

The Teaching of Writing at Bentley Heath

VISION AND INTENT

At Bentley Heath, English is at the heart of everything we do. By the end of Year Six, we intend our children to have developed a love of writing and to be able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and creatively through the written word. We also intend to create writers who can re-read, edit and improve their own writing, and enable pupils to be able to confidently use the essential skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. We set high expectations for all our children to take pride in their work and have a fluent, cursive handwriting style alongside allowing their imaginations to flourish.

Through using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary rich learning environments and ensuring new curriculum expectations and the progression of skills are met, our children will be exposed to a language heavy, creative and continuous English curriculum which will not only enable them to become primary literate but will also develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to help us to develop confident, enthusiastic writers who can express themselves in a variety of different styles and across a variety of contexts, our teaching of writing is based on a wide range of carefully selected texts. In English lessons, teachers plan using a 'Reading into Writing' approach. Our units of work empower our teachers to provide high-quality teaching of writing through children's high-quality literature. The units of work focus on engaging, vocabulary-rich texts, with a wealth of writing opportunities.

- Learning journeys are led using a quality text as the stimulus, this may be fiction (including poetry) or non-fiction in line with the National Curriculum and comprehension, grammar and writing are embedded in lessons.
- In Early Years, English is planned around early reading, early writing and phonics.

Early Writing

We aim for all of our children to be able to write independently in a variety of genres and for a range of purposes with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment. We believe children should understand from an early age that their writing needs to be accurate, legible and set out in an appropriate way. From early on in their learning journey, children explore a range of genres, see adults writing and experiment themselves through mark marking, symbols and conventional script. Though oral rehearsal, children learn to communicate meaning in narrative and non-fiction texts and spell and punctuate correctly. As they move through the school, children develop an understanding that writing is essential to thinking and learning but also enjoyable in its own right. They learn the main rules and conventions of written English and start to explore how the English language can be used to express meaning in different ways. Powerful teaching techniques such as shared and guided writing mean children are exposed to high quality demonstration, exploration and discussion of the choices writers make. Children use the planning, drafting and editing process to improve their work and alongside effective feedback marking, are encouraged to become reflective, resilient learners.

Enriching experiences

We strongly believe in giving children first hand experiences to draw on information and emotions to enhance their learning and are always seeking ways to engage with the local area. Trips to local places of interest and visits from local figures are essential to provide an engaging starting point to enable the children to achieve high quality writing. We also feel that, wherever possible, children should write for a purpose and take pride in their learning; therefore we provide many opportunities for children to share their writing with the intended audience and to exhibit their work with the rest of our school community via prominent school displays and our school Twitter feed.

Spellings

Spellings are taught according to the rules and words contained in Appendix 1 of the English National Curriculum. Teachers use Purple Mash in Key Stage 2 and Read, Write Inc in Key Stage 1 to support their teaching. Children are given spellings to learn each week and are given a spelling test the following week. When marking work, teachers identify words that children have spelt incorrectly from within that child's known ability and the child will practice these as part of their English lesson. Statutory spellings and common exception words are also taught throughout English lessons.

Assessment

Informal assessment is on-going and forms part of every lesson, feeding into teacher's planning. Children are involved in self and peer assessment. Teachers provide feedback to pupils on a daily basis, either in written or verbal form. This feedback focuses on how the success criteria have been achieved and the next steps children can take to improve their writing.

Teachers will use their teacher assessment to determine whether a child is working within age-related expectations, above or below. They will base their judgements on the quality of the independent write that pupils produce at the end of each unit. Children's writing is moderated internally as well as within the BDMAT externally.

Reading into Writing

At Bentley Heath, we use a 'Reading into Writing' approach as we firmly believe that reading is the key focal point of good writing – it encourages curious writers who use a range of ambitious vocabulary and written techniques to create purposeful final pieces.

Everything the children read will, in turn, support them with their writing.

Each genre is taught through a journey approach, where the last piece of writing in the journey is the 'final write' – a piece of writing that has been researched, modelled, planned, drafted and edited. Throughout the journey, children explore the genre by reading lots of different examples, look at grammar and punctuation and spelling linked to the writing and learn to plan, draft and edit their work.

We know that it is important that children are given a reason to write (EEF, 2021), and we teach these purposes of writing progressively, building year on year.

- **Writing to entertain**
- **Writing to inform**
- **Writing to persuade (KS2)**
- **Writing to discuss (UKS2)**

