

Writing at James Peacock Infant and Nursery School.

Intent

It is our intent at James Peacock to provide pupils with a high-quality education in English that will teach pupils to speak, read and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others effectively. We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge-base in Literacy, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. We recognise that writing is a key life skill that is crucial to a high quality education and lays the foundations for lifelong learning.

We believe it is vital to instil in the children a firm perception of themselves as a 'writer' early on. We want our children to develop into confident, able writers who find pleasure in the writing process

- View themselves as real and purposeful writers
- Develop the gross and fine motor skills needed to use writing tools and equipment successfully
- Be able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Consider writing to be an interesting, creative and enjoyable process

- Know how to organise, plan and monitor their oral and written compositions via scaffolds which are often derived from model texts.
- Know how to draft, edit and revise their writing
- Develop a progressive understanding of punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting
- Reduce their reliance on models, scaffolds and structured support until they are capable of completing a writing task independently
- Develop increasing fluency in their transcription skills so that their focus can gradually shift to composition.

Implementation

Through our immersive curriculum, children at James Peacock experience writing woven throughout their topics and experiences. This engages children through giving writing a purpose and providing a wide-range of communication opportunities.

We follow an **approach** which sees writing as a **process**

We tailor our curriculum to the needs of the children, cohort and their interests and consider how we will engage our learners and scaffold their learning.

Writing at James Peacock follows this approach we intend for pupils to plan, revise and evaluate their writing at all phases of their education. This may initially be more oral based in EYFS, eg. Spotting a missing finger space and then become a more recorded approach as they move through Year 1 and Year 2 where children write and then have the opportunity to edit their original work to improve it, both with the support of the teacher and with growing independence.

Talk is at the core of all we do in writing as we value the use of **talk for learning** strategies to help children rehearse, place in context and develop their ideas.

If you were to walk into an English lesson at James Peacock you would see:

- A high-quality text being used as a stimulus for learning.
- Lessons based around encouraging discussions, role-play, debating and developing vocabulary.
- Children being given opportunities to plan, draft, edit and publish their writing.
- Purposeful writing opportunities which excite children and motivate them to write.

Progression across school

In Nursery, children are encouraged to mark make and give meanings to the marks they make. Staff ensure that children are given plenty of exciting and engaging opportunities to mark make independently such as in salt, glitter, paint and chalk.

Over the year in Reception, children are taught how to form letters and how to use their phonic knowledge to write simple words. Once children are ready, they are then taught how to orally compose and write a simple sentence. There is a focus on using finger spaces between words so both the child and adults can read their writing.

Once children enter Year 1, the expectations for writing increase as children are expected to finish the year writing correctly demarcated sentences using capital letters and full stops. They are also taught to extend their sentences using conjunctions e.g. 'and' and 'because'.

When children begin Year 2 with this secure knowledge, they are then able to build on this and learn how to use more advanced conjunctions e.g. 'but', 'if' and 'when'. They are also taught how to use different types of sentences e.g. statements, commands, exclamations and questions.

British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Learning in English

British Values: During English lessons, children are encouraged to show tolerance by being given opportunities to speak and listen to other people's opinions. They develop their mutual respect through the use of talk partners during English lessons. Many books we use as a stimulus are diverse and have themes covering tolerance, mutual respect and democracy.

Social: During whole class reading sessions, children are provided with opportunities to socialise with other pupils. They are encouraged to demonstrate their own viewpoints and appreciate others'.

Moral: High quality texts are chosen which allow children the opportunity to investigate and offer reasoned views about various moral issues. They also have the opportunity to partake in debates where they can challenge and appreciate the viewpoints of others.

Spiritual: A text-centred curriculum enables children to develop a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about the world around them. They are given opportunities to develop their understanding for different people's faiths, feeling and virtues.

Cultural: Children are able to develop, through texts, an understanding of different cultures and beliefs. They are taught to accept, respect and celebrate differences. They are taught that there can be many ideas about one subject and that we all appreciate ideas offered in a discussion.

The writing approach at James Peacock from Reception to Year 2.

Engage-rewrite and vocabulary collection.

