

Ballifield Primary's Writing Curriculum



***If you want to
change the world,
pick up your pen
and write.***

MARTIN LUTHER

Context

The context of Writing at Ballifield Primary School is that of a large urban primary school, serving children in the age range 3-11 years. The catchment is predominantly white British with broadly average deprivation indicators and free school meals.

OUR INTENT FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Purpose

Our English Curriculum ensures children communicate their ideas through:



At Ballifield, we are committed to helping every child develop the skills to become a confident and effective writer, fostering a genuine love for the written word. Through an imaginative and purposeful curriculum, our pupils are encouraged to explore their creativity, express themselves with flair, and develop a lifelong passion for writing.

In today's ever-changing world, where screens and digital devices often limit children's engagement with different forms of English, we strive to provide a curriculum that builds strong, systematic foundations. At every stage of their education, children acquire the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed as writers and communicators.

Aim

An appreciation for rich, high quality literature underpins the Writing curriculum at Ballifield Primary School and we endeavour to promote a lifelong love of the written word and the English language for all pupils, especially our disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

Our Writing Curriculum has been designed to deliver the national curriculum objectives for **writing, spelling and grammar** and **speaking and listening**. Long term planning maps each strand of the curriculum to make clear exactly what is to be taught in each year group and are further broken down into small steps for each term.

We place high quality texts at the heart of our Writing Curriculum and the texts children study are carefully selected in recognition of their central importance in teaching children how texts are structured, how authors write, exposing them to diverse styles and contexts and helping to build cultural capital. The text scheme of work has been carefully crafted to become increasingly complex in style, content and theme. Careful consideration has been given to the knowledge and reading experiences that children need in order to access increasingly complex and anachronistic texts at the end of key stage 2 and beyond.

Building strong foundations in early writing have been identified and are taught explicitly in both EYFS and Key Stage 1 to ensure our children get off to the best possible start with their writing. These include learning, practising and securing the basics of:

- how to compose simple sentences orally
- how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters and numbers
- how to spell
- how to become a fluent reader

We ensure that we do not introduce overly complex writing tasks too soon, as doing so would not allow our children to learn and practice their foundational knowledge.

In Key Stage 2, these foundational skills are built upon with increasing independence, precision and sophistication. Pupils are taught to write with greater control and fluency, developing their ability to structure ideas across longer pieces, select appropriate vocabulary for effect and write for a range of purposes and audiences. Spelling, handwriting and sentence construction continue to be explicitly taught and refined, ensuring accuracy supports composition rather than limiting it. Reading remains central, providing pupils with rich models of language and enabling them to draw on a growing bank of vocabulary, structures and ideas to enhance their writing.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEACHING OF WRITING AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

The School Curriculum Requirements

As a maintained school in England, Ballifield Primary School is legally required to follow the statutory national curriculum which sets out in a programme of study, on the basis of key stages, subject content for the subject of English that should be taught to all pupils.

Time allocation for English

English is taught daily in EYFS, KS1 and KS2. Lessons are on average one hour long, but may vary depending on the age group.

Teaching and Learning

The curriculum is delivered through meticulously planned and sequenced units plans which vary in length in accordance with the challenge and length of text. Some units are longer than others, and can range from 2-3 weeks in length in KS1 and LKS2, to 4 weeks in some LKS2 and several UKS2 units. Unit plans specify the writing, and spelling and grammar knowledge to be taught through small-step objectives and teaching sequences which further specify the outcome and vocabulary knowledge to be taught in each sequence. Unit plans identify the prior knowledge that children need to fully access the learning and identify areas to develop cultural capital.

There is a high focus on vocabulary development throughout the Curriculum with each unit including a dedicated vocabulary session, exploring the morphology, etymology and nuances of meaning. Additional vocabulary development sessions occur weekly in KS2, equipping our

children with a broad and deep vocabulary that gives them a rich palette with which to express themselves.

Achieving automaticity in transcription—fluent, accurate handwriting, spelling and sentence construction—is essential for freeing up cognitive capacity to focus on composition. In line with the DfE Writing Framework (2025), Ballifield places strong emphasis on developing transcriptional fluency at the earliest stages of writing. For early and developing writers, dictated sentences are used routinely to secure accurate spelling, grammar and handwriting, and to help children apply taught conventions with fluency. Once children are secure in transcriptional fluency, they move on to applying their developing writing skills at sentence level. These shorter, focused tasks enable pupils to practise and embed their skills without the additional cognitive demands of extended composition. When sentence-level writing is secure, pupils progress to structured planning and shorter compositions, gradually increasing in length and complexity as appropriate. Our emphasis is on ensuring that children are not pushed too quickly through this sequence. Rushing pupils ahead risks creating gaps in foundational skills, which can set them up for future difficulties, such as embedding bad habits. Instead, the teaching sequence is carefully paced, with consolidation and fluency as the priority at each stage.

