

# **Bell's Brae Primary School**

## **Writing Programme**

**Revised June 2006**

# Programme of Writing

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## Introduction

The 5-14 Guidelines on English Language identify 7 strands within the writing outcome:-

- functional writing
- personal writing
- imaginative writing
- punctuation and structure
- spelling
- handwriting and presentation
- knowledge about language.

The following definitions may be helpful to teachers when considering the 3 types of writing.

**Functional writing** - deals with **facts**, presents **information** and sometimes gives **instructions**.

**Personal writing** - deals with **experiences** and our **reactions** to these **experiences**.

**Imaginative writing** - when we choose to **express** and **change** our **experiences**, **ideas** and **feelings** into **imaginative stories**, **plays** and **poems** instead of just writing about them as personal experiences.

(Definitions from Dumfries and Galloway 5-14 Writing Packages)

The advice which follows provides some guidance for teachers on how they can support pupils in the writing process.

## **Purpose and form**

The **form** of the writing is affected by the **audience** (who you are writing for) and the **purpose** of the writing.

In the primary school many of the audiences will be imaginary.

## **How do children learn to write?**

- by writing
- by seeing others write
- by working with someone who can already write
- by experiencing a rich and stimulating environment with opportunities to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

## **Promoting writing in the classroom**

We can promote writing in the classroom by

- providing meaningful contexts
- developing children's language
- providing a suitable area eg a writing corner and a variety of writing materials
- acting as a model for the children
- providing stimuli through a range of books, pictures and displays
- at the early stages using play as a stimulus
- ensuring children are clear about the purpose of the writing
- ensuring the classroom atmosphere is conducive for writing (eg quiet)
- supporting children in their planning through discussion
- showing children a range of different types of writing
- helping children to become more independent in their writing by encouraging the use of wordbanks and dictionaries
- showing that we value the children's writing by displaying it, reading it or allowing children to tape it

- through discussion and re drafting help the children to develop critical self awareness
- providing children with the appropriate technical language to enable them to discuss their writing (strand - knowledge about language)
- allowing children sufficient time for writing

## **Organising for writing within the classroom**

### **(a) Planning**

Long and short term planning in language will ensure that each type of writing is adequately covered within each level. Much of the writing will derive from the Environmental Studies project. By choosing such projects carefully throughout the year children should be provided with a range of opportunities and contexts for writing.

The 5-14 programmes of study help in planning to ensure a progression of skills. Teachers should be familiar with what is contained at the different levels.

Different abilities within the class can be catered for in different ways.

- by varying the tasks set
- by varying the support provided
- by having different expectations of the finished piece of work

See p 52 in 5 - 14 Language for more information on differentiation.

### **(b) Management**

It is not easy, especially in large classes, to ensure that each pupil receives the necessary feedback on his/her writing. However the following suggestions may help.

- target one writing group to work with over a session
- discuss aspects of writing with the whole class
- use your ASN time for writing
- encourage the pupils to become more independent
- support one writing group during the planning stage

## The Writing Process

The 5-14 Guidelines on Writing suggest that pupils should plan, draft and re-draft their writing. The terms planning, drafting and re -drafting should be used consistently throughout the school and should be shared with pupils as soon as it is felt appropriate.

### Planning

This stage includes any preparation for the given writing task.

- observation
- research
- making lists
- drawing pictures
- identifying key ideas
- sequencing ideas
- note taking
- discussion - about purpose, audience, form, structure, characters, suitable vocabulary.

### Drafting

At this stage a piece of writing is produced. (In the early stages this might be a picture.)

This is then discussed with the teacher and/or peers and some improvements might be suggested. **It is possible that no re-drafting is necessary.**

### Re- Drafting

At this stage the content is altered to improve it. This can be done by inserting words or phrases, changing the order of text or deleting sections. Through re-drafting the pupil gains control over his/her writing and hopefully will develop the capacity for self-criticism.

The planning stage is very important and children need to be taught this. As the English Language Feedback 5-14 pointed out in 1991 "Many pupils at all stages showed little evidence of planning or structure, often failing to consider carefully enough the purpose of the writing."

At the early stages there is a great deal of teacher input so the re-drafting is ongoing.

NB Redrafting is **not** producing a fair copy. The pupil should develop as a writer through the process of re-drafting. This will not happen if he/she has to rewrite each piece of writing.

There is a place for rewriting work:-

- to display on the wall
- to keep in a folio
- because the pupil is proud of it and wants to re write it.

## **Assessment**

“Ideally, pupils are thoroughly familiar with the qualities of good writing for particular purposes and can judge for themselves what is appropriate. Teachers can assist this by discussing the qualities of writing regularly with the pupils and offering them frequent opportunities to evaluate their own writing, and that of others, with these qualities in mind.”

