

5. WRITING SKILLS

5.1 Sharing evidence, research and data

Statement	Advice & Resources	Notes & Comments
Is writing data collected and analysed to determine pupils' attainment in the full range of writing skills and their ability to complete extended writing tasks? Is this compared with national data trends?	<p>With new GCSE specifications requiring much more extended writing, schools need to collect data about students' writing from all subjects, to ensure pupils are competent in all genres of writing using an academic register. See the national strategies in Improving Writing: a handbook for KS3.</p> <p>See Children and Young People's Writing in 2017/18 for findings from the National Literacy Trust's Annual Literacy Survey. This found that half of children and young people either only enjoy writing a bit or not at all. Overall, fewer children and young people in 2017/18 said that they enjoy writing compared with the year before.</p> <p>For national data, use the DfE Performance website to look at KS2 SATs data from your feeder schools.</p>	
Does a focus on writing form part of the school improvement plan and departmental improvement plans? Is there a policy for improving writing skills in all subjects based on analysis of the school's data?	For an example of a policy, see The City Academy's clear five-strand literacy policy in Improving literacy in secondary schools: A shared responsibility (Ofsted, 2013, p18-19).	
Is current research about the teaching of writing shared with teachers, parents/carers and students (as appropriate)?	See the Annual Literacy Research and Policy Guide 2018/19 (secondary) for other key research about writing. See also What is the research evidence on writing? (DfE, 2012).	

5.2 Writing skills in the curriculum

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During curriculum and extra-curricular time, do all subject areas integrate pupils' writing in a range of purposes and a wide variety of forms? These should include modern digital forms.	<p>Develop and expand staff's subject knowledge of different text types and text purposes (including non-fiction and fiction texts) so they can model and deconstruct different texts confidently. Build on the membership primary resource, Genre and Text-type Mapping.</p> <p>Use Talk for writing in Secondary Schools, Strong, J. (Open University Press, 2013) to get ideas of how to integrate writing in all subjects.</p>	

Does the school's curriculum promote writing in a variety of ways? This may include using tutor time, lunchtime clubs, drop-down days and library sessions?	See how Springfield School is developing pupils' extended writing across different departments in Improving literacy in secondary schools: A shared responsibility (Ofsted, 2013, p25-28).	
Does the subject curriculum time give pupils' time for extended writing and opportunities to teach pupils the writing skills of editing and redrafting to produce writing of high quality?	Teachers should give pupils opportunities to practise writing, editing and redrafting in pairs, groups and independently. See the membership resource Transforming Writing: 12 key classroom approaches .	
Is curriculum time used to focus explicitly on improving spelling, punctuation and grammar and vocabulary in all subject areas?	The national curriculum emphasises that pupils should be taught to "pay attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling and should "consolidate and build on their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through: ... extending and applying the grammatical knowledge set out in English Appendix 2 See our resource Grammar for writing which can be used to consolidate teacher knowledge.	
In all lessons, do teachers use writing to consolidate students' knowledge and understanding of their subject area as well as promoting enjoyment in their subject?	Teachers should exploit the fact that reading and writing are reciprocal and speaking and writing are generative in nature. The teaching of writing combines the three elements continually.	

5.3 Developing teacher knowledge and pedagogy

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Do teachers design and set authentic writing tasks that have a clear purpose, audience and form (genre)?	Lessons where writing tasks give pupils real audiences and contexts have a consistently positive impact. Writing outcomes should be linked to pupils' lives and interests outside of school. See Moving English forward , (Ofsted, 2013)	
Do teachers use the sequence of teaching writing to scaffold the writing process?	See the membership resource Learning to Write, Reading to Learn . It provides a class pedagogy that supports the teaching of reading and writing and sees the two as mutually enhancing.	



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Do teachers collect and provide high quality examples of writing to illustrate and deconstruct what good writing looks like?	See <i>How to Teach Writing Across the Curriculum</i> (ages 8-14) by Palmer, S. (Routledge, 2010) which gives a range of non-fiction examples for each subject area, along with a number of resources such as planning frameworks for use in class. Use sample annotated texts from different subjects, or attend our IPEELL course for improving writing at KS2 and 3.	
Do teachers explicitly model the writing process, talk through writing choices and deconstruct example texts, drawing out the language features to develop pupils' knowledge about how to write in that style?	See how The City Academy identified that teachers in all subjects should 'model' writing for their pupils and included it in their policy Improving literacy in secondary schools: A shared responsibility (Ofsted, 2013).	
Is talk used as a key strategy for developing writing? Do teachers encourage discussion about writing in the classroom? For example, writing jointly and then comparing and improving their own and peers' work?	Encourage discussion with pupils around what makes a good piece of writing for the task. See the membership resource Dictogloss which explains a strategy that integrates, listening, speaking and collaborative writing.	
Is writing a rich and varied teaching and learning experience that uses active strategies within a multi-modal approach?	Many of the texts pupils experience online are multi modal - a combination of print, image, sound and movement. Give pupils the opportunity to use technology in their writing –such as blogs, social media, journalistic writing for further ideas. Also, see <i>Visual Approaches to Teaching Writing</i> by Bearne, E. and Wolstencroft, H. (Sage, 2007). Research shows that boys in particular respond enthusiastically to projects which involve this approach.	
Are spelling, grammar and punctuation taught in an engaging and contextualised way within writing to illustrate their effect? It should go beyond simply knowing terms, towards encouraging pupils to enjoy playing with language.	See the membership webinar Making Grammar Work from Debra Myhill, which shows that the teaching of grammar needs to be integrated and explored as part of the writing process. Our membership resource, Embedding grammar teaching across the secondary curriculum includes a list of the top 10 research articles about the teaching of grammar and specific ideas for embedding grammar in writing about history.	

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Do teachers use a consistent approach when assessing pupils' writing using the same marking symbols?	See strategies from the National Literacy Trust's Transforming Writing: Final Evaluation Report to embed formative assessment in writing lessons. Ensure you have a whole school marking policy that highlights specific features for all to correct. Embed the teaching of spelling through interactive games, and tasks and use vocabulary journals to explore and play with word morphology.	

5.4 Developing a writing skills ethos and environment across the whole school

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Is the importance of developing writing skills in all subject areas visible and displayed in a range of ways? This includes pupils' own work with annotations and references to choices about structure, vocabulary and spelling.	Classroom environments should display the process of writing and demonstrate and celebrate all forms of writing (formal, multi-modal, web based). Use pupils' work and GCSE standardisation materials available on examination websites to display good models.	
Are all teachers, pupils, parents/carers, members of the community used to showing how writing is a purposeful and necessary skill? This could be carried out through participation in cross-curricular writing projects or events.	See how Springfield School promotes 'real writing' (p28) and extended writing following visits from authors and professors in Improving literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility (Ofsted, 2013, p25-28).	
Does the school's leadership team involve the whole-school community in developing pupils' writing skills, challenging the belief that it is just the job of the English department? This can result in the implementation of whole-school writing initiatives as well as strong links between feeder schools, home and supplementary schools.	Do all staff know what the expected level writing from Year 6 looks like? Use the 2018 teacher assessment exemplification: KS2 English writing (DfE, 2017) with all staff. See how Chenderit School Sixth Formers run six week blocks of support with writing projects for Key Stage 3, in Improving literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility (Ofsted, 2013, p14-17). Involve governors, parents or supplementary schools in key events that promote and develop writing skills. For example, the Goldsmith's multilingual digital story telling project .	