Teachers provide children with a **'hook'** The hook can be anything the children would be excited and motivated to write about. Their ideas and interests are very much considered when devising the 'hook'. This could be an experience, video clip or visitor.

The **'excellence model'** is introduced by the teacher to exemplify the finished piece that the children are aiming to produce.

The children are guided to identifying the purpose and audience. This might include the use of drama with opportunities for practise and performance.

Talk for learning strategies are used to contextualise the vocabulary.
(see Appendix)

Children take part in short bursts of writing which will build the children's confidence to use the vocabulary precisely in their writing. These sentences are orally practiced and developed and word choice is considered based on audience and purpose.

Expose – to the key features

The teacher demonstrates reading the 'excellence' model as a writer. They show how to scour the model for key features including purpose and specific vocabulary, figurative language, punctuation, and grammatical devices. The effect of these features on the reader is consistently explored. The teacher and children work together to **co-create** the success criteria which will be displayed on the working wall.

Teachers talk about the purpose of the features.

Practice Skills –model and scaffold

To develop resilience, the teacher chunks the **drafting process** into manageable sections with each part building towards the final piece.

As they write, the teacher models their thought processes and choices by articulating them aloud.

Choices are explained and justified in relation to the desired effect upon the reader. They model how to include aspects of the success criteria to develop a first draft.

As the children begin their drafts, the teacher provides on the spot feedback relating to the SC.

After each chunk, the teacher models explicitly how to make edits and revisions.

The focus at this stage is very much about recording ideas in a way that supports the sequencing of the piece. Where appropriate books are split into a thinking half and writing half (top and bottom) or graphic organisers are used to show the planning draft stage.

Revise

Having produced their first draft, children are shown examples that highlight lots of revisions and edits; children are encouraged to understand writing as a process.

Teachers exemplify what a 'strong' model is and compare to a 'weak' model. This supports discussion about the components of the stronger model and how they could be included in the children's own work.

Teachers then model revising the 'weaker' piece before children apply similar strategies to their own writing.

Whilst undertaking this, the children are provided with a selection of ideas which they can choose from to revise their piece. They are also asked to return to the ideas and word banks generated in the prewriting phase and to integrate them where appropriate.

Write

With lots of ideas and new skills, children independently write their own version.

Where appropriate a graduated approach to scaffolding is provided teachers make it obvious where and how support has been given.

Edit and feedback

Peer marking and sharing of work is used to improve ideas.

Drama is also used to add detail to ideas and suggestions for improvement. (Concentric circles is a great tool here)

Having completed the writing, children are encouraged to share their work with the audience identified at the beginning of the process.

This may include presenting it on an online platform or taking a photocopy home to share with family. The opportunities to share the final pieces of work are taken wherever possible

as children develop as writers and look to celebrate their achievements in every piece of work.

Environment expectations

Throughout the process the **working wall** is developed to aid each stage. Teachers use the wall as a scaffold to promote independence. This working wall must have the following on display so that children can refer to them at any time.

- The excellence model
- Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary.
- The co-constructed success criteria.
- Story maps.
- Class shared/modelled write.

The emergent writing approach in Nursery at James Peacock.

At James Peacock, we recognise the importance of emergent writing. We provide lots of meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the written word and to support them to understand that symbols carry meaning. Although we do not formally teach children to 'write', there are plenty of skills and activities that are promoted in Nursery to support later writing skills. Teachers take in to account the expectations of the Development Matters and the guidance of Birth to Five Matters documents, but also make reference to the characteristics of effective teaching and learning as an **approach** for early writing.

Writing is not just about the technical aspects of the process. As a writer, you must also engage with the act of writing, be motivated to communicate your ideas, and think about what those ideas might be and how to share them.

All **three** of these are key areas of focus within the **characteristics of effective teaching and learning**.

Playing and exploring (engagement)

In order to support **engagement**, it's important to model being a writer for our children. We show them how to use writing as a form of communication and self-expression.

Teachers for example, join in with play in a role-play shop, modelling how and why you might write a shopping list and encouraging the children to write their own. Talk about why you might need a list, modelling your thought processes as you do this – "I've got so many things I need to buy in this shop, I'd better make a list!"