From “Taking a closer look at learning to write” (p5) published by SCORE

## **Personal Writing**

Qualities to look for:-

- the writing should make sense
- there should be a clear structure – a beginning, middle and end
- vocabulary should be varied and appropriate and express emotions
- there should be evidence of personal involvement
- layout should fit the purpose
- punctuation should be appropriate and aid the reader’s understanding
- actual events should be clearly described
- the sequence of events should be logical
- spelling and punctuation should be appropriate to task and level

## **Functional Writing**

Qualities to look for:-

- writing should be concise
- information should be presented clearly
- form chosen should be organised logically eg diagram, flow chart, report
- information should be organised logically including all the main points
- language should be appropriate to the purpose
- spelling and punctuation should be appropriate to task and level

## **Imaginative Writing**

Qualities to look for:-

- the story should be interesting and hold the reader's attention
- events are organized in a logical sequence
- characters, setting and plot are developed and an imaginary world built up
- there is evidence that the author has selected ideas
- there is a variety of sentence structure
- punctuation is appropriate and aids the reader's understanding
- spelling is accurate for the level

## **Writer's Craft**

The writer's craft task relates to the strand within the outcome of Reading, *Reading to reflect on the writer's ideas and craft* (*English Language: 5–14 National Guidelines*, pages 16 and 17).

The purpose of Writer's craft tasks is to allow pupils to show, in writing, their understanding of the writer's craft at a level appropriate to their age and stage. These tasks involve pupils in responding to a piece of text through discussion with the teacher, and then continuing the text using the features of the original as a model.



Pupils should be introduced to the task and given the appropriate support for the level. They should understand the purpose of the piece of writing and the criteria to be used for assessing their writing.

Additional advice on assessing writing can be found in the advice to teachers on marking national assessments in writing.

### **Writing within themes**

The 5-14 Guidelines on English Language state "teachers will, therefore, spend time devising programmes which will provide contexts in which pupils will be asked to write in a variety of forms". (page 44)

#### **Themes:**

- offer a meaningful context for writing
- build on children's previous experiences allowing all children to contribute
- stimulate discussion and expression
- provide motivation for writing
- provide a range of purposes for writing and a variety of writing forms
- can improve the content of writing produced as children are involved in the theme
- provide opportunities for children to record information gathered from various sources.

## **ADDITIONAL ADVICE**

“English Language 5 - 14 Guidelines” SOED 1991

“Assessment 5 – 14” SOED 1991

“Improving Reading at the Early Stages 5 – 14 A Report by HM Inspectors of schools” The Stationery Office 1998

“Improving Writing 5 – 14 A Report by HM Inspectors of Schools” The Stationery Office 1999

“Information and Communications Technology 5 – 14” Learning and Teaching Scotland 2000

“Improving Reading at the Early Stages” - SIC Education Service March 1999

### **Teachers should also refer to the following school policies and guidelines:-**

Jan 2004	English Language
Nov 2003	Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Jan 2004	Marking, presentation and monitoring of Pupil Work
Revised Sept 2005	Homework

## Appendix 1 – Spelling

The teaching of spelling must be approached in a very positive and systematic manner from the beginning to enable children to spell words:

- (a) which occur frequently in their writing
- (b) which exemplify regular spelling patterns

Spelling is essentially a hand/eye skill, not a listening skill. However, in order to develop spelling, a knowledge of phonics is necessary as well as the ability to hear and discriminate letter sounds. To this end, children need to be taught to look at, recognise and remember letter patterns before reproducing them in well-formed, legible handwriting.

This raises a number of issues which need to be addressed.

These include:

- (a) teaching words that look the same irrespective of their sound
- (b) always writing from memory
- (c) developing a firm strategy for learning new words
- (d) handwriting which is integral to spelling
- (e) the value of a multi-sensory approach

These issues can be addressed by:

- (a) using a structured spelling approach
- (b) using a structured handwriting programme
- (c) all staff adopting the **LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK** technique when teaching spelling

This technique involves:

**LOOK:** at the word carefully and in such a way that you will remember what you have seen (eg breaking into syllables)

**COVER:** the word so that you cannot see it

**WRITE:** the word from MEMORY saying it softly to yourself as you are writing

**CHECK;** what you have written

**NB** If you have not written the word correctly do not alter it; instead go back and repeat all these steps.

Refer to the English Language policy for guidance on resources to use.

## **Appendix 2 – Folios**

### **Reasons**

- to show progression in writing
- to provide evidence of different types of writing
- to provide an opportunity for the child to select good pieces of writing to put in the folio
- to develop self assessment

### **Selection of material**

Original or photocopied pieces of writing can be put in the folder.

There should be a variety of different types of writing – personal, functional and imaginative.

Some pieces of writing can be discarded during to year to prevent the folder becoming too unwieldy.

Pupils should be involved in the selection of pieces of writing when it is felt they are ready to do this.

### **Organisation of folders**

Each pupil will get a blue folder in Primary 1. This is their folio which goes through the school with them.

At the end of P7 the contents are given to the pupil and the empty folders returned to the DHT (Early Stages).

If a child leaves the school the same procedure is followed.

The DHT (Early Stages) will provide new folders for any pupils who join the school.