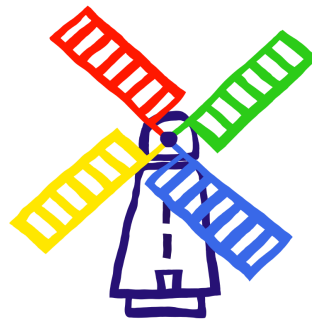


Writing Policy

Unity
Trust
Courage
Curiosity
Respect
Kindness



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

Policy Revised: **September 2026**
Policy Review Date: **September 2027**
Headteacher: **Mrs Gemma Hillier**



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Writing Policy

'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

At Widmer End, we also recognise that writing:

- Develops pupils' confidence and self-expression
- Builds resilience through the process of drafting, editing and improving
- Prepares pupils for life beyond school by equipping them with essential communication skills
- Supports pupils' mental health by providing opportunities for creative expression and reflection
- Develops pupils' understanding of diverse perspectives through exposure to texts from different cultures and backgrounds



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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.

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

The Reception year plays a vital role in building the foundations for writing. These foundations support children throughout primary school and prepare them for secondary education.

To ensure children get the best start in writing, we focus on building strong foundations in:

- Transcription (handwriting and spelling)
- Oral composition

As well as the main phonics programme, we also use the RWI writing and handwriting scheme in the Early Years to ensure children benefit from a complete literacy programme where core elements are 'interconnected and mutually supportive'.

Handwriting instruction

Handwriting instruction begins at the start of reception, in addition to phonics teaching. We provide:

- Daily, explicit handwriting lessons taught by trained teachers using the new RWI handwriting programme
- Teaching in small steps with lots of opportunity for practice - different stages taught when children are ready
- Cumulative teaching that builds on what pupils have learned previously - children learn correct letter formation using the exact same picture mnemonics they have already learned in their Speed Sounds lessons. For instance, when learning the sound 's', they use the same snake imagery to write it
- 'Ready to write' routines including correct pencil grip (tripod grip), comfortable sitting position, and paper positioning



- Regular practice of letter formation, focusing on where to start each letter, the direction of formation, its shape, position and spacing

In the first few weeks of reception, handwriting lessons include:

- Learning the movements needed to form letters (practising in the air, on surfaces)
- Learning how to hold and control a pencil
- Developing correct writing posture
- Understanding directional words such as 'up', 'down', 'round' and 'back'

Supporting physical development

Alongside explicit handwriting instruction, we provide, both inside and outside of the classroom:

- Activities to develop fine and gross motor skills (threading, playdough, cutting, tweezers, water play)
- Opportunities to develop body strength, co-ordination, core strength, stability and spatial awareness
- Intentional play opportunities

Oral composition

While children are developing their ability to form letters and spell, the majority of composition is oral. Children are taught to:

- Compose simple sentences orally
- Say out loud what they want to write
- Prepare sentences before writing them down

This technique is seen when children complete 'Hold a sentence' in their RWI writing sessions. Each 'Write About' session is tailored to their phonics level.

Dictation

Dictation is used regularly to help children practise transcription . This includes:

- Writing individual letters
- Writing single words
- Writing sentences after saying them

Dictation is particularly helpful for less confident writers as it removes the additional demand of thinking of their own words to write down. 'Fred fingers' from the RWI scheme are used to support children to write individual letters and sounds in order to spell a whole word.

What we do NOT expect in Reception

Children are not expected to produce extended pieces of writing. Instead, they:

- Practise handwriting and spelling
- Write dictated sentences



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- Develop oral composition skills
- Focus on the quality of their writing (letter formation and spelling), not the length

Opportunities for writing

Writing can take place at any point in the day and in any area of the EYFS setting. In addition to the Read Write Inc. writing sessions, 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.

Meeting the Early Learning Goal for Writing

By the end of Reception, children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others

Children do not need to independently compose sentences (dictated sentences can be assessed) and sentences can be simple rather than extended. Not all words need to be correctly spelt, and sentences do not need to contain punctuation.

