

Priory's Approach to Writing

At Priory, we understand that, when a child sits down to write, it is never a stand-alone event. Instead, it is a coming-together of experience, knowledge, vocabulary, grammar, handwriting, spelling and self-expression. Writing is one of the main ways that we communicate with one another so it is our aim to ensure that our pupils feel confident and empowered in writing for a range of purposes and across a range of genres during their time with us.

A Text-Based Approach

Priory Staff understand that, in order to be successful writers, children must be widely read. Reading provides the foundations for effective writing so our writing units always begin with a high-quality text. This text (fiction, non-fiction, poem or film) acts as a springboard for all writing outcomes as well as spelling and grammar teaching.

A Developmental Approach

As writing goes hand-in-hand with reading, we understand that our pupils will only be able to write as well as they can read. Our expectations for independent writing are realistic and are always decided in connection with the child's age as well as the phonic phase or reading band that the pupil is working on. As our children progress from year to year, our expectation increases.

Teaching Writing

We use two main approaches to teach writing at Priory as they mirror our belief in how pupils learn as well as our aims for our pupils:

CLPE's Power of Reading

The *Power of Reading* puts quality children's literature at the heart of literacy learning and is built on years of research and best practice

(<https://clpe.org.uk/books/power-of-reading/about>) .

With this approach, pupils explore the plot, characters and themes of a text and write widely on these. The *Power of Reading* approach is cross-curricular and allows pupils to use what they have read and learned across the curriculum as well as in English lessons.



The *CLPE's Power of Reading* style of planning is the primary approach to writing teaching in EYFS and KS1 with pupils also being given opportunities to write about their experiences and as part of their continuous provision. A combination of *Power of Reading* and *Jane Considine's The Write Stuff* is used to teach writing in KS2.

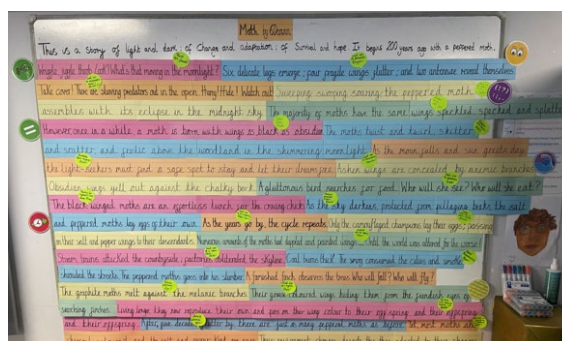
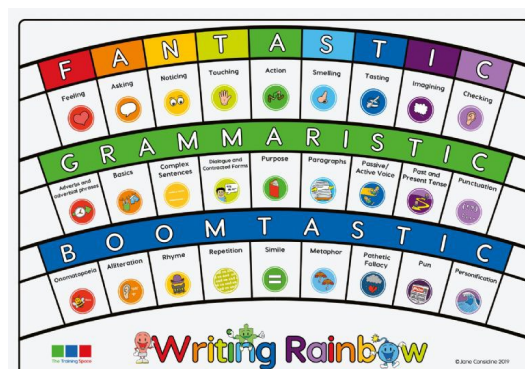
Jane Considine's *The Write Stuff*

Alongside *The Power of Reading*, we also use *Jane Considine's The Write Stuff* in KS2 to help our pupils create powerful pieces of writing that demonstrate the high level of language, punctuation and grammatical techniques that are expected of them.

Using a high-quality text as a stimulus, *The Write Stuff* puts effective sentence construction at the heart of writing teaching. It is a rigorous but fun approach that uses The Writing Rainbow (see *right*) to provide children with the ideas, tools and techniques that they need to become amazing authors. In writing lessons, pupils explore the different writing lenses (sections) on The Writing Rainbow which are divided into three tiers. These are:

- **Fantastics** – ideas for writing
- **Grammaristics** – tools for writing
- **Boomtastics** – writing techniques

English lessons using *The Write Stuff* approach are either Experience Lessons, which immerse pupils fully in the text allowing them to gather language and ideas to support their writing, or Sentence Stacking lessons which follow a formulaic style of providing stimulus and clear modelling followed by the children independently creating dynamic sentences. During sentence stacking lessons, pupils compose a collaborative text which acts as a class model – a sentence stack (see *right*) – before they create an extended piece at the end of a unit.



