

How we teach writing at Dunstable Icknield Lower School (DILS)

The importance of Writing

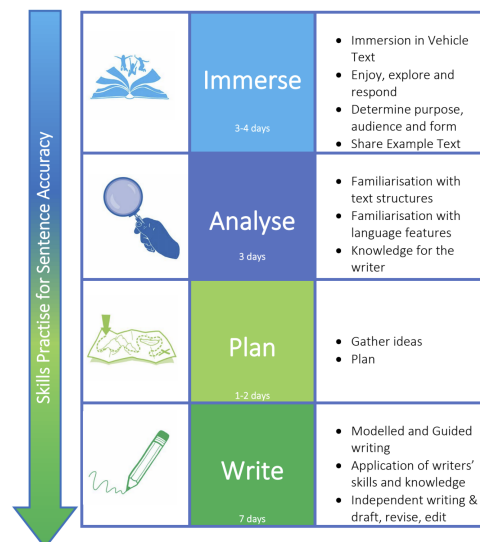
At DILS, we believe that reading and high quality spoken language is fundamental to support children's writing. It is important to us that our children are aware writing is a necessary tool for life. We value opportunities for high quality discussions and the use of engaging and enriching texts to support children's writing and development of vocabulary. Therefore as a school we have implemented the 'Read to Write' scheme of work from Literacy Counts in addition to their 'Sentence Accuracy' scheme.



Rationale

'Read to Write' empowers our teachers to provide high-quality teaching of writing through high-quality literature. These revised and detailed units of work centre on engaging, vocabulary-rich texts, with a wealth of writing opportunities within and across the curriculum. These units are being implemented with great success because they also provide:

- Clear Sequential Episodes of Learning:









- Example Texts (at a greater depth expectation)
- [Vocabulary Learning](#)
- Contextualised Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation
- Writer's Knowledge Linked to National Standards
- Sentence Accuracy Works Linked to National Standards
- Progressions Documents with Year Group Expectations
- Reflecting on Unit Outcomes: Planning for Next Steps
- Example Planning Format
- Wider Reading for the Wider Curriculum
- A Wealth of Resources Linked to the National Standards
- Explicit Links to the National Curriculum

The Read to Write scheme was selected for our school because its design is heavily based upon research influences (see appendix for extended details).







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Programme Structure (Progressive Sequence for Each Year Group)







Reception:

A	B	C	D	E	F
The Something 	Star in a Jar 	Juniper Jupiter 	Little Red 	The Extraordinary Gardener 	The Storm Whale 
Writing Outcome & Writing Purpose					
Narrative: A Losing Story Purpose: To tell and write a losing story	Narrative: A Finding Story Purpose: To tell and write a finding story	Narrative: A Superhero Story Purpose: To tell and write a superhero Story	Narrative: A Traditional Tale Purpose: To tell and write a traditional tale	Narrative: A transformational Story Purpose: To tell and write a transformational story	Narrative: A Friendship Story Purpose: To tell and write a friendship story
Recount: Animal Information Purpose: To inform	Information: Poster to find a lost star Purpose: To inform (and describe)	Information: A letter wanting to be a sidekick Purpose: To inform	Instructions: How to trap an animal Purpose: To instruct	Instructions: How to grow a garden plant / vegetable Purpose: To instruct	Poems: Sea creature poems Purpose: To describe




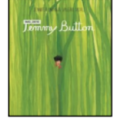


Year 1:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Old Bear 	Rapunzel 	Hermelin 	Where the Wild Things Are 	The Secret of Black Rock 	The Last Wolf 
Writing Outcome & Writing Purpose					
Narrative: Discovery Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Traditional Tale Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Detective Story Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Portal Story Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Return Story Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Hunting Story Purpose: To narrate
Recount: Messages Purpose: To recount	Instructions: How to catch a witch Purpose: To instruct	Recount: Letters Purpose: To recount	Information: Wild Things Purpose: To inform	Recount: Postcards Purpose: To recount	Instructions: Recipes Purpose: To instruct

Year 2:







