

Curriculum Subject Statement: English (Writing)

The principles for River Bank Primary School's curriculum design follows Dylan William's *Principled Curriculum Design* (2013), which are:

- *Balanced*
- *Rigorous*
- *Coherent*
- *Vertically Integrated*
- *Appropriate*
- *Focused*
- *Relevant*

Details of how these have been incorporated into our overall curriculum design can be found on the *River Bank Primary Curriculum Intent Statement document*.

In specificity to English writing, some of the applications are further explained, below.

A 'Balanced' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School, this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. All learning content for English writing is taken from the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and all statutory objectives are covered throughout EYFS, KS1 and KS2.
2. In EYFS, pupils produce between 6/7 outcomes per term and this reduces to 4/5 each term in KS1 and 2 where more time is dedicated to exploring each genre. The topics covered link to our overarching themes for the term or half term and linked texts. For example, in EYFS, pupils retell the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in spring term as part of their topic 'Our Wonderful World' which explores life cycles, animals and growth. Similarly, in year 4, when learning about Ancient Egypt, pupils write a recount of the opening of Tutankhamun's tomb.
3. In KS1, 1 hour per day is dedicated to the teaching of English writing. In KS2, 15 minutes of the hour-long sessions are devoted to the teaching of handwriting or spelling.
4. Curriculum content is not 'blocked', but individual lessons can be extended in cases where more time is essential to understanding, lessons are referred to as 'sequences' to reflect this fluidity.
5. Trips and visits are planned carefully to support curriculum content and to offer children an experience which is both memorable and informative. Examples of this would be: visiting the seaside in year 2 followed by a recount of their trip, as well as a visit from a dog and dog owner, prior to writing a set of instructions about 'how to look after a pet dog'. Further examples of writing outcomes being supported by real-life experiences can be found in year 4, where pupils are visited by a Viking workshop before writing a non-chronological report entitled 'Who Were the Vikings?'. Similarly, in year 5, pupils write a persuasive letter urging people to stop destroying rainforests, which is supported by their visit to a 'living rainforest' earlier in the term.

A 'Rigorous' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. In EYFS, all writing objectives and statements are taken from the EYFS Statutory Framework and are mapped out across the year with many statements repeated to build on teaching progressively.
2. All English writing objectives and statements are taken from the National Curriculum and are mapped out from years 1- 6, i.e. composition; vocabulary, grammar and punctuation; and transcription.
3. **Cultural understanding and diversity** are promoted throughout the writing curriculum. For example, during Black History Month, pupils in year 3 write 'The Recipe of a Leader' after learning about the life of Barack Obama. Further examples of this can be seen across the reading curriculum, as outlined in the reading and phonics statement of intent.
4. In various units of writing across the primary phase, pupils' own cultural understanding and diversity is explored and celebrated, for example in year 2 when pupils write an autobiography with the title 'All About Me and My Family' and again in year 6 when pupils have the opportunity to write an autobiography entitled 'My Time at River Bank'.

5. In addition, individuals that pupils and teachers write about have been selected with intentionality. For example, in year 6 where teachers model writing a biography about the life of Japanese mountain climber Junko Tabei during the Shackleton unit. Similarly, in year 4, children learn and write about the life of Marcus Rashford in their biographical writing unit. This appreciation of diversity and cultural understanding are also evident across the other areas of the curriculum and have been detailed in these intent statements.

A 'Coherent' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. The English writing curriculum has been carefully designed and sequenced to build on previous knowledge and have subsequent knowledge then continue to be built upon. This coherence is designed across curriculum areas. For example, The Great Fire of London is taught in year 2 where children learn about the gunpowder plot in history. This learning is then brought into art lessons, where pupils create a cityscape using collage for The Great Fire of London. Pupils also read appropriately challenging texts in class reader time, which are closely linked to support the learning in class, such as 'The Great Fire of London' by Emma Adams. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed further when they write non-chronological reports about the Great Fire of London at the end of the term, applying everything they have learnt across the unit. All of this knowledge is sequenced in a way which is coherent and builds upon and revises key knowledge.
2. This coherence is also reflected in key stage 2, where in year 5, pupils are immersed in their theme 'Rainforests'. Pupils engage with the topic through listening to their class reader 'The Explorer', which supports their narrative writing later in the term, as well as exploring the text 'The Extra-ordinary life of Greta Thunburg' which forms part of the stimuli for their persuasive letter writing. Learning is further built upon in geography, where pupils learn about climate change and pollution, as well as in art, where the artists Georgie O'Keefe and Henri Rousseau provide the focal points on which students' work is based. This thematic approach to curriculum design, where topics are relevant to our pupils, supports their understanding of the topic and enables them to write with increased understanding and purpose.

