September 2024**  
Policy Review Date: **September 2025**  
Headteacher: **Mrs Gemma Hillier**



# Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

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**'One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.' (Malala Yousafzai)**

English is an integral part of our curriculum at Widmer End. We deliver a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum, teaching children to speak, read and write fluently and enabling them to communicate their ideas and emotions. We have an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and a habit of reading widely and often. We create a culture where children take pride in their writing, writing clearly, imaginatively and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts.

At Widmer End, our writing curriculum is planned sequentially, allowing children to build on prior skills and knowledge, which will prepare them for future success. As a school, we have written our curriculum to incorporate the following National Curriculum statements:

The aims of our curriculum are to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

### **Speaking and listening for writing**

Speaking and listening are skills children are expected to practise daily at Widmer End CC School. Teachers regularly engage the children in class discussions through carefully targeted questions across all subjects. All children are encouraged to participate and they are taught how to speak confidently, clearly and expressively when it is their turn. Children are expected to listen to their teachers and peers throughout the day so they can understand what is being taught; respond and engage with the views of others; develop their own arguments and allow their own minds to be challenged and changed.



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Drama is often used as a vehicle in English lessons and across the curriculum to support children's understanding of themes and concepts. We know it helps them to empathise with others and gives all children the confidence to speak in front of others by playing a character. In addition, drama gives children the chance to rehearse sentences before transferring them to the written form which leads to more effective pieces of writing. Speaking is also practised using tools on the iPads to record the children's voices in a range of tasks. In EYFS and KS1, we also use 'talking tins' and 'talking cards' to record our thoughts and answer questions.

### Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected in their writing. As children follow the Read Write Inc programme, they learn:

- to write each letter correctly alongside reading the letter and there is a specific 'Handwriting' activity as part of the Storybook lessons.
- to use their phonic knowledge to help them spell words.
- to practise spelling the words they read using the 'Fred Fingers' activity. This skill is then applied during literacy based activities. Phonically-plausible spellings are accepted.
- to compose their own sentences, rehearsing orally first. The 'Hold a sentence' activity in the Ditty and Storybook lessons teaches children to write a simple sentence using correct spelling and punctuation. Children will use a range of Red Words (irregular common words) during their writing compositions.
- before they write, children build up each sentence orally, either as a group or in partnerships. These sentences are structured using a series of questions to develop responses. Children are supported to use full sentences through taking feedback from partner discussion, then extending and expanding when teachers paraphrase their answers.

In addition to Read Write Inc, a wide variety of opportunities are provided for children to engage in writing activities. Amongst these are:

- Role-play (e.g. an office or restaurant)
- Labels
- Recipes
- Lists
- Making books
- Writing letters/cards
- Menus
- Instructions



Through engaging in these activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English. A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of fine motor control which is essential for good handwriting. These include playdough, cutting, threading and tracing. Within the Foundation Stage, both the indoor and outdoor environment include resources to support the children's mark making, drawing and writing. Staff involve themselves in the children's mark making by modelling the process and by helping to order the children's thoughts. Writing can take place at any point in the day and in any area of the EYFS setting.

### **Writing in Key Stage 1 and 2**

#### Reading into writing

Reading nurtures creativity, fuels curiosity and sparks imagination. Children are inspired by what they read so we ensure that children have read books covering a range of themes and authors by the time they leave us. Every term, children read a different whole class quality text with the intention of developing their fluency and comprehension skills, widening their vocabulary and developing their understanding of the structure and conventions of a range of text types. It may also become a stimulus for writing, taking away the time spent gathering ideas for writing when there is already a huge amount of information ready to be used in children's minds!

#### Links with other subjects

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities for writing to make cross-curricular links where relevant. Teachers plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through writing lessons to other areas of the curriculum ensuring the consistency and quality of writing remains the same.