A	B	C	D	E	F
A River 	The Night Gardener 	The Bog Baby 	Grandad's Island 	The King Who Banned the Dark 	Rosie Revere 
Writing Outcome & Writing Purpose					
Narrative: Circular Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Setting Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Finding Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Return Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: A Mistake Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Invention Narrative Purpose: To narrate
Recount: Letter Purpose: To inform	Recount: Diary Purpose: To recount	Instructions: How to build a habitat Purpose: To instruct	Information: Jungle Animals Purpose: To inform	Information: How to be a Regal Leader Purpose: To inform	Explanation: How a machine works Purpose: To explain

Year 3:

A	B	C	D	E	F
The Iron Man 	Fox 	The Rhythm of the Rain 	Jemmy Button 	Egyptology 	Into the Forest 
Writing Outcome & Writing Purpose					
Narrative: Approach Threat Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Fable Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Setting Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Return Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Egyptian Mystery Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Lost Narrative Purpose: To narrate
Explanation: How to capture the Iron Man Purpose: To explain	Information: Fox Report Purpose: To inform	Information: River Information Leaflet Purpose: To inform	Information: Letters Purpose: To recount	Information: Secret Diary Purpose: To inform	Recount: Newspaper Report Purpose: To recount

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Year 4:

A	B	C	D	E	F
The Whale 	Leaf 	Arthur and the Golden Rope 	The Lost Happy Endings 	The Journey 	Manfish 
Writing Outcome & Writing Purpose					
Narrative: Setting Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Outsider Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Myth Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Twisted Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Refugee Narrative Purpose: To narrate	Narrative: Invention Narrative Purpose: To narrate
Recount: Newspaper Report Purpose: To recount	Information: Polar Bears Purpose: To inform	Information: Defeating a Viking monster Purpose: To inform	Persuasion: Letter Purpose: To persuade	Recount: Diary Purpose: To recount	Recount: Jacques Cousteau Biography Purpose: To recount

Sentence Accuracy:

The Importance of Daily Sentence Accuracy



Daily Sentence Accuracy is a vital element of **Read to Write** and encompasses word, sentence, and punctuation from the statutory National Curriculum programme of study for writing *and* Appendix 2 (Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation). Children *must* demonstrate using these skills across a range of writing to achieve end of year standards. This daily practice also helps build **fluency** and **stamina** for writing. Example sentences are provided for teachers to model explicitly. Teachers of younger children may choose to dictate some of the sentences provided.

Example Sentences & Year Group Expectations

Blue shaded boxes link directly to year group expectations covered in this particular unit *and* are contextualised to the type of writing outcomes expected (e.g. Instructions, Narrative etc).

Example Sentences & Supporting *all* Children

Non-shaded boxes provide contextualised example sentences of **all Word, Sentence and Punctuations** elements for the entire year group and the preceding year group. This helps teachers consider the needs of the children in their classes and any identified gaps in learning. This important feature also allows for:

- ✓ Mixed age year groups
- ✓ Differentiation
- ✓ Reinforcement of grammar yet to be secured

Learn how to use expanded noun phrases for description and specification

The pond was full of crystal blue water.
He had a spiky tail.
He hid in the blue sea bucket.

Explainer: Phrases are a group of words (shown in orange) that make sense but do not contain a verb. A phrase alone is not a sentence.

Develop understanding of how words can combine to make sentences joining words and joining clauses using **and**






It had small wings and feet.
It was sad and alone.
It was happy and he was jumping up and down.

Explainer: The first two example 'and' is used to join words. In the third example 'and' is used to join a clause.

NB Teachers may want to provide additional opportunities for Sentence Accuracy work outside English lessons.

Using the Sentence Accuracy Checker

It is an important children check their work for errors and the Sentence Accuracy Check enables children to do this. Children benefit from regular daily modelling of its use by the teacher. It is important to demonstrate how to make additions, revisions and proof-read work. NB use them for extended writing also.

