



The Northaw Writing Framework

Learning to write is one of the hardest challenges pupils face at school but it is vitally important: learning to speak, read and write well are crucial for children and young people's success in education, life and work. Pupils who find it difficult to express their ideas in writing are likely to struggle across the curriculum, not just in English. This framework establishes the principles we aim to follow in writing at Northaw.

Writing in reception

- Leaders make sure that every child is supported to reach the expected level of development in the early learning goal for Writing by the end of the reception year.
- Plans are put in place to support all children who do not meet the expected level of development in Writing by the end of reception to access and meet the expectations of the year 1 curriculum.
- A clearly defined curriculum extends children's language and vocabulary in each of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning.
- Explicit handwriting instruction, in addition to phonics, begins early in reception for all children.
- Children are taught transcription skills and practise them. They should practise what they have been taught through dictation.
- Teachers focus on developing the quality of children's writing (letter formation and spelling) and not the length. Children are not expected to write extended pieces.
- Children are taught to practise oral composition. They compose sentences orally and say out loud what they want to write.
- Children are supported to hold their pencil comfortably for writing through a range of activities that develop fine and gross motor skills and strength, in addition to handwriting instruction and practice.
- Teachers systematically pass on information about children's knowledge gaps to year 1 staff as part of transition.

Handwriting

- Handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school to all pupils. This begins early in reception and is in addition to writing in phonics lessons.
- Pupils across the school are taught consistent routines for handwriting that support a comfortable writing position and enable them to form letters legibly and to develop fluency. Routines consider posture, paper positioning and pencil hold (including for left-handed pupils).
- All adults who work with pupils expect consistently high standards of handwriting and provide good models of handwriting that align with the school's agreed style, across all areas of the curriculum.
- Handwriting instruction focuses on letter formation, size, orientation, spacing and consistency.
- Teachers make sure all pupils in every year group regularly practise handwriting to develop physical skill and control, and maintain fluency and legibility.
- Teachers teach pupils how to hold the pencil using the tripod grip, and support and encourage them to use it when they write.
- Pupils who need support have access to appropriate resources and equipment to enable them to make progress in handwriting in line with their peers.
- Teachers routinely model handwriting in the writing lesson to enable pupils to see how letters are formed.
- Teachers seek advice and work with the SENCO and other adults to support pupils needing adaptations or further support.
- A consistent, school-wide approach to handwriting that follows a clearly sequenced progression and supports the gradual acquisition of skills is embedded across every year group. Once print handwriting is mastered, handwriting instruction encourages speed, legibility and consistency.
- Teachers begin teaching letter formation at the start of reception for all pupils.
- Joined handwriting is not taught until pupils have mastered print handwriting.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress in handwriting and take action to support those who are not progressing in line with their peers.
- Pupils who struggle with handwriting and/or are at risk of falling behind are identified early on and are taught and practise the knowledge they are missing. Teachers focus on these pupils during the handwriting lesson and provide individual support.

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- Teachers focus on the pupils who need the most support as they practise handwriting during the handwriting lesson. They observe them as they write and provide feedback and support, preventing them from practising letter formation incorrectly.

Spelling

- A school-wide systematic approach to spelling that acknowledges and includes phonics, orthography and morphology is taught in all year groups.
- A clearly defined curriculum ensures that spelling instruction begins in reception and progresses throughout the school.
- Direct spelling instruction takes place regularly.
- For pupils learning systematic synthetic phonics, instruction includes regular spelling practice.
- Pupils are taught how to apply their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences to spell using dictation.
- Pupils are given tasks that allow them to practise and apply what they have been taught.
- Spelling is monitored consistently in all year groups. Teachers assess whether pupils are on track to spell all words on the national curriculum word lists correctly.
- Effective procedures identify pupils who struggle with spelling.
- When editing written work, feedback to pupils on incorrect spelling relates to spelling patterns, morphology and etymology.

