



# CLOUGHWOOD ACADEMY

## Writing Policy (*Secondary*)

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## **1. Introduction**

Literacy skills are essential to our ability to understand, interpret and communicate about the world and each other. Writing is the ability to effectively communicate ideas, information and opinions through the written and printed word in a wide range of contexts. Writing also enables people to be able to express themselves imaginatively and make sense of new learning experiences as well as develop confidence in forming essential relationships. Skilled writers understand the characteristics of writing's many forms and can adapt their style to suit a range of purposes. At Cloughwood, our pupils arrive at various stages of their writing development, often having missed key milestones in their education. We aim to quickly equip our pupils with the necessary skills to become confident communicators and able writers in all areas of the curriculum. Particular reference will be enhancing vocabulary in all curriculum areas in order to maximise pupil potential particularly with reference to the changes in Examination requirements from 2017.

## **2. Aims**

By adopting a consistent, creative, whole-school approach to the teaching of writing we aim for our pupils to develop confidence and accuracy when writing in all areas of the curriculum by:

- Developing a genuine love of writing which develops positive attitudes.
- Writing with confidence, fluency, clarity and imagination.
- Helping them to learn to value and enjoy their own writing and the writing of others.
- Teaching the phonics and spelling system and use this to write confidently with better accuracy.
- Encourage creativity and the use of more ambitious vocabulary in their writing.
- Providing language-rich learning environments that promote independence and self-help.
- Enabling pupils to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry and to understand narrative structure such as setting, character, plot etc.
- Writing non-fiction texts using the features of different forms.
- Teaching pupils to plan, draft, revise and edit and publish their own writing and learn how to critically and constructively appraise the writing of others.
- Developing a technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their writing.
- Developing fluent and legible handwriting.
- Developing the attitudes of curiosity and interest, imaginative thinking, independence, perseverance, critical appraisal and co-operation.

## **3. Teaching and Learning Opportunities**

### **How we teach writing**

Writing will be taught in English lessons by the English staff but also taught in all areas of the curriculum to support the enrichment of the subject and better curricular access and proficiency.

There are agreed protocols in respect of the presentation of work in pupil books and all staff will reinforce these at every opportunity. All teachers will designate a whole lesson and several lesson portions per week to have a literacy focus, regardless of the subject.

All staff are expected to develop writing by continually looking for opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Incentives will be given for good writing. The whole-school marking policy describes how staff communicate with pupils in their books and this is intended to provide a consistent approach which allows pupils to quickly improve their work and build on successes.

One of the key attitudes necessary for our pupils to experience success in writing is resilience or stamina. As well as teaching the basic skills of writing, our pupils will be given a range of extended writing opportunities which build the confidence and enthusiasm which in turn, lead to greater writing resilience. As well as practising their skills, drafting, spelling, editing and re-drafting, pupils will be encouraged to present final, neat copies of their work which they have edited and levelled (e.g. using the VCOP pyramid).

We will expect pupils to apply their written skills to all areas of the curriculum and to write at a sustained high level, matched to both their potential and current writing level. Pupils will have realistic targets identified and planned for. All staff will be expected to provide detailed plans of where they expect to provide writing practice in their weekly and termly planning proformas and this will be monitored by the Curriculum and Standards Co-ordinator. Writing activities, like all others, will be differentiated and matched to the individual abilities of all pupils.

Extensive INSET and staff meeting time including the use of outside Consultants has been utilised to develop boys writing across the curriculum and a development of this is seen as a priority.

### **VCOP**

When teaching writing skills, particular emphasis will be placed upon the four main skills: VCOP – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation. These skills will be developed on a daily basis by a wide range of activities both complex and more simple tasks to practise and reinforce. In particular, staff will provide a language-rich environment both visually, auditorily and orally which encourages pupils to build up an exciting and ambitious vocabulary.

