

Granby Junior School



Writing Policy

Review Date	Approved by	Governor Minute Reference
September 2023	FGB (tbc)	

The new 2022 policy was created after the implementation of a school-wide writing approach.

Introduction

Our Writing Policy (2022) which sets out the principles and approaches underpinning the teaching of Writing at Granby Junior School. This policy will be reviewed by the Writing Co-ordinators in July 2023 or as required by the School Improvement Plan.

Writing Intent

At Granby, we empower our children to be vibrant and expressive communicators with a love for language and an appreciation of the power of the written word. Our writing is varied, fun and purposeful, and closely tied to our curriculum intent in reading which emphasises fluency, comprehension – but most importantly, enjoyment.

Implementation

We teach writing through our own version of the Write Stuff approach, which emphasises an alternating system of collaborative writing, followed by a period of independent writing. Children are guided through the different structures and text features ('shapes') found in a wide variety of text types and are then allowed to explore which sentence-level writing features ('lenses') will achieve the desired effect on the reader. Our children's writing is celebrated and shared in these daily collaborative writing sessions and through special events and competitions within school – such as our annual 'Spooky Writing' event at Halloween – and displays around school for all to see. We encourage our children to see themselves as real writers with the power to persuade, to instruct and to enthrall their readers with the magic of their words.

During their time at Granby, pupils undertake a writing journey, which is sequenced through varied topics, building on prior skills and allowing them to grow in skill and confidence. Our curriculum coverage is rigorous, and our teachers are talented and confident in weaving their teaching of writing into subjects across the school through the use of robust and intuitive methods such as the 'Sounds and Syllables' spelling system and 'Rainbow Grammar' for sentence building.

Impact

The overall aim of our writing curriculum is to equip pupils with the confidence and the skills to be able to tackle any style of writing independently: this comes through a familiarity with writing conventions gained through the wide breadth of our curriculum, and with the rigor with which we teach the technical, SPAG, side. Those who were not confident learn to enjoy the subject, and those who are naturally strong writers learn how to become great writers by making controlled and sophisticated choices with their use of language and structure.

The Teaching of Writing:

At Granby, we have based our approach on "The Write Stuff" by Jane Considine to bring clarity to the mechanics of writing. "The Write Stuff" follows a method called "Sentence Stacking" which refers to the fact that sentences are stacked together chronologically and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing. An individual lesson is based on a sentence model, broken in to 3 learning chunks. Each learning chunk has three sections:

1. **Initiate** section – a stimulus to capture the children's imagination and set up a sentence.
1. **Model** section – the teacher close models a sentence that outlines clear writing features and techniques.

1. **Enable** section – the children write their sentence, following the model.

Children are challenged to 'Deepen the Moment' which requires them to independently draw upon previously learnt skills and apply them to their writing during that chunk.

"The Write Stuff" uses three essential components to support children in becoming great writers: 'The Three Zones of Writing':

- IDEAS - The **FANTASTICs** uses a child friendly acronym to represent the nine idea lenses through which children can craft their ideas.
- TOOLS -The **GRAMMARISTICS**. The grammar rules of our language system and an accessible way to target weaknesses in pupils grammatical and linguistic structures.
- TECHNIQUES -The **BOOMTASTICs** which helps children capture 10 ways of adding drama and poetic devices to writing in a vivid visual.

A unit of work comprises of 'Waypoints/Plot Points' (paragraphs), Shapes (paragraph features) and Lenses (sentence-level features) as a planning framework and a way of organising and discussing different aspects of writing. A unit may also include discrete teaching opportunities based on grammar or sentence level work.

E.g.

Y6 'Revolution' Victorian Topic, Autumn 2

Week 1: Persuasive writing about Victorian/modern schools (persuasive language skills, SPAG, short written pieces produced using RW lenses)

*Weeks 2-3: Historical fiction narratives (**modelled and independent extended pieces**)*

*Weeks 4-5: Historical biographies (**modelled and independent extended pieces**)*

Week 6: Poetry - Victorian Limericks (rhyme schemes, vocab, performing poems)

Our system is based on 2-week blocks which focus on a single text type for both weeks. The first week is teacher-modelled and uses collaborative class writing to teach the skills/lenses (this is displayed on the wall as a work in progress, being added to each day), then the second week is independent writing by the children, where they will hopefully employ the skills they learned the previous week, applying them to a different piece of the same text type.

Two pieces of extended independent writing are produced in this way each half term (i.e. 4 weeks of using the Jane Considine method). Pieces produced through modelled writing are written in English books; independent pieces are done in Extended Writing books.

The format for extended writing pieces (both modelled and independent) as seen across consecutive pages in the books is:

- 1) Waypoint/paragraphs plan with 'shapes' and lenses.
- 2) 'Thinking Side' for notes, key phrases/vocab that will be used.
- 3) The written piece itself.
- 4) Success criteria assessment with individual aspects highlighted in green by children and also indicated within their writing. Teachers indicate success in the tick boxes and give a 'next step' target where appropriate.