Impact

Since implementing both approaches across the school, we have noticed a higher level of engagement in all pupils in writing lessons and outcomes are improving as a result. We are confident that the children will continue to develop as writers by learning from high-quality texts; sharing their creative ideas; and creating super sentences across the curriculum.

Spelling

Spelling is an integral part of the writing process and we develop the children's ability to spell in numerous ways at Priory. We have found that teaching spelling alongside our phonics, reading and writing provision has a far greater impact than discrete spelling lessons. For this reason, we gradually introduce pupils to 'tricky' words (that do not rely on phonetic rules) in line with our *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* Revised sessions. It is within these lessons that children are also given the opportunity to apply their knowledge of phonemes and graphemes in small writing activities. After the children have completed phase 5 of the phonics scheme, they will begin *Little Wandle Spelling*. For the academic year 2024-25, this will include pupils in Year 2 and 3.

No matter which stage of education your child is at, they will be receiving words to take home and learn. We thank you for your ongoing support in encouraging your children to practise these.

Handwriting

As with spelling, we have found that the most effective way to teach handwriting to the pupils is alongside other writing skills as part of English lessons. We feel that it is crucial for pupils to first learn the correct letter formations before introducing them to a cursive or joined style. This is because the graphemes they are taught and the print that is used in their reading books are usually not cursive or joined and this can cause confusion.

Once a child is confident with their letter formations and is using these independently, we encourage a cursive and joined style that the pupils can use to help them write at greater length and speed. Our expectations for handwriting and presentation are high and our 'live marking' approach allows staff to immediately identify where letter formations, grip or posture are not supporting clear handwriting and address this within the moment.

We have many resources to support children with letter formation that we are more than happy to share with parents - just ask your child's class teacher.

For pupils that require additional support with fine motor skills or handwriting, we do have high-quality interventions to allow them to improve and catch-up with their peers.

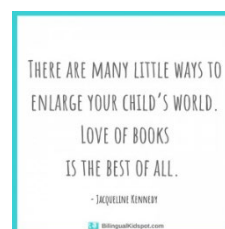
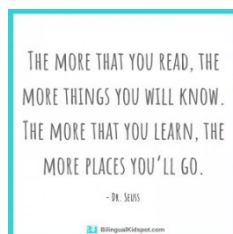
Supporting Your Child with Writing

We are often asked by parents the best ways that they can support their children with writing at home. We have worked together to compile some ideas that we hope you will find useful.

As mentioned above, writing is the 'coming-together' of many different skills and nuggets of knowledge therefore you may be surprised by some of the tips that we suggest. However, please rest-assured that all suggestions will contribute to the overall writing experience and allow the children to become the amazing authors that we know they can be.

Reading

It will come as no surprise that reading with your child and providing a wide range of books for them is the best way to support all children, no matter their age, to become better writers. Exposing children to books, from the youngest age, provides them with the foundations that they need to create amazing pieces of writing. Reading helps children to develop a rich vocabulary as well as learn from the 'masters'. Encouraging your child to read any books that they bring home from school; visiting local libraries or bookshops; and having bedtime stories as part of your nightly routine are just a few fantastic ways to support your child's learning as well as their well-being.

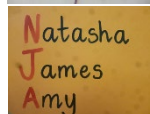
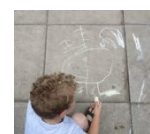


Children in EYFS

In Nursery and Reception, the best way to support children to become brilliant writers is by developing their imagination, vocabulary and fine (involving small muscle movements including grasping, drawing and object manipulation) and gross (involving large muscle movements including sitting, walking, climbing) motor skills.

