Tachbrook Nursery School

Writing Policy

'Happy, healthy & high expectations'

Reviewed: September 2024

Writing Policy

At Tachbrook Nursery, we are dedicated to nurturing the early writing development of children. This policy outlines our approach to fostering a positive environment that supports children's exploration of writing skills and creativity.

Aims:

1. Vision and Objectives
Our goal is to instil a love for writing while laying the foundation for future literacy success. We aim to:
a. Cultivate a nurturing environment that encourages self-expression through writing.
b. Foster children's creativity and imagination through diverse writing experiences.
c. Develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination as essential precursors to writing.
d. Collaborate with parents to enhance early writing experiences both at school and at home.

2. Curriculum Organisation
a. We integrate writing opportunities into daily activities, allowing children to engage in drawing, mark making, and letter recognition.
b. Writing activities are cross curricular and interwoven with play, fine and gross motor skills, art, construction, role play, storytelling etc. making the learning process enjoyable and meaningful.
c. We provide a variety of writing tools and materials to encourage exploration and experimentation throughout the nursery environment both inside and outside.

3. Learning through play
a. Our approach focuses on learning through play, where writing is incorporated into games, physical development, cooking, maths, imaginative activities etc.
b. Children are encouraged to create their stories, fostering a sense of ownership and confidence.

4. Individualised Learning
a. We recognise that every child develops at their own pace, we provide individualised support and encouragement in their writing development where appropriate.
b. Staff observe and assess each child's progress, adjusting activities to match their developmental stage and needs.

5. Home School Collaboration
a. We value the partnership between parents and staff. We encourage parents to engage in writing activities at home, extending the learning experience beyond school.
b. Regular informal and formal meetings with parents are established to share progress, ideas, and strategies.

6. Assessment and Progress Tracking
a. Progress in writing skills is documented through observations, photographs, and samples of children's work.
b. Portfolios serve as a visual record of each child's growth and development.

c. Termly tracking is used to assess children's progress in writing.

7. Safety and Inclusion

a. Writing materials are carefully selected to ensure they are safe and age-appropriate.
b. Activities are designed to be inclusive, catering to diverse learning needs and styles.

How we teach Writing

Children's learning is linked to our curriculum progression map. This maps out progress children will make during their time at Tachbrook. Half termly learning objectives are linked to individual learning activities which all children are able to access.

Tachbrook Writing Ethos

Writing is a complex activity that is intricately bound up with speaking, listening, reading and children's physical development. Many children will in fact come to reading through writing. Writing enables us to communicate with others (and ourselves) over the barriers of space and time. It helps us to sort out our thoughts and organise our ideas. It is a vehicle for self-expression. We write within the conventions of a culture - different languages have different scripts and directions. We write for an audience and therefore writing can affect what that audience knows.

There are three aspects to being a writer:

- **Composing:** creating the text, inventing the sentences
- **Communicating**: sharing meaning with others
- **Secretarial**: letter formation, layout, punctuation

Composing and communicating are the motivating aspects of the process, why people want to write. Both these sides of writing are served by the secretarial skills. These are as important as the first two parts but not more so.

There are various stages to developing as a writer though all children may not go through them all in the same sequence and at the same time.

- Children make marks in a variety of media, with their hands & fingers and with brushes, pencils, crayons and other graphic tools. Initially this mark making is a motor activity.
- Children will then progress to symbolic mark-making i.e. their marks represent something – an event, an object, an action, an experience. We may not recognise the representation but it is clear in child's mind.
- Initially children will not know the difference between drawing and writing.
- Children will start to engage in mark-making they call writing in imitation of adults or older children. They may not attribute meaning to but may just call it "writing" i.e. their marks are a representation of an activity they've observed adults doing but their marks might not yet be representations of individual words or sounds.
- Many children use their own symbols which they will call writing and distinguish as different from their drawings, before they start to use conventional symbols i.e. letters. When they can form one or two letters they will often use the ones they have learnt for all their writing. Children

often write their names before other words and very often will use the initial letter to stand for the whole name.

- Some children will confidently 'read' what they have written whatever the mixture of symbols and letters used. Others will write but then say they can't read it.
- Children decide on what they wish to communicate and dictate their text to an adult to write for them.
- Children use their growing knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent to attempt independent writing of words. As they develop still further they start to learn conventional spellings and punctuation marks, all of which help to clarify the meaning being communicated.

Motivation is key to any successful learning. Here are some of the uses of writing which might inspire our children to write:-

- Label work with their names .
- Put captions on their drawings - the beginning of story writing .
- Record investigations and play .
- Make notices/give instructions e.g. 'Hamad's model, please don't touch'.
- Make personal communications e.g. letter or birthday card to Mum or Dad.
- Imitate adults.
- Enhance imaginative play.
- Record scores e.g. tally chart.

