

1) Create a word rich environment

Words are important: they allow us to express ourselves and communicate with others. Teachers constantly model selecting appropriate language for a purpose and audience whilst also exposing children to new age-appropriate words through word play and discrete teaching. Our Word of the Day lessons use a range of memorable, relevant activities to teach words, recall them and use them in context. Our teachers immerse children in high-quality texts across a range of genres, through reading lessons and storytelling. This provides them with the opportunity to see words used in different contexts and expand their bank of adventurous or subject specific vocabulary. Children have regular opportunities to explore written texts in the library, classroom reading corners and in many reading events, including author visits and workshops, book clubs, our after-school reading café and sponsored reads. Our curriculum is rich in rhyme, song, poetry and drama to foster children's phonological development and encourage them to have fun reading, writing, speaking and spelling words. Children's learning is supported at all times by useful, relevant displays in the classroom, most often created collaboratively with children in the lessons.

2) Hook children's interest by providing meaningful opportunities to write for real purposes and audiences

From the earliest stages, we want children to experience the joy of writing in order to engage them completely in the process and bring about maximum progress. To do this, they have to want to write and see the purpose in doing so. At Woodlands, we create purposeful, relevant contexts that provide children with a real meaning to write and for real audiences; we use existing texts, media, art, imagination, play, fictional and real life experiences as a stimulus for writing. We provide opportunity to write beyond the curriculum, by holding or promoting a range of events including writing competitions and workshops. Most importantly, we vary the purpose and audience for writing so that children experience writing a variety of text types, including different genres of narrative and forms of poetry. By doing so, they are able to find a love of writing and recognise how it benefits them in everyday life. Teachers also plan opportunities for publishing or final performance that brings the children's writing to a wider audience so that children can feel pride in finished pieces.

3) Use talk to enhance writing outcomes

Before children can write independently, they need to be able to say (aloud or to themselves) what they want to write so with this in mind, we create many opportunities for talk. Conversation with others offers children the chance to think more deeply about what they will write: they may discover new ideas, explain and develop their own thoughts, hear new vocabulary and language structures, form opinions, reason and ask further questions. When drawing on a narrative to stimulate writing, we pause at pivotal moments as the story unfolds to allow children to express and discuss their initial responses. Drama is key as it allows children to engage deeply in a scenario and supports them to write in role. Before writing poetry, children hear it read aloud, see it performed and perform it themselves. Integrating collaborative thinking into teaching and learning activities also has the benefit of improving independent thinking; collective reasoning with peers acts as a template for 'inner speech' of individual reasoning when they are working alone. Orally rehearsing sentences gives children the confidence to write their thoughts in an accurate and clear way.

4) Deliberately practise phonics, grammar and spelling

Improving writing is not simply down to spending more time on it. At Woodlands, we believe every child can improve their writing with the right approach. Teachers use a variety of assessment techniques to determine the target of each child for the long term. They create lessons that allow children to deliberately practise their targets. They monitor progress closely and constantly provide feedback, reviewing progress against targets. Repetition is

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absolutely crucial for the development of children's skills. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities across different subjects for children to hone their skills for as long as it takes until the skill is part of their writing toolkit. To support with this, lessons in phonics, grammar and spelling may be taught discretely and then revisited many times in a variety of contexts.

5) Teach the writing process alongside the children

At Woodlands, we believe that reading is key to creating excellent writers. We spend time enjoying and analysing high-quality texts to learn how existing authors write effectively for an audience and purpose. Teachers then slow the process of writing down for children by imitating a text type step-by-step. Children are supported with direct instruction in the different components of the writing process (how to generate an idea, plan, draft, revise, edit and publish). They scaffold children's understanding of these processes through demonstration, discussion, modelling and sharing exemplars which they have written themselves. Crucially, they write alongside children, articulating the thought process they are going through and strategies they draw on to articulate ideas and ways to overcome difficulties faced. The ultimate aim is for children to relinquish their dependence on this scaffolding and develop their preferred writing process.

6) Provide valuable feedback to children in order for them to improve their writing

Children take pleasure in a reader's feedback and begin to link writing with communication. In writing lessons, children are given ample opportunities to share and discuss with others (including teachers) their own and others' writing in order to give and receive constructive criticism and celebrate achievement. Teachers aim to provide children with 'live' verbal feedback, which is immediate, relevant and allows children to reflect on and attend to learning points while still engaged in their writing. Written feedback is sometimes used after lessons to reflect on successes, edit and improve further, and generate new targets. When giving feedback, teachers are positive and settled in tone, so that children can see the benefits of this dialogue on the outcome of their writing.

7) Sequence the teaching of writing into manageable, progressive steps

When children are learning to write, their cognitive demand is high. At Woodlands, we sequence writing skills into manageable and progressive steps, carefully increasing independence and writing stamina.

The first consideration teachers make when planning is which age-related grammar, composition, spelling and handwriting objectives in the National Curriculum need to be taught. These are the means by which children's writing is assessed and as such, must be organised in a logical order. Teachers carefully match objectives to text types that enable children to fully demonstrate their writing skill in these areas. Over the year, they will cover a broad range of text types to enable them to fully meet the writing requirements set out in the National Curriculum.

Teachers plan lessons that combine all of our principles of writing, so that the skill of writing becomes more comfortable and automated over time. To do this, they organise a sequence of lessons into consecutive phases that include exploration, imitation and innovation. At appropriate time points, based on assessment of skills, teachers may reduce or extend these phases in learning to write. Through this process, children are constantly encouraged to embellish their writing with ideas inspired by books and their imagination, even when they are imitating texts. Spelling and punctuation should be largely self-monitored as children write, marking their text for items to be checked and corrected at the editing stage. Invented spellings should be seen as acceptable in the drafting stage.

Throughout the year, teachers ensure that children have increasing opportunities to innovate their own ideas and develop authentic personal voice and style. This includes opportunities to 'free write' where they can practise their independence, stamina and range as a writer. Our aim is for them to enjoy writing expressively, imaginatively

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and informatively for purpose. Taking possession of the written word can open up a world in which children can express themselves and communicate with others.

8) Create the optimal environment for writing

To have the greatest impact on writing progress, teachers at Woodlands think carefully about the learning environment. Children's working memory can handle a finite amount of sensory input from their surroundings, so it is important for teachers to help them channel their attention to the appropriate learning. This is helped by minimising distractions, such as unnecessary noise, resources or unstructured activities. This enables children to focus their attention on elements of writing rather than their surroundings. Therefore, teachers make careful considerations about the seating arrangements, resources and levels of talk each task requires and communicates the ground rules clearly to children at the start. Most importantly, in order for children to engage fully in their writing, they must feel safe to challenge themselves. Our teachers hope to create an atmosphere free of stress and anxiety, but full of exuberant discovery. They utilise their good relationships with the children to engage and empower them, offering them a safe and positive environment to challenge themselves and strive for their best.