In addition to focused VCOP activities the pupils will participate in a whole-class and shared/grouped strategies led by the staff who will model the appropriate style of writing and expectations.

### **Modelled Writing**

This is a powerful strategy that teachers use to demonstrate a range of skills, processes and procedures. By thinking aloud as they write teachers give pupils insights into the processes writers use to compose text as well as provide them with a completed text which can serve as a model for the pupils' own writing.

Using this strategy teachers can incorporate a range of teaching points to enable pupils to see how a piece of writing takes shape – e.g.

- Planning a piece of writing
- Editing and proof reading
- Aiming for standard spelling and conventional grammar
- Developing ideas

### **Shared Writing**

This is a blend of demonstration and participation, enabling pupils to understand what being a writer means.

In practice, shared writing is where a whole group contribute to create a piece of writing together. This could be through oral work, using mini-whiteboards or taking part in drama activities to list a few activities. At the end of the session the class should have a piece of work that they have all contributed to, which has been expertly modelled by the teacher. The teacher models all aspects of writing so that pupils can see the things they are expected to achieve in practice.

### **Guided Writing**

This involves a teacher working with a group on a writing task based on previous work on the process of writing. Guided writing supports learners in this psychologically and cognitively difficult task.

Guided writing can be fully exploited by providing pupils with the language they need to complete the task together with the teacher. E.g. this may include making suggestions ('Why don't we start by saying ....?'), agreeing and disagreeing ('That's a good idea – let's put that ....') and asking for help ('Is it right to say ...?').

### **Paired Writing**

Pupils write with another pupil for:

- Shared ideas and immediate feedback
- Development of oral fluency.

Pupils should be encouraged to write or work with a partner when working on pieces of writing, when annotating texts (or peer-reviewing) or using whiteboards.

### **Independent Writing**

Pupils enjoy writing from an early age and we must endeavour to develop their craft. To develop craft from emergent writing we will provide them with different materials such as different types of paper, felt tips, white boards, chalks, crayons, magnetic letters, brushes and paints as well as laptops/computers to encourage writing per se. Pupils should be provided with scaffolding materials such as menu blanks, letter forms, invitations and label blanks that familiarise them with different writing formats. As they become more adept and knowledgeable the expectation must be that they learn the forms and are able to produce many of their own.

Physical development is key to pupils developing better gross and fine motor skills. Kinaesthetic activities help pupils to do this and must be part of the programme that leads to pupils developing a comfortable, legible script. Individual pupil work must be regularly displayed in classrooms to develop confidence.

Extensive work has been undertaken through INSET, the staff meeting programme and extensive input from outside Consultants in order to improve the quality of boys writing across the curriculum. This has been further developed through training for Reading for Inference which will have a significant impact on the quality of boys writing.

## **Supported Writing**

Some pupils, for a number of reasons, might require adult assistance to begin with. This will be provided for but will never result in an adult doing the work for a child. Adult 1:1 support for writing will be fully planned and described by the teacher and will enable pupils to experience success in small steps, leading gradually to greater independence.

Some pupils will practise writing during FFTW3-type withdrawal sessions each day until functionality is reached.

## **Talk Strategies**

### **i. Book-talk**

'Book-talk' is the extended opportunity to use **talk** to explore pupil's personal and collective responses to a text **as readers**. It is open-ended questioning eliciting and developing responses.

After careful reading of a shared text, the teacher initiates 'book-talk' with open invitations such as, 'Tell me what you thought/felt about...', 'What came into your mind when you read...', or 'Have you come across anything like this before?' and then focuses on extending the pupil's responses with prompts such as, 'Tell me more about...'. 'What led you to think that?' or 'Can you extend that idea a bit for us?'. Groups of pupils can be supported and encouraged to feed off each other's thinking and talking, with prompts such as 'Do you agree or did anyone have a different response to that story/paragraph/sentence/word?' In this way rich exchanges often occur, helping pupils to develop and extend their own responses.