				
Word choice & effect	Spelling	Handwriting	Appropriate punctuation for effect	Read to an adult

Modelling Sentence Accuracy

When modelling Sentence Accuracy, always indicate grammatical feature by underlining in one colour (orange in example) and circle the punctuation marks in another (green shown in example). Modelling the use of brackets to explain the grammatical feature will also encourage the children to demonstrate their understanding when generating a sentence also with bracketed explanation of their own.

He hid inside the blue bucket. (blue bucket is a noun phrase)

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Assessment

In conjunction with the 'Read to Write' scheme of work, we follow the 'Assessment Counts' scheme from Literacy counts to ensure our assessment of writing complements our scheme of work. The assessment scheme is broken down into providing three different tables for each year group, one at below expected standard, one at expected standard, and working one above the expected standard (see example to the right).

Additionally, to aid our assessment, each term the whole school is given an identical stimulus (this could be a piece of writing, an image, art, or a piece of music) to then produce a piece of writing. We then use this to help internally moderate writing and as a means to facilitate staff to discuss attainment in writing across year groups and key stages. This practice also enables us to clearly see the progression of skills across the different year groups.

Where relevant, our foundation subjects or key events may be linked to our English learning, however our focus remains on teaching the English objectives.

Working at the <i>expected standard</i> in Year 3	
The pupil can:	
Composition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write narratives, describing setting and characters within a storyline or plot ✓ Use paragraphing to group related material, focusing on a theme or topic • In non-narrative, use simple organisational devices (heading and subheadings) • Use the present perfect form of verbs instead of the simple past (e.g. 'He has gone out to play' in contrast to 'He went out to play'.) ✓ Extend sentences using a wider range of conjunctions other than those stated in the working towards standard ✓ Express time, place and cause using conjunctions (e.g. <i>before, after, while</i>), adverbs (e.g. <i>soon, therefore</i>) and prepositions (e.g. <i>before, after, during, because of</i>) • Understand and use specific year 3 terminology (<i>preposition, conjunction, word family, prefix, clause, subordinate clause, direct speech, consonant, consonant letter, vowel letter, inverted commas and speech marks</i>) • Draw upon material read • Use, when appropriate, figurative language included metaphors and similes 	
Grammar and Punctuation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demarcate sentences with full stops, with occasional error • Demarcate sentences with capital letters, with occasional error ✓ Use question marks and exclamation marks mostly correctly, with occasional error • Use apostrophes consistently to mark the possession of singular nouns ✓ Begin to use inverted commas to punctuate direct speech 	
Spelling	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell mostly correctly, words with prefixes: sub-, super-, anti-, auto-, inter-, un-, dis-, mis-, in-, il-, im-, ir-, re- • Spell mostly correctly words with suffixes: -tion, -sion, -ation, -ture, -sure, -ly, -ally, -ed and er ✓ Spell many of the words in the yr3/4 NC list ✓ Spell many of the homophones and near homophones from the Y3/4 appendix • Begin to explore and understand how word families are based upon common words and are related in form and meaning e.g. solve, solution, insoluble • Use the first two letters of a word to check its spelling in a dictionary • Begin to build a varied and rich vocabulary 	
Handwriting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined. 	
Evaluate and Edit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effectiveness of their own and others' writing ✓ Identify some spelling and punctuation errors and make some changes to grammar and vocabulary 	

Supporting writing in the Early Years

A big focus begins in the Early Years with children learning to hold a pencil correctly using the dynamic tripod grip and demonstrating a good seating position (see diagrams below). We support children to develop these positive writing habits through strengthening their gross and fine motor skills to ensure that their muscles and fingers are strong enough to mark make.



Mark making is the first step in writing and this starts with exploration of large tools such as chunky chalks, paintbrushes and water, using fingers in sensory resources; it is not just writing with pencils and paper. Following on from exploration, mark making develops with children being taught to form letters correctly in the Early Years.

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Curriculum in the Early Years (Nursery)

Alongside a focus on physical development, speaking and listening plays a crucial part in writing in the Early Years. Children need to be given the opportunity to listen to each other, hear stories being read, ask questions, speak to each other and sing songs. It is important for children to share their thoughts verbally before attempting to write. Pupils need to develop a love for writing and have opportunities in all areas of provision in the setting to be able to mark make / write when they want to and for a purpose.