#### The process of writing

Before writing, children at Widmer End are given exciting and interesting stimuli to help support their ideas and boost vocabulary ready for writing. These could include a colourful picture book, a video clip, a trip outside or a visiting author during World Book Week. Armed with creative ideas and information, children are taught to write for a range of purposes and audiences across the school. As well as writing different types of stories and poems, children are asked to produce non-fiction texts such as instructions, persuasion, discussion and recounts. Teachers know how important effective modelling is when teaching writing. They use their own ideas alongside carefully chosen examples from known authors to show children what effective writing looks like. Children explore key features of the chosen texts including what the purpose of the text is and who their audience (reader) might be. All writing is then planned beforehand to help children to structure their text correctly and make sure they have included everything.



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Next, using a wide range of vocabulary with the support of dictionaries and thesauri, children learn to replicate the text type, constructing quality sentences and manipulating grammar and vocabulary to add detail and interest for the reader. More able children are challenged with greater choice in the task set and are often encouraged to write by changing the main character's perspective or break away from the standard model provided.

Throughout this process, children are frequently asked to edit or proof-read their work, checking for missing or incorrect punctuation and spelling errors. We also value redrafting as another skill crucial to the writing process. Redrafting and editing is completed in purple pen and children are encouraged to share their writing with their peers to help them to identify successes and targets for improvement.

Becoming a competent writer means being able to change and adapt our writing to suit a specific purpose. Therefore, we believe that giving children opportunities to write across our curriculum is essential to give them time to practise and develop the skills they have learnt in English lessons. This might be writing an explanation text in Science or a report in a History lesson, for example.

### Grammar and punctuation

We believe that grammar and punctuation should be taught as part of the writing process. Teachers carefully choose specific grammar and punctuation objectives from the National Curriculum which tie in closely with the text type they are teaching. They then weave this learning into their English lessons. For example, teaching inverted commas would be done as the children are learning to write a piece of narrative containing dialogue. Short retrieval tasks are also set regularly to support the children's recall of specific grammatical terms and key vocabulary; for example, the recognition and understanding of word classes.

### Spelling

At Widmer End, we aim to:

- encourage children to become confident and competent spellers;
- teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage;
- help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learned.

Children in the EYFS and Year 1 are taught spellings through the Read Write Inc programme. Children in Year 2 to Year 6 are taught using Spelling Shed. Weekly spelling tests are given to children from Year 2 and spelling intervention groups are offered as necessary.

Through regular teaching of spelling, children are taught to:

- identify sounds in spoken words (phonological awareness);
- recognise the common spellings for each phoneme (phoneme/grapheme correspondence);



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- blend phonemes into words for reading;
- segment words into phonemes for spelling;
- acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words;
- investigate and learn spelling conventions and rules;
- attempt a spelling before checking with the adult;
- identify mis-spelt words in their own writing, keep individual lists and learn to spell these words;
- develop and use independent spelling strategies;
- use a variety of dictionaries and thesauri to support their work.

All children are taught strategies for learning spellings effectively e.g. LSCWC: Look, Say, Cover, Write, and Check. Throughout the school, teaching spelling patterns at the same time as practising handwriting skills provides useful reinforcement. Weaving spelling teaching into daily English lessons is our goal as it supports regular retrieval practice.

### Handwriting

Children are asked to join their letters using the Letterjoin font from Year 1. Teachers have access to a range of resources from this programme to teach the children the letter formations, including tracing sheets and handwriting paper. Children are supported with:

- Daily letter writing practice (Read Write Inc) in EYFS
- Daily handwriting in Years 1 and 2
- Three weekly sessions of handwriting practice in Years 3 and 4 in their English books. Children are taught handwriting explicitly during English lessons and linked to phonics and spelling where possible.
- Weekly handwriting practice in Years 5 and 6 in English books during English lessons where needed. Cursive script is reinforced alongside other types such as printing for labels and a fast script for notes. Experimentation with personalised styles is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility.
- Teachers from Year 1 model handwriting using neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwritten tasks including writing on the boards and marking in books.

### **Assessment of writing**

At our school, we use the assessment for learning cycle to determine how much progress children are making in writing over time.