A 'Vertically Integrated' English Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. English material taught at one point in time builds on materials taught earlier, and feeds what is to be taught. This starts right from the foundations in reception, where in summer term pupils focus their learning on Cinderella. In this unit, pupils read, rehearse and retell the story of Cinderella as well as engaging in many other speaking, listening and writing opportunities. Their end of unit assessment consists of writing invitations to a royal ball. This learning is then built upon in year 1, where in summer term, they explore this text again. This time developing 'innovate' skills, where they use some of what they have read as a basis for their own writing, to write their own 'rags to riches' story, as part of their topic 'Things That Change.'
2. A further example of our vertically integrated curriculum would be in biographical writing, where pupils in year 1 are expected to write a three-part biography about Neil Armstrong focusing on writing complete sentences with accurate, simple punctuation. Whereas in year 4, pupils write a four-part biography about Marcus Rashford, where information in each section is more detailed and the sentence structure more varied, e.g. including fronted adverbials. Finally, by year 6, biographical writing of Ernest Shackleton is a six-part piece of writing with more complex skills applied, e.g. the use of relative clauses and formality.
3. Similarly, this is demonstrated in narrative writing units. In year 1, pupils write three-part stories with a description of setting or character, followed by a problem and a resolution. In this unit, pupils are learning to connect two simple sentences using co-ordination. This is further developed in year 2 where pupils are still writing three-part stories, but this time developing subordination and writing about characters' feelings. By year 3, pupils are writing four-part narratives incorporating dialogue, and year 4 write five-part stories which include a range of single and multi-clause sentences for effect.
In years 5 and 6, pupils continue to write five-part stories. Year 5 develop their use of dialogue to convey character, and year 6 build on this as well as the use of dialogue to develop action.

An 'Appropriate' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. English writing material is sequenced and taught from the National Curriculum on a 'year by year' basis.
2. Children are not set according to ability in English writing. Instead, independent learning tasks are set by the teachers using the 'Slope of Difficulty' approach, with any misconceptions / misunderstanding picked up through feedback in the next session or same-week intervention.
3. Pupils' with SEND are equally challenged to build on previously taught skills and are expected to work towards broadly the same outcomes as their peers. For example, when pupils in year three write a non-chronological report, pupils with SEND do the same. However, they may spend longer working towards less complex targets than their peers. This is decided by the class teacher and will differ dependent on each child's individual needs.
4. Pupils in key stage 2 that are identified as needing further support in reading and writing are assessed using Fresh Start (phonics) and placed within the appropriate stage of the programme. These sessions happen daily with a member of staff who is trained in delivering the Fresh Start (phonics) intervention. These pupils are then assessed half termly to monitor progress and ensure they continue to be placed in the group that meets their needs.

A 'Focused' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. English genre progression maps for years 1-6 specify which skills should be applied to each unit. This is broken down into: text organisation, sentence organisation, grammatical features and punctuation.
2. These skills make up much of the retrieval practice that takes place at the start of each session.
3. In EYFS, knowledge is specified on the LTP and then broken down further on MTPs for each of the ELGs. This knowledge is taken from a combination of Development Matters and Birth to 5 matters documentation.
4. Each year, the English content is reviewed and refined with teachers, year leaders and curriculum leaders.
5. Strategies and ideas from 'Writing Revolutions' by Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler are embedded within our writing curriculum to ensure that pupils have the opportunities to explore and practise grammar and sentence structure techniques. For example, in year 1, when writing narratives, pupils explore 'fragments' and 'scrambled sentences' to help them gain an understanding of a complete sentence. Similarly, in year 2, pupils complete activities from 'The Writing Revolution' linked to subordination, in line with NC statutory requirements.
6. In addition, the 'select, explain, explore, consolidate' process (Isobel Beck and Alex Quigley) linked to learning new vocabulary is implemented in writing lessons, as well as across the wider curriculum, to support pupils to understand and remember new vocabulary in the long term.
7. Each writing lesson comprises an element of grammar or vocabulary. Activities within this part of the lesson build on previously taught content taken from the National Curriculum and genre progression maps.

A 'Relevant' English writing Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. In EYFS, the curriculum – although provisionally mapped out – is fluid and may change throughout the year to adapt to the interest and observations of the pupils.
2. In English writing, children are able to engage with school trips which offer experiences to children and to make learning as concrete as possible. For example: visiting the key landmarks of London on an open bus tour (year 3), having VR sessions on life in the North and South Pole (year 6) and visiting the seaside (year 2), all of which have associated writing outcomes.
3. In English writing the material within our curriculum areas is relevant to the children's own interests and helps our pupils be good citizens of the future. This includes: looking at climate change and its effects, for example, year 6 write a balanced argument focused on discussing whether it should be mandatory for all vehicles to be electric. Also, in year 5, pupils write a persuasive letter in spring term. The purpose of which is to urge people to stop destroying rainforests.