Some tips for activities to support this are:

- Finding some old rolls of wallpaper and encouraging your child to draw, paint and write.
- Creating chalk pictures on the floor, and then watching the rain wash them away.
- Using big brushes to paint the outside walls and floor with water.
- Sprinkling flour on a tray or flat surface and encouraging children to make patterns with their finger. *Can they draw circles and lines? Can they remember how to write the letters in their name?*
- Making patterns with their finger in shaving foam.
- Writing down a pretend phone message.
- Writing a shopping list.
- When your child is drawing or writing, encouraging them to hold the pen correctly. This means **holding the pen near the point/nib between their first two fingers and thumb**.
- Practicing writing your child's name. **Remember to encourage your child to use a capital letter for the first letter and lower case letter shapes for the rest.**



As explained, our expectation is for children to be able to write only as well as they can read. Ensuring that you have familiarised yourself with *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* Parent Information and know which phonic phases, phonemes and graphemes your child is working on will play a huge part in supporting their writing.

There are a wealth of resources for parents to support their child's physical development as well as their speech and imaginations. Our EYFS specialists recommend <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people> and <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>.

We have included some extra information at the end of this document to support with developing your child's pre-writing skills that you may find of interest.

Children in KS1

The suggested activities above are also suitable for our pupils in KS1 as they continue to develop their imaginations as well as their physical strength. Children, of all ages, learn best through play so it is important that the activities you plan to support writing at home do not feel like extra 'work' for the children. Tasks such as copying words, phases or sentences or completing shop-bought workbooks can sometimes have the opposite effect as they restrict children's creativity and do not make writing exciting.

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Other activities to support your child include:

- Having an area for your child to write. This should have a surface for them to write on and may include different types of paper as well as a range of pencils, crayons, felt tips, pens, chalks etc.
- Writing shopping lists together.
- Creating a post box with which you can post each other letters.

- Encouraging your child to write post-it note letters to friends and relatives and read what they say.
- Encouraging them to keep a holiday journal where they can record what they have done in writing as well as collect leaflets/tickets/photos.
- Following your child's interests and encouraging writing to support this i.e. writing recipes or writing the players and scores of football matches.
- Playing word games or completing word searches.
- Retelling stories verbally, with pictures or in written form.
- Role -playing stories using props, costumes or puppets.
- Having lots of experiences together. Visit shops, beaches, farms, zoos and talk about what you have seen and done.
- Having the subtitles on the TV. It allows children to see how words should look when they are said.
- Allowing your child to practise their typing skills by writing on screens or sending emails to trusted recipients.
- Referring to your child's Peek at the Week so you know which topics are coming up.

Children in KS2

Maintaining an interest in the topics and lessons that your child is learning can have a big impact. We encourage parents to look at their year groups' Peek at the Week so that they can help prepare their child for any upcoming units. Encouraging the children to complete their spelling and grammar homework each week will also make a huge difference.

As children become older, it can be more of a challenge to interest them in writing when they are at home. Therefore, it becomes even more important to ensure that the task does not feel like extra work and to tailor any activities to their interests and hobbies. You may find that many of the activities above are also suitable for your child.

Other activities that you may find useful are:

- Encouraging your child to keep a diary or a journal. This is often advised to support children's mental health and will have a positive impact on their writing too.
- Writing postcards from places that you have visited.
- Listening to audiobooks on journeys.
- Typing up homework pieces.
- Sending emails to relatives.
- Having a vocabulary book to gather words and phrases that they like in books, films and TV shows.
- Playing word games and puzzles such as Hangman, Wordle, Articulate, crosswords etc.

Lastly, continue to talk to your child about what they are doing. Do not forget that children often learn by copying what you are doing. When was the last time that they saw you write? Spend time writing alongside your child and reading back to them what you have written. Have some fun!



Pre-Writing Skills:-

Develop postural control & gross motor control: Upper body & core strength:-

Climbing ladders, wheelbarrow walking, hanging from monkey bars, carrying heavy things, roll a big ball along a wall at shoulder height, wash windows, animal walking (all fours, crab walking and bunny hops), tummy time, tug of war, jump on a trampoline, swimming, crawl through a tunnel, yoga for kids.



