



## **The Children's Writing Journey at Garra Community Primary School**

At Garra Primary School we aim to inspire both a love of writing and the understanding of the power of writing. We want to motivate children to write for a range of audiences and purposes using high-quality, diverse children's literature by significant authors. We immerse our children in a range of literary worlds and themes, heightening engagement and creating curiosity through drama, discussion and debate. This allows them to see themselves represented and explore the lives and experiences of others.

When we read, we are curious about how the writer has written something so that we can try out similar words and techniques in our own writing. We encourage children to explore how their choice of words and punctuation can impact the reader.

We feel it is very important to master the skills of transcription in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting to free up their thoughts for creativity. Modelling writing is an important teaching tool. But we encourage the children to play with the model and make their work their own.

We also use independent writing (Doodle Dot) as well as ensuring that there are opportunities for 'free writes' where they choose what to write about. This is motivational for the children, and it is an opportunity to develop their own voice and style as well as showcasing their knowledge of different genres. This is completed at a distance from the Literacy lessons.

Two of the key tools we utilise are books and people. Story is powerful, so books form the building blocks of our curriculum. One of the best ways to become a great writer is to be an avid reader. The high-quality texts read and signposted, help the children develop a love of language and act as models and inspiration for their writing.

### **Writing Curriculum**

Our writing curriculum links to texts that we read and other subjects, to give writing purpose and opportunities for application. It is carefully mapped to ensure progression and coverage. We also believe that children need to have experiences to write about. As a school, we offer a rich broad curriculum to support this and offer lots of enrichment opportunities.

At Garra, we have designed our scheme of learning predominantly using the Literacy Tree programme, with our EYFS children also using Drawing Club to support their introduction to writing.

We see reading and writing as a way to help people grow and blossom. We want our children to see the power that writing can have and that the written word can change the world.

### **How Writing links to Our Curriculum Drivers**

We have designed a history and geography-rich curriculum that connects learning by building an understanding of ideas, concepts, chronology and themes through the framework of '**here, there, then, now, next**'. These thinking threads link learning meaningfully to create

opportunities to learn from the past and present as well as equipping children for an ever-changing and exciting future.

Writing allows us to express ideas rooted in the **here** and **now**, reflect on experiences from **then** and **there**, and imagine possibilities for **next**, creating powerful narratives that connect the past, present, and future.

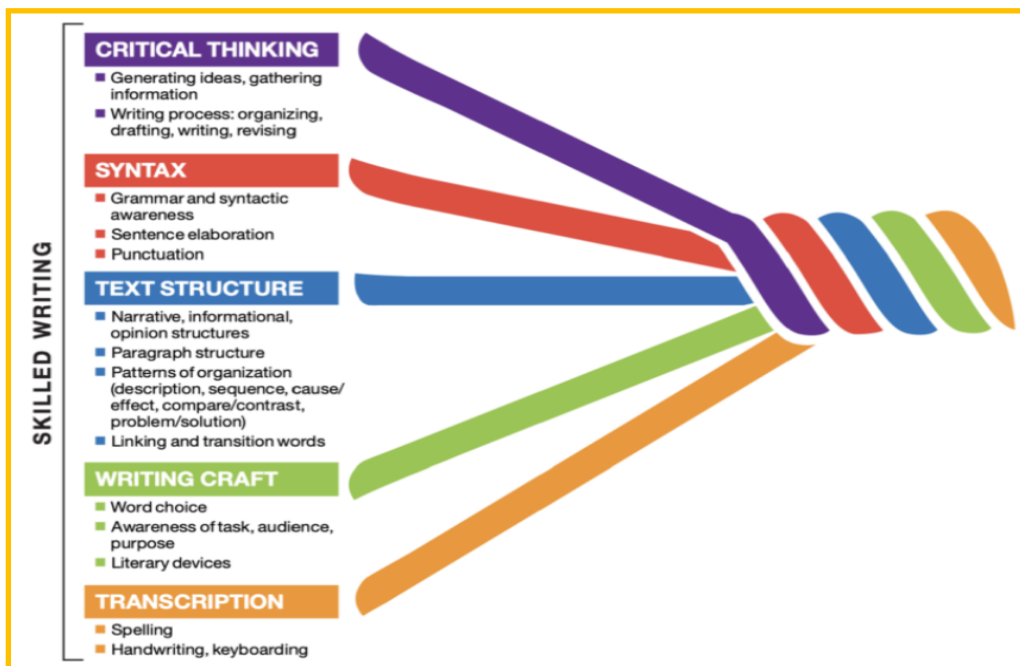
Our writing curriculum plays a pivotal role in this.

