

Writing

How we teach writing at Crofton Infants' School

Writing is a complex skill for children to learn and it involves applying many concepts, skills and knowledge all at once. We hope that by sharing with you how we teach the children at school to write, and by giving you some ideas of what you can do at home to help, we can continue to improve writing at Crofton Infants' School.

We try to make the teaching of writing as fun and relevant for the children as possible, ensuring that we cover a variety of topics and genres. Children will engage more fully with a writing task if they can see a clear purpose behind it, for example, writing recipes that they will cook later in the week, writing stories to read to younger children or writing recounts of events they have taken part in.

What does writing involve?

Research has shown that young children go through the following 7 developmental steps when learning to write:

- Drawing and sign writing
- Letter like forms
- Copied letters
- Child's name and string of letters
- Words
- Sentences
- Text
- Editing and polishing

In order to become an effective writer, children need to learn to transcribe and compose. Within Early Years and early Key Stage 1, we focus on oral composition and rehearsal whilst teaching the skills of transcription, mainly through the teaching of phonics and handwriting skills. We think a sentence, say a sentence, count the number of words in the sentence, say the sentence again, write the sentence and then read the sentence we have written.

As children move through Years 1 and 2 we begin to develop their written composition skills, whilst extending and consolidating their phonic knowledge. We also teach the skills of checking and editing written work using **Magic 5**.

1. Does my writing begin with a capital letter?
2. Does my writing have finger spaces between words?
3. Is my handwriting neat?
4. Does my work make sense?
5. Is my sentence punctuated correctly?

Writing also involves many complex physical skills and therefore in Early Years the teaching of writing includes lots of gross, medium and fine motor activities, both indoors and outdoors, to help develop the fine pencil control necessary to form letters. Children take part in daily **dough disco** activities and **funky fingers**.

The teaching of writing is supported by regular assessments, which are used to identify areas for development for individual children, classes and year groups. To help us make our judgements we take into consideration the statements in the Development Matters document in the Early Years and the objectives from the New National Curriculum at Key Stage 1. These tell us where a child is currently working and what aspects or skills they need to work on next to make progress.

How you can help your child develop their writing at home

- **Read to them.** Reading books to your child helps to develop their vocabulary and exposes them to the language they need to help compose their own writing.
- **Talk to them.** Talking to your child about what they are doing and seeing and what is happening around them will help to expand their vocabulary and model sentence construction for them which they will then begin to apply in their own talk, and eventually their writing.
- **Model for them – let them see you writing.** If your child sees that writing is something you do on a regular basis then they will want to do it too, they will see it as something important.
- **Get them to help when you need to write** – shopping lists, birthday and thank you cards, emails, texts etc.
- Ask your child to write sentences to caption family photos that can be put together in an album. Good practise for writing and a great keepsake too!

- **Younger children** – help them to develop their motor skills by activities such as painting, play dough, Lego, jigsaws, cutting & sticking, chalk on the ground, throwing & catching. All these help to develop the skills that allow a child to effectively control a pencil for writing.
- **Boys** – it can be notoriously hard to engage some boys in wanting to write. Some ideas for making it more appealing can be to write on a large scale, use shaped paper, and write outside or use mind mapping. It is also really important that they see male role models writing.