To prompt children's motivation to write, adults should start with the child's interests and find relevant opportunities in children's self-initiated play to model and encourage writing

for a purpose, such as creating a sign for a den to tell baddies to 'keep out' or writing invitations to a tea party.

Active learning (motivation)

Teachers help children to understand why they might want to use writing.

Teachers motivate children to make plausible attempts to behave like a writer, and to draw freely making marks that have meaning. We provide a wide range of opportunities, such as, wet sand, corn flour, foam, chunky markers, clipboards, chalks for paving stones, and notepads.

Teachers consider how they can motivate the children's mark-making and writing outdoors as well as indoors. We don't see writing outside as simply writing inside, transposed to your outdoor area. We think about the reasons why we might genuinely want or need to make marks outside – using outdoor chalks to create a 'welcome mat' at the entrance to your setting, or marking out an area in which to play hopscotch.

Creating and thinking critically (thinking)

We model writing for the children and talk about what is going on in our mind as we write, using the language of thinking and learning. This helps to promote the important skill of metacognition – the act of thinking about and becoming aware of our own thought processes. This helps the children understand the thinking processes that happen when a writer works.

Teachers talk about their choice of vocabulary and its impact on an audience – "I was wondering which word might help us persuade the wolf not to eat the three little pigs?"

Communication and language

Communication and language sits at the heart of writing – everything we do around building language and supporting communication feeds into the writing that children do, even at the very earliest stages of their mark-making.

We play around with language, using alliteration, nursery rhymes, and listening activities to build the phonological awareness that is so vital as a basis for learning phonics.

The more vocabulary children have, the better placed they will be to become fluent writers. In Nursery we look for every opportunity to introduce them to new words when they're ready for them, by modelling new ways of describing the world in our interactions.

Physical development

The development of fine and gross motor skills is critical for the act of writing this will develop core strength, dexterity, and eye-to-hand coordination.

It is tempting to view writing as something that is done in a static way, seated at a desk. However, it is often more useful for physical development to create opportunities for making marks that are not desk-based at all.

For instance, sticking paper on the underside of a desk so that the children can mark upside-down, hidden in a den, or using easels and flipcharts so that the children can mark standing up are just a few creative ways to develop shoulder, arm and wrist strength.

To support transcription, we give children opportunities to develop finger strength. In the early stages children need lots of fun, play activities. We provide lots of activities to work at a large scale using brushes on walls outside, before they move on to using chunky crayons or pencils. To develop finger strength in preparation for writing we show them activities like manipulating dough, completing puzzles or threading blocks onto a rope. We plan small muscle coordination for hands and fingers, through things like using scissors, learning to thread, eating with cutlery, using small painting brushes or drawing pencils and crayons.

Generally, 3 to 4 year olds start behaving like writers, making wavy lines and distinct separate marks. If children show an interest and want to write, it is crucial that they should develop hand and finger strength to hold a chunky crayon or pencil comfortably and with control. Eventually they may be able to make attempts to write some very familiar letters, for example from their name.

Personal, social and emotional development

Mark-making and writing offer a wonderful way of sharing how we feel, and they also require children to think about alternative perspectives.

Shared writing and storytelling are lovely ways to build empathy and to support even the very youngest children in sharing their thoughts and feelings. Remember that creating stories is not just about writing them down.

Stories play a crucial role in the development of thinking and writing, because they help children internalise the underlying rules and structures. Through listening to and sharing stories, children pick up on the patterns of story language – “Once upon a time ...”, “And they lived happily ever after ...”, “He huffed and he puffed”.

Pie Corbett’s ‘Talk for Writing’ approach offers a lovely way to model the creative process when exploring stories. The approach involves mapping stories by using diagrams and pictures, retelling stories together as a group, and then changing and innovating aspects of the original story to develop it.

Feedback

We encourage children to give meaning to their mark making and talk about their emergent writing some work alongside pupil voice is added to our floor books.

We share children’s early mark-making attempts with parents and carers builds children’s confidence and self-esteem. It also allows children to view writing as a process which has a purpose and an audience.

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