Transition to Year 1

We systematically pass on information about children's knowledge gaps to Year 1 staff as part of transition, and plans are put in place to support all children who do not meet the expected level of development in Writing to access and meet the expectations of the Year 1 curriculum.



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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.

Reducing cognitive load

We understand that writing places significant demands on pupils' working memory. Beginner writers must think consciously about everything: holding the pen correctly, forming letters legibly, combining them accurately into words, before even expressing ideas effectively.

To manage cognitive load, we:

- Ensure pupils master transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) as early as possible, so these become automatic
- Use sequenced teaching to give pupils the best chance of mastering written language
- Provide scaffolds and models to support composition
- Allow sufficient time for quality writing rather than rushing pupils to produce large amounts of lower-quality text
- Encourage oral composition before writing to reduce cognitive demand
- Write about topics pupils are already familiar with ("write about what you know")

The process of writing

At Widmer End, we recognise that proficient writing requires mastery of two key components:

1. Transcription (handwriting and spelling) - the physical skills needed to transfer thoughts into symbols on the page
2. Composition (vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and text generation) - articulating and structuring ideas



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Both elements are essential. Without fluent and accurate transcription, composition will always be constrained, regardless of how sophisticated a pupil's ideas are. Our curriculum is designed to develop both components systematically from EYFS onwards. This understanding underpins our teaching approach: we prioritise transcription skills early (especially in EYFS and KS1) to free up pupils' working memory for composition as they progress through the school.

Pupils do not need to apply every one of the following steps for all types of writing, and they often move back and forth between steps. In Key Stage 1, the writing process is often used at sentence level and may be completed orally. In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to understand that the process is not linear, with phases being returned to as part of composition.

Step 1 - Immersion and planning stage

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 will 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.

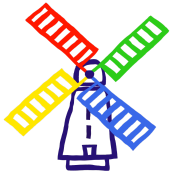
Step 2 - Drafting

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. Accurate spelling, punctuation and handwriting are important but not the main focus at this stage.

Step 3 - Re-drafting (or revising)

Children are asked to improve their writing to meet the goals of audience and purpose (e.g., adding details, combining sentences for effect) Redrafting is completed in purple pen or pencil and children are encouraged to share their writing with their peers to help them to identify successes and targets for improvement.

Step 4 - Editing



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Children identify and correct errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling at this stage, using purple pen or pencil.

Step 5 - Publishing (or sharing)

Children understand that their writing will be read or heard; therefore for some pieces, they will be given the chance to publish or perform their writing for an audience.

Teaching Sentence Construction

We recognise that the best way to teach pupils to write is by teaching them to master sentences first. All writing is ultimately made up of sentences, and only once the concept of a sentence is understood will paragraphs and longer pieces of writing make sense.

In the early stages of learning to write (EYFS, Year 1, Year 2), sentence-level composition is practised orally.

Pupils:

- Use visual prompts (images, photographs) and sentence stems to organise their spoken language into structures suitable for written language
- Compose sentences orally before writing them down
- Understand that a sentence consists of a subject (someone or something) and a verb (action, occurrence or state of being)

Sentence structure activities

Pupils are given ample opportunities to practise basic sentence construction skills before being expected to produce extended writing. Activities include:

- Combining sentence fragments to create complete sentences
- Combining two or more single-clause sentences to make one grammatically accurate sentence (sentence combining)
- Remedying inaccurate sentence structure
- Extending single-clause sentences using conjunctions
- Using pictures and animations to reduce cognitive load
- Adding information using adverbials
- Writing the four different sentence types (statements, questions, commands, exclamations)

Once pupils have a good understanding of how to write a sentence, paragraphs can be composed with much greater ease.

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.