Crossing the mid-line: The ability to cross the imaginary line running from a person's nose to pelvis that divides the body into left and right sides:-

Flipper flappers weaving in the air, magic wands weaving in the air, ribbon sticks weaving in the air, reach across the body to pick up something to the side, row, row row your boat with one oar on each side, bean bag toss, pretend to wash self with a face cloth all over, ball pass around the circle, wash the table down, shaving cream on with one hand and wipe off with the other, flashlight tag.



Bilateral Coordination: Coordinating both sides of the body at the same time:-

Jumping Jacks, scissor cutting and holding with other hand, jumping and hopping patterns, large scale painting and puddle suit painting (like snow angel movements) hammers and nails, playing the drums and other instruments, bopping a balloon back and forth or popping bubbles with both hands, tearing/ crumpling tissue paper, connecting/ separating construction toys, ball games, pinching, pulling, squeezing, play doh and using tools, threading, cooking.



Hand and finger strength - Hand eye coordination - Object manipulation/visual motor: Grasping and manipulating activities that support dexterity and separation of the two sides of the hand, plus visual motor development :-

Finger exercise with thumb to each finger, counting on fingers, puzzles, opening containers and threading and lacing, scrunching paper, using tweezers, pegs, poking activities with one or two fingers such as dough disco, rolling dough with the rolling pins, pushing small items into the dough, single hole punches, squeaky dog toys, anti-clockwise motions with finger in the sensory materials such as, flour, rice and paint, throwing and catching activities, controlled use of everyday tools, vehicles with pens, finger games: that practice specific finger movements such as Incy Wincy spider, building towers, putting rings on a stick, independently opening lunch boxes and putting away, closing zippers and poppers, scooping with spoons, turning single pages in a book, vertical drawing on paper on walls, magnet play on the easel, chalk on upright board or wall, craft: make things using old boxes, egg cartons, wool, paper and sticky or masking tape, construction: building with duplo, lego, mobilo



or other construction toys. Pre-writing shapes: practice drawing the pre-writing shapes (L, —, O, +, /, square, \, X, and Δ). You could pop a rubber band or stickers on writing tools to show where a child can hold it. Mark-make with anything on any surface, such as fingers, pencils, pens, markers, paint brush, sticks, chalk or pastels on paper, wood, plastic, fabric, metal, concrete, mud, sand, tea leaves, rice or salt.



Visual Perception skills: The brain's ability to make sense of what the eyes sees, to receive, interpret, and act upon visual stimuli:-

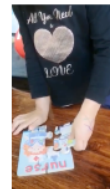
Puzzles, mazes, board games, cards, memory games connect the dot copy a picture or a form matching and sorting.



Number and letter recognition: Matching up letters on two different materials such as cupcake cases and letter stones etc... (we do this regularly).

Motor Memory. Motor memory is the result of motor learning, which involves developing new muscular coordination. This allows us to recall motor coordination we have learned in order for us to interact with the environment. Playing the piano, catching a ball, and riding a bike are all examples of motor memory:-

Writing the letters or numbers on their back, writing and forming 3D letters with dough, foam, salt, feely bag letters and numbers.



Receptive language skills, be language aware: Link with the letter formation directions:-

Up, down, side to side, around. start at the top, bottom halfway round, all the way round, up, down, curly tail, near and far, big, little, over and under, in and out. Do round the face tracking, hide the teddy, feel the palm of your hand, we are going on a bear hunt language, positional walk, magic wand movement and following directions.

Ability to Attend: Build up their focus and attention (for at least the same amount of minutes as their age) at a non-preferred activity:-

Quiet bins or task boxes (where you have one activity in a box, and they need to complete that activity before they can move on) Sensory play or tactile play (e.g., rice, dry beans in bins; letters or numbers in bins that the child pulls out and matches into a puzzle). Repetitive tasks such as colouring or putting objects into a container (repetitive tasks build attention). Add music to a task (additional sensory feedback increases motivation and attention).