Consistent handwriting instruction is ensured by following the training and structure of the ISHA scheme. In KS1 and lower KS2, short, focused handwriting sessions are delivered with high frequency, tapering off in lower KS2 as fluency and legibility become secure. This structured approach ensures handwriting does not become a barrier to composition and supports the wider goal of achieving automaticity in transcription.

The English skills of reading, writing and oracy are also carefully woven into the wider curriculum where there are opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction and write for a range of purposes which are meaningful to the subject being studied and provide an opportunity for children to practise their writing skills and knowledge and to embed their knowledge through writing.

Teaching sequences have been carefully planned so that knowledge builds incrementally with time to consolidate prior learning and multiple opportunities to embed new skills. Through teaching sequences, children learn how to read as a reader and as a writer, understanding the meaning of what is being read and the impact and effect of language and syntax. A systematic approach to modelled writing makes the expectations for independent writing explicit and makes clear the grammar and vocabulary that children will be expected to apply. Children are taught to independently write and redraft their work to a high standard. End of unit final outcomes provide an opportunity to assess how well children have embedded the knowledge and skills taught in the unit.

Planning

- Long term plans set out the clear sequencing and coherence of the English curriculum across each year group for the academic year. These plans detail the texts to be used as a model, and the form and genre of written outcomes.
- Medium term plans set out a coherent and well-sequenced series of lessons for each unit of work.

In KS1 the sequence over a unit consists of:

- **Listen to/read** the text or stimulus that the unit is based on

- **Vocabulary:** discuss the meaning of and write vocabulary identified in the text
- **Skills:** sentence or word-level skills-based lessons
- **Writing:** children write over a few sessions, some using scaffolded (dictated) sessions and others writing with more independence

In Key Stage 1, pupils are given frequent opportunities to speak, rehearse and explore language aloud, enabling them to develop vocabulary and orally compose sentences before writing. This ensures that, although transcription skills are still developing, children can communicate ideas with increasing confidence and clarity. Alongside this, there is a strong emphasis on accuracy, with explicit teaching of spelling, handwriting and basic sentence construction so that pupils develop secure and consistent habits from the outset.

In KS2 the sequence over a unit consists of:

- **Analyse the model:** These lessons identify features of writing in the text that form the author's writing toolkit. Children will consider how these elements are effective, their impact on the reader and how best to emulate them
 - **Vocabulary:** explicitly teach vocabulary that will support the writing
 - **Skills:** Following on from an analysis of the text, the identified authorial techniques are taught to pupils in sentence-level skills-based lessons. There will also be a vocabulary lesson, introducing tier 2 vocabulary that will be effective in the writing.
 - **Application:** Children will then have opportunities to apply these skills in shorter writes at paragraph level. This stage builds deliberately on secure sentence-level writing so that children can focus on meaning and authorial intent once transcriptional demands are automatic.
 - The final stage of a unit usually comprises an **extended piece of writing** which is planned through a variety of formats, drafted and reviewed. Careful consideration is given to whether children are ready for extended composition, and no pupil is expected to write at length until transcriptional fluency and sentence-level control are secure.
- Consideration is given to the ensuring that skills are revisited over the year to ensure that children have sufficient opportunity to embed the skills and acquire automaticity with them.

Writing Resources

The school has whole class copies of selected texts, which are usually kept in the appropriate year group. Other texts and additional copies are sourced from the School's Library Service (SLS) in Sheffield. The English lead supports staff with sourcing and ordering resources as and when needed.

Inclusion

We understand that the most effective inclusion strategy begins with high-quality inclusive writing teaching, which benefits all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Teachers are aware that pupils who

have barriers to learning in other areas may have a passion and love of writing, which will always be capitalised on.

We also recognise that strong foundations in communication, language, spelling and handwriting will aide pupils' to access our writing curriculum to the maximum. Adaptive teaching methods will be put into practice to support all pupils. Teachers also recognise that pupils' work and learning outcomes can take many forms, such as demonstrating their understanding orally, in pictures or in mark making.

While it is expected that most children will progress through our curriculum at a similar rate, we recognise that some pupils require additional support to maintain this pace. These children may access immediate intervention (pre or post teaching activities) to ensure they are adequately prepared for their next writing lesson. Some will receive targeted, differentiated small group sessions or 1:1 support tailored to their specific writing needs.

EYFS

Children in the Early Years have a range of opportunities to mark make through a range of multi-sensory provision activities including: chunky chalks outside, paintbrushes and water, painting, colouring, mark making in sand and salt. Staff in the Early Years are continually engaging with children in their play and in adult led sessions to develop and widen their vocabulary.