Knowledge, Understanding, Skills & Attitudes

We want each child to develop the following:

Knowledge & Understanding

- Writing is different from drawing.
- Writing represents speech & can be used as a permanent record of what is we say .
- Each letter represents one (or more) sounds.
- Words are made up of letters.
- Each letter has two forms - upper and lower case.
- We write for many purposes.
- There are different types of writing.
- In English we write from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom.
- We write for an audience.
- Spaces are needed between words in a sentence.

Skills

We want each child to be able to:

- Hold and manipulate a range of writing tools.
- Make marks.
- Give meaning to the marks they make.
- Form letters.
- Write in different contexts.

Attitudes

We want each child to feel**:**

Interest, pleasure, involvement in writing

- A sense of themselves as a writer.
- Pride in their achievements.

How we promote this development

Many children will come to nursery already knowing a lot about writing. They will have seen different family members writing in lots of situations: shopping lists, birthday cards, letters to friends and families, letters to officials, older brothers and sisters doing homework, parents working from home. They will have seen people writing in different environments. Some children may have started to make marks to which they give meaning or which they call writing. Some children will have seen writing in different scripts e.g. Arabic, Bengali, and Russian etc.

We will teach early writing using the core knowledge and skills we want children to learn in our curriculum progression map. Children will be invited to join writing activities linked to learning objectives and develop their learning during their time at nursery.

Children will also learn through the enabling environment through: the equipment, displays, our planning for and assessments of their progress, and the way we act as models for the children- writing for a variety of purposes.

Provision

We need to ensure that the following are readily available and attractively presented; that there is a place for everything and children know where that is.

- A wide range of papers, notebooks, envelopes, postcards, notelets, in the graphics area together with pens, pencils, felt tips, crayons, chalks, charcoal.
- Rulers, paper clips and fasteners, rubbers, hole punches, staplers.
- Sellotape, masking tape, Pritt sticks.
- Paper, pens, pencils, clipboards throughout the nursery, inside and outside.
- Name cards, alphabets cards and books, examples of other scripts.
- Labels for models in construction area.
- Examples of writing (typed & handwritten) throughout the nursery: e.g. lists of children's names, annotations to displays, notices, reminders, labels, invitations to play, lists for taking turns on the swing, woodwork bench, cooking etc.
- A basket of paper and pens for outdoor role play.

Planning

In our plans we will ensure that -

- Writing is planned for progressively using the Curriculum Progression Map and ensures every child has access to linked activities.
- Writing is a daily part of all activities e.g. telephone messages in the home corner, incident reports in the police station, writing frames for experiments, choosing sandwich fillings, writing notes to friends, staff, families etc.

Assessment & Record Keeping

- Tracking is used at the end of every term to assess progress children have made.
- Key people keep examples of children's writing and marking making in their profiles in order to keep track of their skills and knowledge.
- Children's ability to represent is recorded and tracked.
- We use the Curriculum Progression Map to ensure we are covering all aspects of this part of literacy development.

Adult's Role

Our involvement with children is crucial to their development as writers as it is in all areas of the curriculum. All staff need to contribute to children's learning. All staff need to know about the developmental stages of writing. They need to be able to recognise when a child's mark-making is simply a motor activity; when a child's mark-making is symbolic or representational; when a child's symbolic mark-making has moved onto representations of speech; when a child is using their own symbols for letters; when a child is using letters; when a child understands that words are made of letters; when a child understands that there are spaces between words; when it is appropriate to teach upper and lower case forms and when they should be used; when to teach phonics etc. We need to be aware of promoting opportunities for writing throughout the nursery not just in the graphics area.

Adults will need to:

- Act as models for children by themselves writing for a number of different purposes and explaining this to children.
- Provide examples of handwritten and printed writing as labels and explanations and invitations around the nursery.
- Encourage children to look at their name cards and have a go at copying their names.
- Act as scribes for children annotating their drawings, helping them with book making.
- Encourage children to 'write', to behave as writers in imaginative play or putting their name on the waiting lists for turns on the swinging tyre etc. Children will then start to perceive themselves as writers and this positive attitude will foster learning.

Equal Opportunities

Boys and girls both need opportunities to write in different contexts. If children are engaged more often in superhero play in the garden, then this does not preclude their development as writers. Notebooks and pencils can be introduced into the play for report writing and messages to each other. They can be encouraged to draw maps and plans to extend the play; to label the Bat Cave; to make signs for the rocket ships etc.

If we ensure that writing materials are available daily throughout the nursery then all children, whatever their play preferences, will have the chance to write.

Examples of different scripts are on show in the graphics area. We have a large collection of dual text books which show familiar stories in a range of home languages some of which use an alphabet other than the English one.

Our pencils and crayons on the whole are triangular in section. This makes it easier for young children to learn to grip well. We also have pencil grips that can be put on to pencils to make it even easier for children with poor motor development to grip. Children who have not yet established a preferred hand will be offered pens etc. in the middle so they are free to choose.

Conclusion

This policy reflects our dedication to fostering a lifelong love for writing in young children. By providing a nurturing, creative, and inclusive environment, we aim to lay the foundation for their future success in literacy and beyond.