We aim to:

- Ensure progression of handwriting, spelling, grammatical and punctuation skills across the school.
- Teach writing through English sessions as well as ensuring regular opportunities for writing across other subject areas.
- Provide meaningful writing experiences using the contexts inspired by quality core texts and the whole school topic themes.

## Writing Rope

Writing is a thread that runs through our curriculum drivers of '**here, now, then, there, next**'. We use Sedita's Writing Rope as a way to breakdown the key elements that help make a great writer.



## Writing journey

We see learning to write as a journey. We feel there needs to be consistency across the school but also recognise that children at different stages of their education need different things. Each class builds on previous learning. Garras School has created a "Writing Progression" document. This shows each objective in writing and when it is taught. This then links closely with our "Garras English Spine Coverage and Progression Document Yr 1-6" which maps the Literacy Tree units/texts used with the grammar and punctuation to be covered. Each class follows this as shown on the "Curriculum Overview".

A range of genres is taught across the school, and this is captured in a long-term plan. The usual pattern for writing is to focus on a genre for a few weeks, with various pieces of writing and activities building up to a final piece. This is called a 'unit of work'. Most units follow a similar pattern. Lessons are sequenced to explore embedded writing conventions, and outcomes are chosen for their pertinence and relevance to the particular point in the text so that the children see the purpose in the skills learnt.

### **Garras' Typical Unit of Work structure:**

1. Read a high-quality text over a period of time.
2. Analyse and identify key features
3. Practise and explore different elements of the checklist
4. Explore, experiment, research, seek inspiration
5. Write an end piece
6. Redraft and write final version

### **Using Texts as a stimulus for Writing**

The class readers (from the fiction and non-fiction spines) or picture books are often used as a basis for the writing. A range of additional texts from a variety of genres are shared with the class and staff's own models are used to inspire.

### **Garras' Structure for a Typical Writing Lesson:**

The teaching of writing is delivered through an 'S' plan recipe following the Literacy Tree Writing Roots planning. By following this structure, the children revisit and recap prior learning before accessing new skills, in a format that is sequential and methodical.

1. Date and "As a writer," title shared and underlined.
2. Grammar focus for lesson shared.
3. Main lesson input linked to success criteria using high quality models and/or teacher modelling.
4. Recap on previous learning to incorporate in independent work.

5. Independent/group work completed linking to success criteria and prior learning. (Scaffolds such as word mats, stem sentences or the use of technology are in place for those who need it.)
6. Teacher and TA live mark. Pupils respond in purple.
7. Plenary to extend, challenge or edit work.

Some lessons will focus more on generating ideas and involve things such as role play, some will be focus on editing and redrafting work. However, it is expected that children will be writing in most lessons.

## **Implementation**

### **Phonics**

As we teach the children to read a phoneme, we also get them to write the phoneme. We use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised to provide the consistency. Little Wandle is used across the school in Reception and Year 1 to deliver phonics and then in Year 2-6 for Rapid Catch-Up interventions. At Garra, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. Spelling Shed is then used in Year 2-6 for spelling. Using phonic knowledge is the primary strategy to spell unknown words in the early years and then as spelling rules, exceptions and non-decodable words are taught, these are expected to be applied in the children's writing.

### **EYFS**

Drawing Club is used in EYFS to engage children in marking making, drawing and then writing. One of the key focuses is on developing vocabulary in Drawing Club and the words introduced are reactivated regularly through actions. Children are now much more ambitious with their language. Staff encourage children to mark make, draw and write and develop their gross and fine motor skills within continuous provision by including stimulating enhancements outdoors as well as indoors

### **Oracy**

We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects. At Garra, we use using the Voice 21 Oracy Progression document to support this. We emphasise the importance of talk and discussion because children often generate and develop ideas through discussion. Many children benefit from oral rehearsal before writing. There are lots of opportunities for speaking and listening woven into English lessons and into the wider curriculum such as our weekly Lyfta Discussion Assemblies.

### **Vocabulary**

The acquisition of vocabulary is a key focus in all subject areas. This is to help children to become more effective writers, and reading is used to develop children's vocabulary. Words are celebrated. Vocabulary is discussed to ensure that children understand the impact it has

on the reader. Key vocabulary is displayed and revisited. Children are then encouraged to use this vocabulary in their work. Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary is explored, and rich powerful vocabulary is celebrated.

## **Handwriting**

Having neat and fluent handwriting is important to support the legibility and cohesiveness of a text. Letter formation is a key focus as the phonemes are taught in EYFS. We use Little Wandle planning to support this. As a school, we use a printed script in Barn Owls (Reception & Year 1) following the Little Wandle planning. The rest of the school then use a joined script with the following letters being looped: f g j and y. In sessions, incorrect formation is picked up on and corrected. There are regular discrete handwriting sessions. We are aware that for some children with additional needs their fine motor skills can prevent them achieving a neat fluent style. We provide support to develop their fine motor skills to help them improve their handwriting.

