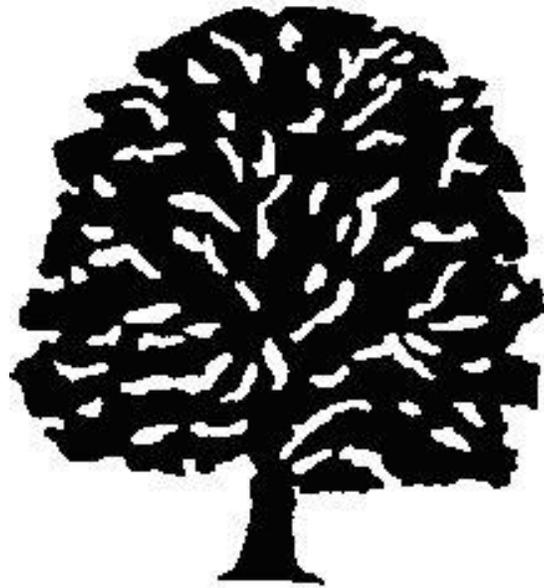


Woodcote Primary School



A Guide for Parents

Writing

Introduction

At Woodcote Primary School we believe the ability to write is one of the fundamental skills children will need for life long learning. We aim for children to enjoy writing and to understand the purpose of writing, as well as have a good knowledge of the basics of grammar, handwriting, punctuation and sentence construction. Children will have the opportunity to develop their understanding of a range of different writing. They will spend time learning what makes a good piece of writing, and will use this to edit and improve their own writing. Teachers will allow plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas in a range of ways, understanding that if a pupil can 'talk it' then they will have a better chance of 'writing it'. We place a high focus on training children to identify the development needs in their own writing, with support and guidance from the teacher. This enables them to be more reflective learners and develops life long skills.

Starting to Teach Writing

From the time the children enter Woodcote Primary, they are encouraged to write, as a means of recording, their thoughts and ideas. This will include emergent writing, which may not be recognisable or legible to an adult, but allows the child the chance to practise and start to develop the skills of writing. Teachers will help children to sound out words using their knowledge of letters and sounds, and allow them to make plausible attempts at words. Teachers may correct key words or sounds that have been focused on in class. During the early stages of writing, children will be encouraged to have a go at writing and will not be criticised for not forming letters correctly, incorrect spellings or lack of punctuation. If we want children to engage in writing we cannot criticise their first attempts.

We will plan to guide them through our teaching, and develop letter formation and spelling knowledge as the children progress through the school. Teachers will continually demonstrate how to write for different

purposes and will discuss correct letter formation with children. Children may be encouraged to write labels for work they have completed or write instructions for someone else of how to make an object. We will continually praise children when they write, especially if they choose to do so independently.

Children will be encouraged to write in a range of areas of the classroom and in different ways. They might write individually, in small groups, or contribute to a whole class piece of writing. Children will be encouraged to write on large scale pieces of paper, using paint, water or even within sand. There will also be opportunities for children to write in the role play areas; maybe writing a list of items, or recording an observation.

If you want to know more about how your child is doing in writing then ask the teacher!

Developing Knowledge and Understanding of a Range of Writing

As the children progress through the school from Year 1 to Year 6, the teachers will follow the National Guidance for Literacy Teaching. This will give the children a range of opportunities to engage and develop their understanding of a range of different types of writing. Although the main focus is on writing, children may not write every day. They will have opportunities to capture ideas, plan and experiment with different writing across a week. This might include drama, film clips, ICT and working in small groups, for example.

Teachers will support the pupils in identifying 'What Makes Good...?' in a piece of writing. This allows children to see what they should include in their writing to make it good and allows them to reflect on their own writing as to how they can make it better. Children will focus on a range of areas to improve their writing, including the structure, content and a focus on the secretarial skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Many of the

children confidently use the VCOP (Vocabulary, Connective, Openers and Punctuation) focus to help them identify improvements for their writing. Children may concentrate on one or more of the areas of VCOP to focus in on the secretarial skills of their writing.

Teachers will use pupils' written and class work to identify particular needs for learning. Teachers will then plan individual, group or whole class focused teaching as necessary. If they find there is an area that requires discrete teaching, then opportunities for this will be planned, either through the literacy lesson or as a short challenge task within a day.

Types of writing and features

- Fiction/narrative (Stories)
- Myths and legends
- Poetry
- Recount
- Report
- Instructions
- Explanation
- Persuasive
- Discussion
- Dialogue

Handwriting

From February 2010, we have introduced a new whole school handwriting scheme; PenPals. This scheme focuses on developing children's letter formation, presentation skills and fluency of writing. We feel a consistent scheme, that supports the teaching of handwriting, will assist this development. This new scheme will enable us to have a consistent pattern, 'patter' (speech used to explain the formation of letters and joins) and focus on the teaching of handwriting across the school. The style of handwriting demonstrated within this scheme is not fully cursive, but does support the development of joined handwriting from Year 1. As this is a change to the previous style of handwriting, no child will be told they are doing it incorrectly, and children will just be encouraged to produce a neat, fluent and legible style of handwriting. The style of handwriting across the school will gradually change, and teachers and teaching assistants will model the joins to those children who need this input.

With joins not being introduced until Year 1, children in younger year groups can focus on mark making and a range of writing skills and enjoyment without the added pressure of forming cursive letters. Cursive writing is rarely viewed by children and this does not assist with their letter sound recognition.

Even in this technological, computer-literate age, good handwriting remains fundamental to our children's educational achievement. '*Penpals for Handwriting*' is the only handwriting programme to offer progression from 3 to 11 yrs and will help the children to develop fast, fluent, legible handwriting.

5 Stages of Basic Organisational Structure

1. Readiness for handwriting; gross and fine motor skills leading to pattern and letter formation (EYFS, 3-5yrs)
2. Beginning to join (KS1, 5-7yrs)
3. Securing the joins (KS1&LKS2, 5-9yrs)
4. Practising speed and fluency (KS2, 7-9yrs)
5. Presentational skills (UKS2, 9-11yrs)

Spelling and Phonics

Children from Nursery to Year 2 take part in a daily phonics session. Teachers follow National Guidance and use Jolly Phonics to support this teaching (for more information please see Parents' Phonics Booklet). The teaching of phonics is also being integrated into the work in KS2 for those children who need it. Phonics is the foundation of reading and, along with a range of other strategies, assists children with their spellings. Since January 2010, the teachers in KS2 have been planning an early morning challenge each week to develop and reinforce children's spelling knowledge. This work is also integrated into lessons and is a focus for individuals, groups or whole classes as necessary. To support children with their spelling development, we have also purchased Spellodrome for all children from Years 2 to 6. Spellodrome can be found on the Mathletics site (see below for more information).

Supporting Your Child at Home

Children need to want to write in order to become successful writers. Give them a purpose for their writing; ask them to help you with the shopping list or allow them time to write about something that interests them. Most of all make it fun! Special paper and pens can really encourage them!

It is important for children to see you writing. May be write something together! Make a poster or write a recount of a trip you have been on for friends!

Children need to experience lots of different types of writing to enable them to write for different purposes! So share a range of texts with them when reading to give them experience of different structures, styles and language.

Talk to your child's class teacher or look at the curriculum summaries to find out what your children are focusing on.

Log on to the school Managed Learning Environment on Fronter to access games, information and activities to encourage learning at home. **DON'T FORGET** there is a link for Mathletics from Fronter where you can access SPELLODROME!

www.fronter.com/croydon and use your child's Universal Sign On to access. If your child has lost their USO please ask the class teacher.

If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to come in and ask!