Regular feedback takes place to inform weekly and daily planning of writing, enabling flexible grouping and targeting of children dependent on their progress in learning that day. Children also peer and self-assess their work to support their understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to work on next. For writing, our school uses Arbor to record assessments against the National Curriculum objectives. Teacher assessments are made by collecting evidence of children achieving objectives through looking at work in books, pupil voice, reflecting on class discussions and considering the data used from GAPS termly Rising Stars tests. In Year 2 and Year 6, teachers use the Teacher Assessment Framework for writing to assess the children's attainment. Teachers in Years 1, 3, 4 & 5 are also given regular training to consider the TAF and how their work and planning contribute and build towards the children achieving this standard by Year 6. All teachers understand the hierarchy of statements and that children recognising the purpose and audience of their writing is essential; this should be considered first when assessing writing rather than the technical skills, which simply contribute to the overall effectiveness of the piece of writing. Teachers moderate writing termly within school but also with other local schools to ensure judgements are robust.

In the Early Years, ongoing assessment is made through observations of mark-making in continuous provision and children's 'Wow books'. Summative assessment is completed termly against the Early Learning Goals.

### **Inclusion**

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They adapt the planning of writing to match all groups, to include more able pupils; pupils with low prior attainment; pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds; pupils with SEND; and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Examples of how teachers adapt could be in the form of scaffolds; for example cloze paragraphs or more detailed success criteria and targeted questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers may stretch and challenge able writers by giving children choice or providing texts with a wider range of sophisticated vocabulary.

### **Equal opportunities**

At Widmer End, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all children, staff, parents and carers. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. A wide range of core texts have been selected to reflect a wide range of cultures as well as ensuring there is an equal number of female/male main characters. Children are given opportunities to write about a range of topics covering different cultures and backgrounds.



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### **Cultural capital**

At Widmer End, we take every opportunity possible to enhance the cultural capital of our children and equip them with the knowledge and experiences needed for society. One way in which we promote cultural capital via writing is by providing and exposing our children to a range of texts, from different genres, that have been written by authors from a wide range of backgrounds. Using these ensures they have an understanding of our world and how anyone can be an author, regardless of background, culture, religion or ability.

### **Enrichment opportunities**

Enrichment activities for English are planned throughout the year and offer a range of reading and writing related experiences for our children e.g. National Poetry Day, World Nursery Rhyme Week, World Book Day, Non-fiction November, Summer Reading Challenges, Extreme Reading Challenge, National Storytelling Week and Multicultural Children's Book Day.

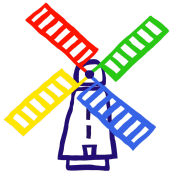
Children are also offered places on writing challenge days at local schools; the most recent one being run by the company 'Aim High'. In addition, the CAP group of schools regularly meet to offer children the chance to work with children from other schools on a special Writers' Day, held at the local secondary school. Children experience a fun and immersive event (such as a crime scene) and then work with other children to plan, draft and publish a non-fiction text.

Children's writing is celebrated in school through the use of displays; highlighting special effort in assemblies or in our weekly newsletter; and sharing examples of effective writing and extra effort with other colleagues such as the Senior Leadership team. Children's writing is also celebrated during weekly Biscuit Bingo pupil voice sessions with the headteacher.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

At Widmer End, writing progress is monitored by all staff at different levels to identify any pockets of underachievement and ensure consistency of practice across the whole school. Our Senior Leadership Team analyses summative assessment data for writing for KS1 and KS2 every half-term. Key marginal pupils are identified and planned for using Quality First Teaching and keep-up interventions if necessary. All data is reported to governors.





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The Writing coordinator ensures that teachers are planning writing for their classes using the progression documents to enable children to work at the correct standard for their age. The co-ordinator also ensures that teachers have the correct resources to be able to teach writing effectively. In addition, they are skilled at delivering regular training to meet the needs of individuals and groups of staff. Staff and pupil surveys are undertaken throughout the year to gather feedback and gain a better understanding of others' views. All work undertaken is evidenced in the action plan written to drive improvement in pupil outcomes for writing by the end of Key Stage 2.