

COLLATON ST. MARY C. OF E. (V.A.) PRIMARY SCHOOL, PAIGNTON

WRITING POLICY

OCTOBER 1997

**Rationale**

Throughout our school emphasis must be placed on valuing each child's writing as an expression of their feelings, ideas and understanding. From the very beginning we must develop their confidence in themselves as authors.

To ensure writing of the highest quality we must provide close links with reading so that the children have constant access to good models of poetry, fiction and non-fiction writing.

We must also ensure that our children have all the skills they need to communicate effectively through their writing and to present it correctly. We must teach those skills according to a developmental framework.

Our Policy

1. Balance between experimental approach and correct presentation

Throughout our school we must be aware of the BALANCE between the quality of the children's ideas and the correct presentation of their writing. It is important that our children are not restricted when choosing vocabulary, by selecting only words that they can spell correctly. Our assessment sheets specify the use of imaginative, precise vocabulary. We encourage this by teaching the children to experiment with spelling and invent their own spellings, based on their phonic knowledge. We must encourage the flow of writing so that children can really communicate their ideas and thoughts.

In Key Stage One, we value the children's own writing and mark-making from the earliest stages i.e. emergent writing. They must be given opportunities to write for real purposes and audiences e.g. shopping lists, forms to fill in, letters to nursery rhyme characters.

This policy must be supported by classrooms rich in words for the children to see and strong systematic phonics teaching. We use the order in Longman Language One. This order is reproduced in the scheme of work for class 1 and class 2.

It is our policy to display the children's writing at any stage during the writing process, reflecting inventive and experimental spelling.

In upper Key Stage One and lower Key Stage Two, the children must make the transition from emergent writing to correct spelling. We facilitate this by teaching spelling in patterns and using a rigorous framework. (See Spelling Policy). We must continue to encourage the quality of the ideas of the writing.

2. Importance of the writing process

The writing process is of crucial importance. Planning, drafting and re-drafting, with the real purpose of improving the final product, will place the emphasis on the quality of the writing. Re-drafting should improve the use of figurative language and descriptive, exciting ideas, as well as punctuation and spellings.

Plans, in the form of picture plans, storyboards etc. should be a constant point of referral throughout the process, and first drafts should be kept, ideally in the child's writing book.

Our children should be given the opportunity to undertake an extended writing task, going through the whole writing process, once every half-term. This could be any form of writing - stories, non-fiction, letters, newspaper articles, poems etc. During Key Stage Two, the children must learn to work through the writing process in less time, so that ideally, they can plan, review and write in one session by year 6, still making use of the principles they have been taught from class one.

It can be very valuable to display the whole writing process, including first drafts that have been altered and worked on.

### 3. Importance of the range of writing

To ensure that our children are given the opportunity to write in a range of forms, we use the Devon Curriculum Advice Folio on "Range in Writing" to inform our planning. This lists four main categories for writing:

- ♦ to persuade
- ♦ to create
- ♦ to express
- ♦ to refer to

These are outlined in more detail in the scheme of work for each class.

Using cross-curricular links, our children should write in several different forms each week.

### 4. Links with reading, speaking and listening

It is not possible for children to write good poetry unless they read a lot of good poetry and have it read to them. This applies to all forms of writing and the children must have constant access to good models of writing. Discussions about alliteration, characterisation, description etc. in literature will encourage children to use these skills in their own writing. This will also encourage a widening vocabulary.

Group reading, as well as providing excellent opportunities to develop language about language, can also provide material for writing. Follow-up activities could be in the form of letters to one of the characters, predicting the next part of the story, writing endings, writing the next scene of the play etc.

Writing can be used to enrich drama activities such as different sides in a debate, radio plays etc.

The children's own writing could also be used as group reading material.

### 5. The importance of talk to improve the quality of writing

We must give children the opportunity to TALK about their writing with their peers and teacher and possibly other adults. We must teach the skills of being "a response partner" from the beginning of school. This would include the skill of listening and asking questions to deepen the writer's thinking and raise awareness of an audience.

### 6. The importance of high standards of presentation

Throughout Key Stage Two in particular, the standard of organising writing in paragraphs, varying punctuation, correct spelling, adventurous vocabulary and handwriting must be improving all the time.

These skills are outlined in the scheme of work for each class.

Dictionaries, spell-checkers, thesauruses, should be used regularly to improve any piece of writing.

We must be seen to value well presented work highly. Final products must be displayed carefully, shared with other classes, added to the library etc.

#### 7. The use of our marking policy

Throughout Key Stage Two every teacher will use the same symbols to draw attention to mistakes in the children's writing. The marking policy is particularly useful for reinforcing specific learning objectives and the criteria for that particular piece of writing. For example, if the correct use of paragraphs was the learning objective for a piece of work, the correct symbol is useful for demonstrating where new paragraphs should begin.

It is also very helpful to use the marking policy when working on a first draft with a child.

The marking policy will be displayed for the children to refer to, or stuck in their books.

#### 8. Assessment

We use the Assessment sheets from the "Primary English Profile" to indicate each child's progress. This is useful summative assessment. It is also important to make formative assessments regularly. It is vital that the children know what the criteria are for a successful piece of work, and how well they have achieved these, and what they must work on to improve.

The following points are included on the Assessment sheets, and have implications for the range of our teaching:

- ◆ understanding of persuasion and argument in writing
- ◆ wide range of stimuli for writing
- ◆ appropriate forms for particular audiences
- ◆ adventurous word choices
- ◆ beginning to use simile, metaphor and alliteration in writing
- ◆ written synthesis of information gathered from more than one source
- ◆ writing from different viewpoints
- ◆ uses vocabulary imaginatively and with precision