It is expected that in upper school, several of these independent extended pieces are also written up as a 'best version' (still independent, incorporating editing-stage changes resulting from peer feedback, and presented decoratively to be proudly displayed/shared). Lower school will do this with at least one extended piece. Examples of these are to be compiled by the coordinator and celebrated on the website, etc.

SEND and lower-ability writers

This approach may not be suitable for all learners – particularly during the 2nd week of independent writing, when some children may still need adult support, both in the planning stage and the writing.

In these cases, non-independent or assisted work should be identified, and planning requirements may be simplified (e.g. 1 lens planned per paragraph rather than 3).

The Teaching of Basic Skills:

Grammar:

At Granby Junior School, we value the importance of enabling children to become confident, literate individuals, who can actively select and use a wide range of grammatical forms. We work from the principle that the ideal methodology for the teaching of grammar is through the wider teaching of writing composition.

Aims:

- 1) To successfully deliver the National Curriculum for Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation to all pupils, as appropriate to their learning needs.
- 2) To ensure that the teaching of grammar and punctuation is effectively planned for by selecting grammatical ideas and principles relevant to the year group in question, and pertinent to the text/topic being covered.
- 3) To maximise the progress of pupils through referring to grammatical concepts as key teaching points (underpinned by success criteria) through collaborative class discussions during writing lessons.
- 4) To feedback on pupils' understanding of grammatical concepts verbally and using pupil feedback sessions for pupils to respond to any written marking.
- 5) To improve outcomes for Granby pupils in SPAG tests.

Procedures:

- Grammatical concepts are introduced to the children through texts studied. Teachers make use of the Rainbow Grammar scheme to teach the Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation content of the National Curriculum, selecting which concepts are best suited to each given text/topic.
- Lessons, or sections of lessons, may then be devoted to consolidating the understanding of the grammar principle in question.
- Grammatical concepts will then appear as success criteria, in the form of 'lenses' in writing lessons, and as such will be explicitly referenced/exemplified during modelled writing, e.g. through teachers 'thinking out loud' or making deliberate omissions/errors.

Assessment:

- Pupils' learning in Grammar will be formally assessed through GAPS tests in Y3/4/5 and through practice SATs papers in Y6, as well as ongoing assessment through day to day marking and verbal feedback.

Spelling:

- Spellings are given to children from Year 3 to year 6.
- Children are taught to follow the Sounds and Syllables spelling system and its methods (say it, snip it, sound it out, spell it, target it).
- Weekly spelling patterns are delivered progressively throughout years 3-6 and spellings are sent home for children to practise over the course of the school week.
- Spellings are assessed once a week by the writing of individual words and / or by dictated sentences depending on the ability of individual children.
- Spellings are marked by syllables but written as one cohesive word. E.g. 'ricochet' would be given 3 marks for the 3 syllables. This rewards partial success and recognition of some sounds even others are not consolidated.
- Children are encouraged to use the Sounds and Syllables methods independently and are encouraged to practise in the margins of books when attempting an unfamiliar spelling.

Handwriting:

- Children in all classes use a sharp pencil within their handwriting practice.
- A 'Pen Licence' may be earned by children whose handwriting is joined and legible, and where the child's general standards of the presentation of their work is good.
- All children work towards the use of joined handwriting in their everyday writing tasks. Where progress on this appears to be slow, additional tailored handwriting support is organised and delivered.
- The handwriting of all adults in the school should reflect the high expectations that we have of our children.

Moderation and Tracking

- Year group and across-school moderation exercises are undertaken at least once a term.
- Cluster moderation activities take place annually.
- Teachers across school work to the criteria set for writing on the 'Derbyshire tick sheets' and an end of KS2 formative assessment is based on pupils' progress against these.
- Granby Juniors were last moderated externally in Summer 2022. All teacher assessment judgements were upheld.

Equality and Inclusion

Children of all abilities enjoy and benefit from the study of writing at Granby Junior school, and teachers are able to adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils enabling them to achieve.

Teachers have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn and know how best to overcome these through adaptive teaching. High-quality teaching approaches to engage and support the needs of all pupils are used within the classroom during writing lessons. Assessment of pupils' progress is employed to identify barriers to learning and develop strategies to support all pupils through a graduated response – including but not limited to those with SEND, those of high ability, and those with English as an additional language.

Adaptive teaching of writing focuses on the whole class while providing scaffolding such as differing levels of support, access to resources, modelled sentences via the Write Stuff approach, Sentence Stack displays and questioning to extend vocabulary and pupils' ideas.

Diversity

At Granby Junior school our curriculum offers a diverse view of the world, beginning in our local community and extending beyond. Through the lenses of British values, children are positively exposed to a range of role models, reflected within the wider society, redressing the balance seen within our local community.

In writing lessons, children learn about diversity both in terms of cultural diversity and that of gender. This is shown through the coverage of text types and key figures in history such as Mary Seacole and Greta Thunberg when, for example, writing biographies.