### **ii. Writer-talk**

'Writer-talk' is the articulation of the thinking and creative processes involved in all stages of the act of writing; talk that helps pupils to think and behave like a writer (and indeed consider themselves to be one).

It involves externalising and making explicit, through **talk**, the thinking involved in both '**reading as a writer**' (understanding what response the writer wishes to elicit in the reader and how he achieves this) and '**writing as a reader**' (applying the same understanding when making the choices involved in planning, creating and improving one's own writing).

'Writer-talk' is most helpful when focused on the purpose and audience of a piece of writing (that is, its intended effect on the reader). Although it will often rightly and importantly consider choices made at word and sentence level, these always need to be seen in this text-level context.

It is a useful way of following up and reinforcing direct teaching of the features of a particular genre/text type.

### **iii. Storytelling and Story-making**

This involves the learning and repeating of oral stories, building pupil's confidence to develop them through telling and then extending that development into writing; later creating 'new' stories orally as a preparation and rehearsal for writing.

The learning and development of stories through oral retelling builds up in pupils enormously valuable banks of language and narrative patterning that can be incorporated into later

writing. It can also build towards a confidence to create 'original' stories (although even these often draw on or 'magpie' previously learned/read ideas) and to rehearse them orally.

In this way, the development of storytelling is built through a sequence involving first **imitation** (the straight retelling of learned stories) then **innovation** (developing, extending and changing elements of a story) and finally **invention** (creating a 'new' story).

To build confidence, storytelling and story-making are often more effective if initially carried out communally, gradually working towards greater independence through group, paired and finally individual approaches.

#### iv. **Word and language games**

Talk games and activities can be used to:

- Stimulate and develop vocabulary (for example, word associations)
- 'Warm up' the imagination and tune pupils in to more creative thinking.
- Orally develop a character ('Tell me more about...')
- Orally develop a setting ('Painting the picture').
- A range of "Hooks" based on Literacy activities have been explored during INSET opportunities and are an expectation in all lessons.

#### v. **Role-play and drama**

Use of role-play and drama activities, such as 'hot-seating' and 'conscience alley' are used at the various stages of the reading-writing teaching sequence.

Each and all of these key *Talk for writing* strategies are greatly enhanced and extended by frequent repetition and revisiting – both within literacy lessons and across the curriculum. They also need to be developed and practised cumulatively and progressively each year, so that pupils build up confidence and skill as they move through the school.

To be productive, *Talk for writing* needs to be extensively embedded in every phase of this teaching sequence, that is:

- **During Reading:** When familiarising with the genre/text type and its key features; when responding to, exploring and drawing on models.
- **Before writing:** When generating ideas, preparing for and planning writing.
- **During all stages of writing** (teacher's demonstration and scribing and pupil's supported, guided and independent writing): When making the choices involved in creating, developing and improving texts.
- **After writing:** When reflecting on and learning from a writing experience.

In this it will need to be structured at the following three levels.

- **Teacher talk:** The verbalisation of the reader's or writer's thought processes as the teacher is demonstrating, modelling and discussing.
- **Supported pupil talk:** Structured and scaffolded opportunities for pupils to develop and practise *Talk for writing* through class and group conversations and activities.
- **Independent pupil talk:** Opportunities for pupils to develop and practise *Talk for Writing* in pairs and small groups, independent of the teacher.

All of this needs to be applied in **whole-class** learning and teaching and in **guided writing**.

**The precise nature of what is planned as *Talk for writing* in any particular unit will obviously need to take into careful account:**

- **The purpose and audience of the writing**
- **The key features of genre text/type**
- **The learning objectives of the unit.**

#### **4. Resources**

To enable all pupils to develop the range of strategies taught, classrooms will be well-equipped to support all abilities and learning styles. Resources may typically include:-

- Nelson handwriting scheme
- Whiteboards and pens
- ICT equipment
- Spelling games
- Magnetic letters
- Word bands – subject-specific/high frequency
- Word cards
- Thesaurus/dictionary/picture versions
- Wall charts/alphabets
- Spelling books
- VCOP displays/pyramids
- Visual writing prompts/cues
- Self-help area
- Cross-curricular/subject specific texts
- High quality writing displays

This list is not exhaustive and there will be other resources available. Staff will be required to invest in quality resources each year in their annual subject development plans.