Whilst in Nursery, children are encouraged to write their name and mark make for purpose through a range of adult led and child-initiated activities including role play. Children begin RWI during the spring term to encourage them to Fred talk and blend sounds, including learning what sounds look like in the written form.

Whilst in Reception, children have daily handwriting sessions including finger dancing to build up the muscles in their hands and to encourage them to form letters correctly. Reception children have weekly Literacy lessons which provide opportunities to widen their vocabulary whilst using their phonics skills to write. At the beginning of the year children are encouraged to hear and write initial sounds, this builds up during the year to writing simple sentences in line with ELG.

Oracy

Oracy plays a fundamental role in developing strong writing skills in primary education. The ability to articulate thoughts clearly through spoken language precedes and directly supports children's capacity to express themselves effectively in writing. At Ballifield, oracy is deliberately built into every writing unit: pupils are encouraged to "speak it before they write it," ensuring that oral rehearsal forms the foundation for written composition.

Through oral discussion, children learn to organise their ideas, refine their vocabulary choices, and experiment with sentence structures before committing them to paper. Children are often able to compose at a higher level orally than in writing, both in terms of vocabulary and sentence construction. By rehearsing ideas aloud, they can access and embed ambitious language that might otherwise be beyond their immediate written fluency.

Engaging in purposeful talk—such as sharing ideas, debating, and orally rehearsing sentences—helps pupils clarify their thinking and develop a richer, more precise use of

language. Verbalising ideas also enhances pupils' understanding of tone, audience, and purpose, enabling them to make more deliberate stylistic choices in their writing.

By embedding oracy into every stage of the writing curriculum, Ballifield fosters confident, reflective communicators who can effectively translate their spoken language skills into written form. Prioritising oracy in writing instruction not only strengthens literacy outcomes but also nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to express ideas with clarity and coherence.

English and SMSC

At Ballifield, we believe that reading plays a role in the personal development of all children, especially our disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. It has been described as '*a gateway into another world*' and for many students their world view is indeed shaped by the books that they read. Through reading about other cultures and places, we learn about issues that may not directly affect our children, but allow them to consider different human experiences revealing how other people live their lives. At Ballifield, we recognise that in a world that is full of conflict and challenge, children need to know that at some level we are all human and every individual deserves to be treated with kindness and respect.

English and British Values (where applicable e.g. in PSHE)

At Ballifield, we promote the fundamental British values of:

1. **Democracy**
2. The **rule of law**
3. **Individual liberty**
4. Mutual **respect**
5. **Tolerance** of those with different faiths and beliefs

We believe that English can make a key educational contribution to children's' explorations of British Values through the promotion of these values through the chosen texts. They provide an opportunity for the children **to discuss and enquire**: we can't tell pupils what to value, but we can help them understand the impact of different values, help them question what they may hear and understand from different sources, and help them gain a deeper understanding about the role they as individuals can play in embodying these shared values and shaping society.

Through discussions, paired writing and editing of work children learn to value and respect each other's contributions to the lessons. The opportunity to provide peer feedback is modelled so that it is based in respect and follow the rules of the classroom and develop tolerance for those with different levels of abilities to their own.

THE IMPACT OF THE TEACHING OF WRITING AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Assessment, reporting and monitoring

- Throughout units of learning, teachers recap and review previous learning to ensure that children are building their skills on solid foundations.
- Gaps are filled before new knowledge is taught and AfL is used constantly to ensure children know and remember more.

- Pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school is tracked and monitored by the Subject Leader and SLT in order to ensure that English provision at Ballifield is impactful. The Subject Leader will also be able to identify areas for development and children who are finding it difficult to achieve the end of year outcomes. Through discussion with teachers, ways to further support children to meet the learning outcomes are devised.
- As required by law, we report pupils' attainment in Writing in written form to parents once a year, specifying whether their child has met the learning outcomes taught through our English curriculum. In addition to this, attainment and progress in writing is a key point of discussion throughout the academic year with parents so that they are clear on how their child is progressing, as well as areas or gaps they have. We encourage parents and carers to support with closing gaps where possible, providing supporting resources where useful.

Role of the Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for overseeing teaching and learning in writing at Ballifield. This role includes:

- Ensuring staff are clear on our approach to writing and are meeting the requirements of the EYFS framework and National Curriculum.
- Supporting staff with planning and delivery of writing.
- Monitoring the teaching and learning of writing.
- Providing and sourcing training and CPD (INSETs & PDMs) for staff.
- Attending Subject Network meetings, and other appropriate CPD, to connect and liaise with other Writing Leads across the city, feeding back key messages/updates to staff at Ballifield.

Policy date: April 2026

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