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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:

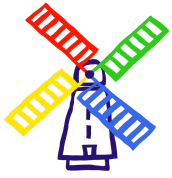
- encourage children to become confident and competent spellers;
- teach children spelling strategies relevant to their developmental stage in a regular and consistent way;
- help children to understand that there are spelling patterns and rules which can be learned.
- Teach children in small steps with lots of opportunity to practice

Children in the EYFS and Year 1 are taught spellings through the Read Write Inc phonics 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);
- blend phonemes into words for reading;
- segment words into phonemes for spelling;
- acquire a knowledge of high frequency 'tricky' words (or 'red' words in RWI phonics); these are taught as 'Words of the Week' and are tested using dictation;
- Write dictated sentences containing words that have already been practised;
- Write dictated sentences to practise spelling patterns and rules;
- 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;
- explore the orthography, morphology and etymology of words;
- use morpheme matrices to help pupils understand and learn how to combine prefixes, roots and suffixes, particularly in Key Stage 2;
- 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, pyramid spellings, using colours for tricky parts. 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.



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Assessment of spelling

Teachers mark spelling mistakes in books but only pick out important ones to correct. Children have a spelling test once a week and results are carefully tracked by classteachers, who adjust planning according to common mistakes in spelling patterns. Children also complete the HAST spelling test twice a year to track their overall spelling progress and pupils can be targeted with a small group provision if they need further support and practice time.

Handwriting

(See also our main handwriting policy and the EYFS summary above for more detail)

The importance of handwriting in developing pupils' writing cannot be overstated. Fluent handwriting is a significant predictor of positive writing outcomes. A lack of fluency can:

- Hinder composition (cognitive demands of handwriting divert attention from planning, composing and revising)
- Reduce motivation
- Prevent others from understanding what has been written

Our key objective is for pupils to achieve automaticity in handwriting.

Pupils are taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from Reception.

Handwriting is:

- Taught explicitly and regularly across the school to all pupils using the correct writing position, paper position and pencil grip.
- Additional to any handwriting that forms part of teaching phonics
- Daily in EYFS, Year 1 and 2, until pupils can write legibly and easily; then 3 x per week in LKS2 and once weekly in UKS2
- Taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice
- Cumulative: teachers build on what pupils have learned previously
- Consolidated before teaching moves on, so pupils do not practise letters incorrectly
- Demonstrated by all teachers in school and correct formation modelled on main whiteboards and when marking books (using RWI letter formation)
- Resourced higher up the school using the Letterjoin package

Progression in handwriting

In Reception and Year 1, pupils:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place



- Form capital letters and digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (letters formed in similar ways)

In Year 2, pupils:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters
- Understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters

Joined handwriting is not taught until pupils can form unjoined letters (print forms) correctly and consistently.

In Key Stage 2:

- The focus is on increasing legibility, consistency and quality, with the aim of increasing fluency and speed
- Once pupils are fluent writers, teachers make expectations clear about the nature of handwriting appropriate for a particular task (e.g., quick notes vs. final handwritten version)

Left-handed pupils

Left-handed pupils receive specific demonstration and adjustments, including:

- Space to write
- Sitting to the left of right-handed pupils
- Paper slanted to the right
- Softer pencils
- Gripping the pencil at a slightly higher point

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.

Feedback

Regular feedback takes place to inform weekly and daily planning of writing. Flexible groupings are set daily and specific children are targeted depending on their progress in learning that day. Live marking and oral feedback is used regularly during drafting and revising and MOTs (Moving On Tasks) are set once a week to give children a personal target to work on in the next lesson linked to the success criteria - these are specific to what the developmental area is and are given with praise to encourage and motivate the learner.

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.



Formative and summative assessment

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 and we aim for all children to get the best start in writing from the very beginning of their journey with us. We quickly identify those children who need adaptations in order to succeed in their writing through regular formative assessment and observations.

Teachers 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. Pupils who struggle with handwriting are identified early and:

- Receive individual support during handwriting lessons
- Have access to appropriate resources and equipment
- Are observed as they write so teachers can provide feedback and prevent incorrect letter formation

Teachers seek advice from the SENCO and other specialists when adaptations or further support are required.

Equal opportunities



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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.

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.

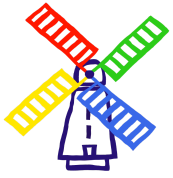
Enrichment opportunities

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



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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.

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.