#### **5. Equal Opportunities/Inclusion**

No pupil will be exempt or disappplied from this work at Cloughwood and where low ability pupils are supported to develop, so will able and gifted and talented pupils. Staff will be expected to promote positive values and attitudes in their teaching of writing and to use every opportunity to tackle prejudices and stereotyping in all areas of disability, gender or race.

Opportunities will be actively sought to utilise texts in English in particular which promote equality and challenge pupils attitudes to race,religion, gender and sexual orientation.

#### **6. SMSC**

Writing provides an outstanding opportunity for developing the thinking of pupils. In all subject areas staff will plan opportunities for writing practice that promote positive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all pupils. Writing about the world should be a central strategy to support the development of good citizens and responsible young people at Cloughwood. A love of writing will enable our pupils to better reflect and critically evaluate what they see, read and are told and to form good attitudes and relationships. Opportunities will be positively sought to utilise SMSC principles in every curriculum lesson. A focus on writing and telling stories which reflect British Values will be promoted.

## **7. Curriculum Links**

All subject teachers will meet regularly to collaborate on the development of writing across the school. Also, time will be designated for teachers to regularly moderate writing.

## **8. Literacy Development**

As with writing in Cloughwood, Reading and Speaking and Listening development are key priorities. It is expected that teachers pay equal regard to improving all three key areas for all pupils. For details of how this is done, please refer to the relevant policies.

## **9. SENDIT**

In addition to the development of writing skills in English lessons and across the curriculum, the Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion team will provide interventions to assist in this work with pupils identified as needing additional support. (See SENDIT policy).

## **10. Health and Safety**

All staff at Cloughwood are responsible for providing the most stimulating, motivating and safe learning environment and care must be taken to ensure this is maintained. If LOTC activities are planned or there is a perceived element of risk relating to an activity undertaken to improve writing, the relevant EVOLVE assessments must be made well in advance of pupils' participation. Off-site visits must be preceded by parental consent. All resources and materials purchased for school must come from a reputable source and with approval of the Principal and/or School Business Manager.

## **11. Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

All teachers must create a folder for each year group using the APP grids to record progress and these will be monitored at the end of each half-term by the Curriculum and Standards Co-ordinator.

Work must be marked in accordance with the school's Marking Policy.

## **12. CPD and Subject Development**

On an annual basis there will be many INSET opportunities for staff in relation to writing, particularly for introducing strategies designed to improve boys writing. Collaborative sessions will be organised as will moderation meetings and discussions of pupil progress. If necessary, external advice and support will be sought to support teaching staff in their delivery of teaching writing. It is each teacher's responsibility to highlight any personal training concerns or interests in their annual subject development plans. Staff are expected to reflect on their ability to teach writing and to identify any training needs that might improve their practice. They are also required to keep abreast of any developments or new ideas in the realm of literacy support and to learn and implement new strategies or techniques.

### 13. **Review and Evaluation**

All staff are required to critically evaluate their own performance and in particular, the impact their teaching has had on certain groups or individuals. Annually, staff will be required to report on their performance and on the progress of pupils in their care. The Curriculum and Standards Co-ordinator will monitor teachers' work regularly and report back to SMT and TLC & S subcommittee.

From time to time teachers will be invited to report to Directors or SMT on how they are making progress with any aspect of their work, including the teaching of literacy. Staff will also be observed in lesson observations and in learning walks by SMT, Directors, visitors (by prior arrangement), or by colleagues looking to share best practice.