Handwriting

At DILS, we employ a handwriting style called 'continuous cursive'. Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement (see example below).

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The key advantages to this system are:

- ❖ By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape;
- ❖ Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q);
- ❖ There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case;
- ❖ The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

At DILS, we aim to teach 'handwriting' so that it becomes an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. We aim to equip children with the dexterity and fluency needed to access the whole curriculum. We use a continuous cursive style which covers all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. At the end of Year 4 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. Different types of print and font are evident in our school environment as found in the wider world. We want our pupils to be proud of how they present their work and to take particular care in our cursive and joined-up handwriting style. Following the guidance from Little Wandle, children will not be taught the continuous cursive style until they reach Year 1. They will be taught this during separate handwriting lessons and not during their phonics. All graphemes will be taught in the specified font recommended by 'Little Wandle'.

Glossary - Useful terminology that we use with the children when teaching writing

Fine motor skills: ability to make movements using the small muscles in our hands and wrists.

Genre: a style of writing

Gross motor skills: ability to make movements using the large muscles in our hands and wrists.

Fiction: the type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events and not based on real people and facts.

Narrative: a spoken or written account of connected events; a story.

Non-Fiction: writing that is informative or factual rather than fictional.

Non-Chronological: a report written on a single topic and has a range of different facts or information about the topic. Examples are information leaflets, instructions, and formal letters.

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Appendix:

Rationale behind Read to Write scheme explained, based on research:

The Read to Write resources follow a common sequence: Immerse, Analyse, Plan and Write. This is based on a tried and tested model (UKLA and Primary National Strategy, 2004 p.7) and acknowledges the strong interrelationship between speaking and listening, reading and writing.

All of the Read to Write resources include reading for pleasure: there is clear evidence that children learn to write from what they read (Barrs and Cork, 2002). Additionally, the Vehicle Texts (children's language-rich picture books) are carefully chosen to be read aloud, enjoyed and discussed. They are challenging and beautifully written, and also provide important opportunities to teach new vocabulary explicitly (Beck et al, 2002). The illustrations lend themselves to Booktalk (Chambers, 1999) and drama (Heathcote and Bolton, 1994 Taylor, 2016) and also provide rich and engaging opportunities to write for a genuine purpose to a range of audiences which can be highly motivating (EEF, 2020).

If children are to write at greater depth, they need to know what excellence at that exact standard looks like (Clarke, 2020). So, alongside the Vehicle Texts is an additional piece of writing that we have called an Example Text. You may know this as a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like) and it has been carefully crafted to provide one example of what the outcome might look like at greater depth. This isn't designed to be learnt by heart or replicated. It is designed for attentive reading and finding out how writing works (Andrews 2008). Experienced writers can draw on a 'repertoire of possibilities' (Myhill, 2012) and the Example Text allows discussion about the choices the author has made and the effect on the reader. The scheme suggests activities to make the generic structure, its language features, and knowledge for the writer visible (DFES, 2008) under the heading Writer's Knowledge. This explicit teaching is an important way of improving writing (EEF, 2020).

Both the Vehicle Text and Example Text provide opportunities to explore and practise ways of controlling grammar for effect. Grammar skills are best learned in the context of purposeful writing (Grammar for Writing DFEE 2000). Grammar activities are included in the scheme of work and can be augmented by other resources as needed. Teaching Grammar Effectively at KS1 (Bearne, Kennedy and Reedy) is an excellent text. The Read to Write resources include many opportunities for modelling and helping to shape the voice children can use themselves when they are writing independently (EEF, 2017). This powerful pedagogy is crucial to being an effective teacher of writing. Successful independent writing is the end aim of all this preparation. The one box per paragraph planning frameworks (Grammar for Writing DFEE 2000) are provided to support this, as are suggestions for supporting the writing process (Smith (1982) and Graves (1983), included to help children regularly loop back on their writing and begin to assess its quality and likely impact.