Composition

- There is an understanding across the school that, for most pupils, composition begins orally and that talk is valuable through the whole writing process.
- Teaching about sentences is at the heart of teaching composition. There is an understanding that the best way to teach pupils to write is by teaching them to master sentences first.
- Sentence structure activities constitute a part of writing lessons.
- Teachers ensure pupils are taught to apply their grammatical knowledge to build sentences.
- All staff understand that the writing process encompasses planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing, and that these steps are relevant for composing sentences as well as longer texts.
- All staff understand that the writing process can be used with pupils of all ages, but the degree to which a pupil engages with each phase will vary, depending on the nature of the task.
- The school's approach to the teaching of writing affords pupils sufficient time for planning, writing and reviewing their work and emphasises quality over quantity.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing strategies through modelled and shared writing.
- All staff are aware that the cognitive demands of handwriting and spelling can divert attention away from other elements of writing.
- Rich and expressive spoken language is used and shared in classrooms and across the school.
- Vocabulary is built through robust, purposeful, explicit instruction.
- When transcription skills are not sufficiently automatic, composition may be practised orally.
- Teachers make sure pupils always have sufficient content knowledge of a subject before writing about it.
- Planning models, that are consistent across the school, are used to support pupils to structure whole texts and paragraphs.
- Model texts are used to develop pupils' awareness of written structures and authorial techniques.
- Feedback from teachers is regular, usually oral, specific, practical, actionable and encouraging. Pupils are able to respond close to the point of feedback and improve their written work.
- There is a whole-school approach to sharing pupils' work, creating an environment where writing is valued.

Keeping up from the start

- Writing teaching is of the highest quality to give all pupils the best opportunity to achieve.
- Teachers use assessment to make sure writing teaching is sequenced to match pupils' existing knowledge.
- A well-planned writing curriculum ensures pupils are taught and have sufficient opportunity to practise and apply the foundational writing skills of handwriting, spelling and sentence building.
- Pupils who find writing difficult and are at risk of falling behind in any aspect of transcription or composition are identified quickly.

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- Pupils who find writing difficult receive the teaching and practice they need to become fluent with transcription.
- The progress of each pupil is monitored and sufficient support accelerates progress, including for new arrivals and pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- Adults value pupils' spoken composition and support all pupils to compose orally, including and especially when transcription is more challenging for the pupil.

Pupils who need further support

- Teachers use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to help build an ongoing understanding of pupils' needs and to provide individualised support that accelerates their progress.
- Effective teaching supports pupils to catch up rapidly.
- Each pupil receiving extra support is profiled to identify any SEND (if not already identified); any speech, communication and language needs; their attendance; time at the school, and previous teaching.
- Leaders support and monitor interventions closely and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress regularly.

Leadership and management of writing

- The headteacher takes responsibility for building a positive writing culture that is motivating for pupils and encompasses both reading and writing, acknowledging that they are interrelated but not inverses.
- Those responsible for leading literacy have the expertise, skills and experience to lead high-quality writing teaching and rigorous assessment.
- Those responsible for leading literacy have sufficient, dedicated time to fulfil the role.
- The leadership of writing is not at the expense of reading.
- Literacy leaders work collaboratively with the SENCO to make sure that all pupils access high-quality writing instruction that is precise, accessible and enables them to make progress.
- Leaders ensure the writing curriculum is well-sequenced and provides sufficient time for pupils to apply, practise and revisit what they have learnt.
- Leaders make sure the writing curriculum begins by securing pupils' foundational transcription and oral composition skills, and then builds on composition skills once pupils' transcription is sufficiently fluent.
- Leaders make sure routines for teaching handwriting are consistent across the school, enabling pupils to form letters legibly and develop fluency. These routines are monitored and embedded.
- If leaders select a writing programme to support the teaching of one or more aspects of the writing curriculum, they have a clear rationale for its use.
- Professional development, including training and coaching, is planned and effective so all staff become experts in teaching writing.
- Leaders ensure that teachers have good knowledge of specific areas of writing, such as grammatical terminology, and plan appropriate CPD for teachers who need additional support.
- Leaders ensure that a shared terminology for teaching writing is used and understood across the school. For example, planning formats and grammatical terminology are consistent in and across year groups.
- The headteacher and senior leaders understand the importance of the reception year in establishing the foundations for later success and ensure that every child is supported to reach the expected level of development in Writing by the end of reception.
- The routines and models this framework describes, such as 'ready to write' approaches for handwriting and planning models for writing activities, are embedded across subjects and not limited to English lessons.
- Leaders ensure that formative and summative assessments are effective in informing and refining planning and teaching for individuals, groups and whole classes.