## **Children with Additional Needs**

For those children who do not complete the Little Wandle programme by the end of Year 2, they will continue with phonics in Year 3 and have Catch-Up sessions to support them to make accelerated progress. Once children are in Year 4, they may continue to have phonic intervention if appropriate but other approaches are also explored such as using precision teaching to help them to spell. Children who are struggling with writing are given extra support and this may take the form of an intervention group or adaptive practices. Support given for writing is identified on STAR plans and, if appropriate, the child will have a specific target linked to writing. We have resources such as pencil grips and sloping boards which are used as necessary. To support children who display dyslexic tendencies, we adapt our practice by using resources such as coloured overlays or typing to record work instead of writing.

## **Assessment**

The children are assessed against the Crofty End of Year statements or the end of key stage criteria and a point in time assessment is recorded on Arbor termly. These assessments are used to track pupil progress and attainment. These are analysed by the teacher and the English Subject Leader. Garras staff work with teachers from at least two other schools to moderate writing assessments each year.

## Appendix 1

### Writing Lesson Expectations

#### **Drawing Club with Barn Owls**

Drawing Club is a structured literacy approach developed by **Greg Bottrill**. It is designed to develop children's early writing, language and storytelling skills through drawing, talk and imagination. The approach recognises that before children can write confidently, they need opportunities to rehearse ideas orally and visually.

Drawing Club places drawing at the heart of literacy learning, using it as a bridge between spoken language and written language.

#### **Drawing Club as a Literacy and Writing Lesson**

Drawing Club is a **daily literacy and writing lesson** in our Reception class. It supports children to:

- Develop rich spoken language and vocabulary
- Understand story structure and character development
- Orally rehearse sentences and ideas
- Make meaningful marks that represent ideas
- Transition naturally from drawing to writing

Through Drawing Club, children learn that drawing is a form of communication and that their ideas matter. As confidence grows, children begin to add labels, captions, words and sentences to their drawings, applying their phonics knowledge in a purposeful context.

This approach ensures that all children, including reluctant writers, see themselves as successful communicators and early writers.

#### **How Drawing Club Is Taught in Our Reception Class**

Drawing Club sessions follow the structure outlined by Greg Bottrill and are taught consistently so children feel confident and secure.

Each session begins with a short teacher input based on a familiar story, character or stimulus. The lesson focuses on the **three key elements of storytelling**:

- **Character** – Who is in the story? What are they like?
- **Setting** – Where does the story take place?
- **Problem** – What could happen? What might go wrong?

The adult models drawing and thinking aloud, introducing ambitious vocabulary and demonstrating how ideas can be represented visually. Children are encouraged to talk through their ideas before and during drawing.

Children then draw independently, creating their own version of the character, setting or event. Adults support learning by:

- Engaging in high-quality talk
- Asking open-ended questions
- Encouraging children to explain their drawings
- Supporting the addition of labels, words or sentences where appropriate

Sessions often end with opportunities for children to share their work, developing confidence, communication skills and a sense of pride.

### **Literacy lessons (whole school, based predominantly on Literacy Tree scheme)**

Children explore a wide variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction which allows them to access, input ideas and explore their own writing style.

### **Planning**

- Discreet 45 minute (Barn Owls) to hour-long writing sessions (Hawk Owls and Eagle Owls) will be taught four days a week, usually based on the class text.
- There will be a progression of spellings, grammar and punctuation taught, alongside the text specific features. The Crofty Writing Principles and Literacy Tree Writing Roots, help guide these to ensure progression across the school.
- There is a range of recording methods used such as written work, group and class work or performances. The written sessions often include an aspect of teacher modelling using a Think Aloud. This work may require scaffolding by either adult intervention, resource, etc.
- Challenge tasks are provided verbally to extend the use of specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.
- Over a term, fiction texts, poetry and non-fiction texts are taught.
- Once a week, Doodle Dot sessions are used as distance writing opportunities. These are based on a stimulus which could be an image, text, video or object. The pupils then share text type features and potential content ideas with minimal or no input from the teacher. Pupils then write their text with little to no adult support. Adaptations such as word mats, typing etc may be used. These written pieces are used to assess children's independent writing skills along with their recall of the features of different genres.

### **Written Lesson Format:**



1. Date and “As a writer,” title shared and underlined.
2. Grammar focus for lesson shared.
3. Main lesson input linked to success criteria using high quality models and/or teacher modelling.
4. Recap on previous learning to incorporate in independent work.
5. Independent/group work completed linking to success criteria and prior learning. (Scaffolds such as word mats, stem sentences or the use of technology are in place for those who need it.)
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