

How We Teach Writing from Reception to Year 2

Information for families 2026 to 2027

Our aim is for every child to enjoy writing, communicate worthwhile ideas and develop the spelling and handwriting fluency needed to write with increasing independence. Children learn to write through rich stories, purposeful talk, clear teaching and frequent successful practice.

Our approach

- We organise progression through the knowledge children need as writers: developing ideas, constructing sentences, connecting a short text, spelling, handwriting, rereading and improving.
- Children learn to write for a variety of purposes and readers. They experience stories, recounts, instructions, explanations, letters, persuasive writing and poetry. Each form is introduced through an engaging context, a meaningful purpose and clear teaching about how writers use language, sentences and organisation to entertain, inform or influence a reader.
- High-quality books develop enjoyment, vocabulary, imagination and knowledge. Teachers also write short examples that show children what an achievable outcome looks like.
- Children say and rehearse ideas before writing. This helps them compose language that may be more ambitious than they can yet spell independently.
- Writing grows in length only as children can maintain sentence control, spelling and handwriting. A short independent piece can show more learning than a long piece completed through heavy adult prompting.

A mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class

The whole class shares the same excellent books, vocabulary, discussion, purposes and audiences. Teachers then adjust the writing demand.

Reception	Year 1	Year 2
Children develop language and imagination through Drawing Club, stories, play, drawing and RWI. They orally compose and begin to record phrases and sentences.	Children concentrate on saying, holding and writing complete sentences; securing spaces, letter formation and basic punctuation; and building a short logical sequence.	Children connect and organise several sentences, use a wider range of grammar and punctuation, maintain tense and viewpoint, and revise and edit with greater independence.

Books and writing across Year A

Most half-terms contain two main literary texts. Carefully selected poems, photographs, experiences and short factual extracts enrich pupils' language and knowledge while the main writing outcomes remain clear.

Half-term	Main texts and experiences	Writing development
Autumn 1	Drawing Club stories and imaginative prompts	Move from rich oral ideas to complete sentences and short connected sequences.
Autumn 2	Look Up!; The Most Magnificent Thing; Christmas and winter poetry	Help a younger reader imagine a meteor shower, explain an invention and create a seasonal poem for performance.
Spring 1	The Storm Whale; The Comet	Sequence events, control tense and communicate a character's viewpoint.
Spring 2	The Secret Sky Garden; Luna Loves Art	Express reasons and consequences and write a purposeful invitation or recommendation.
Summer 1	Window; The Promise; a local walk or shared real event	Observe and group changes, persuade a real audience and recount a genuine experience.
Summer 2	Last Stop on Market Street; The Bear and the Piano	Plan and compose a coherent short text with increasing independence, then revise and edit.

Poetry

Children enjoy, discuss and perform contemporary and traditional poetry throughout the year. Autumn 2 includes a short Christmas or winter poetry composition and performance. At least one poem is rehearsed and performed each term, with a further performance opportunity in Summer 2.

Writing for real purposes

Children write for known readers such as classmates, families and the school community. The plan also guarantees writing about a real shared event, alongside imaginative and literature-inspired writing.

How writing develops

Area	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Ideas and talk	Generate, explain and rehearse a complete idea.	Sustain an oral sequence and express time, reason and viewpoint.	Select, organise and improve ideas for a reader.
Sentences	Secure complete sentences and basic boundaries; choose precise nouns and verbs.	Control tense, expand detail and connect ideas to express time and reason.	Select sentence forms and connections purposefully.
Short texts	Move from one sentence to a logical sequence.	Maintain sequence, tense and viewpoint across several sentences.	Group and sustain related ideas in a coherent short text.
Writing process	Say, write and reread; make one supported improvement.	Use a brief plan; revise meaning before checking spelling and punctuation.	Plan, monitor, revise and edit with decreasing support.
Independence	Write manageable outcomes with explicit modelling and rehearsal.	Transfer learning to a second text with fewer scaffolds.	Make more independent decisions and demonstrate cumulative control.

Grammar and punctuation

Grammar is taught as useful knowledge that helps children communicate meaning. Year 1 pupils develop secure sentences, word order, coordination with and, capital letters and sentence-ending punctuation. Year 2 pupils also learn coordination and subordination, expanded noun phrases, sentence functions, consistent tense, progressive forms, commas in lists and apostrophes. Previously taught knowledge is revisited and applied in later writing.

Spelling handwriting and phonics

We use Read Write Inc. for phonics, spelling routines and handwriting. Children practise holding and writing a sentence during RWI and transfer this routine into their own composition. Handwriting is taught explicitly, with secure formation, orientation and spacing coming before speed or joining. Children receive spellings for ambitious words containing code they have not yet learned, so their ideas are not unnecessarily restricted.

What effective teaching looks like

A writing sequence usually includes the following elements. Teachers adapt the time spent on each element according to assessment and the demands of the text.

- Enjoy and understand the text or experience.
- Develop vocabulary, knowledge and ideas through high-quality classroom talk.
- Explore a character, setting or event through talk, drawing, drama or active learning.
- Say, compare and practise useful sentence constructions until children can use them confidently.
- Watch the teacher think aloud and compose an achievable example.
- Use the new learning in shared, guided and independent writing for a clear reader and purpose.
- Respond to focused feedback before repeating or transferring the learning.
- Plan briefly and complete a short independent application.
- Reread and revise one aspect of meaning.
- Edit a small number of spelling, handwriting or punctuation features that have already been taught.
- Share, publish or perform when this gives the writing a worthwhile audience.

How we assess writing

Teachers consider the different components of writing separately as well as looking at the finished piece. A child may have sophisticated spoken ideas while still developing spelling or handwriting fluency. Assessment identifies whether the next step lies in oral composition, sentence construction, organising a text, spelling, handwriting or independent self-checking.

Keeping the curriculum effective

Leaders and teachers review pupils' work, assessment and classroom experience to check that the curriculum is ambitious, coherent and accessible. We refine teaching where evidence shows that a change will strengthen pupils' knowledge, independence or enjoyment of writing.

How families can help

- Read and enjoy stories, information books and poems together.
- Talk about interesting words, characters, events and ideas.
- Encourage your child to say a sentence aloud before writing it.
- Value clear, thoughtful writing rather than expecting unnecessary length.
- Encourage your child to reread what they have written and check whether it says what they intended.
- Use the school's RWI pronunciation and handwriting language so home practice remains consistent.