

Supporting children's writing in reception class



Guidance booklet by Oxfordshire County Council's Early Years Advisory Team
June 2015

Resources for the writing/mark making areas inside and outside:

Paper – assorted sizes, shapes, colours, textures and types including large rolls

Cardboard – assorted colours, textures and thickness

Music paper, graph paper, lined paper

Pads, notebooks, envelopes, stamps, sticky notes, labels, address books, diaries, registers, forms, headed note paper, calendars, cards

Readymade and homemade books – zigzag, stapled, concertina

A range of writing tools of different thicknesses – multi-coloured pens, markers, crayons, writing pencils, chalks, coloured pencils, felt-tip pens, gel pens and biros

Pencil sharpeners, rubbers, stampers and ink pads, staplers, hole punches, rulers, scissors, sticky tape, glue sticks, paper clips, treasury tags, blu tak

Message boards/communication pockets, display board, post box

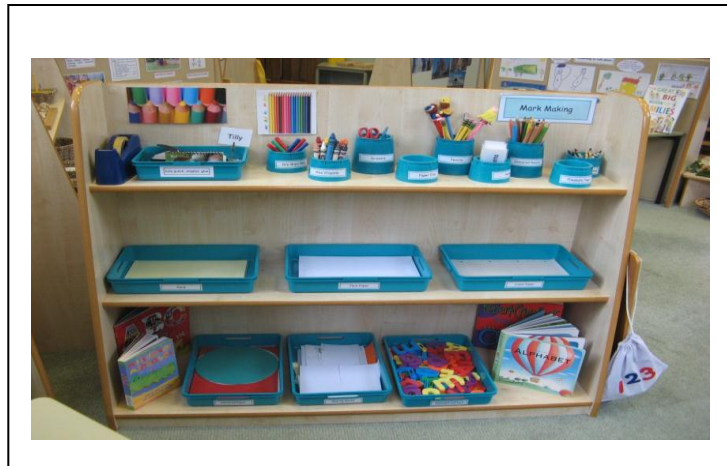
Clipboards, whiteboards and blackboards (fixed and portable, large and small)

Name cards, alphabet frieze, word cards/ word banks

Magnetic letters, gel letters

Examples of environmental print, examples in different languages - notes, timetables, adverts, leaflets, take away menus

Interactive whiteboards, computer programmes and Apps



Opportunities for writing/mark making:

Signs	Menus (role play café/take away)	
Labels	Prescriptions (role play doctor/vet)	
Cards	Order forms (role play builders)	
Letters	Food orders (role play café/take away)	
Postcards	Stories and books	Jokes
Notes	Invitations	Poetry
Messages	Tickets	Receipts
Recipes	Maps	Posters
Sign up sheets	Shopping lists	Bills
Captions	Registers	Diaries
Instructions	Driving licences	Score sheets

Fine motor development:

Small construction equipment
 Tweezers
 Threading, sewing, weaving
 Finger rhymes and finger puppets
 Pegs and peg boards
 Malleable materials – play-dough, gloop, clay, sand, shaving foam
 Cutting and sticking
 Puzzles of various levels of difficulty
 Art materials – crayons, paint, spray bottles, sponges
 Washing line and pegs
 Buttons, zips and laces

Gross motor development:

Digging with spades
 Throwing and catching balls, beanbags, quoits
 Pulling and pushing wheeled toys
 Climbing
 Monkey bars
 Big brushes
 Large rollers
 Mops
 Chunky chinks
 Ribbons and scarves

Key Questions to Consider



Do you encourage writing in a range of areas (inside and outside) and on the go?
Is there an expectation that children will write daily e.g. Name, labels etc?
Do you have well stocked, inviting writing areas?
Do you have a system for keeping them well stocked?



Does every child have access to their name card, alphabet mat, tricky words?
Do children have a place to display writing they have done?
Are there different types of writing on display? Are different languages displayed?
Can children see typed and handwritten labels on displays?
Is there an alphabet frieze displayed at the child's level?

Do children see adults write every day?
Do adults model writing?
Do adults spend time in the writing area?
Do adults scribe for children, including scribing narratives that emerge in children's play?

Do adults plan to lead shared and guided writing sessions?
Do you plan to introduce children to a range of types of writing across the year?
Do children have opportunities to practise and apply skills taught?
Is there a whole-school handwriting policy and an agreed letter formation patten?



Do you have ways of communicating key information about writing to parents?
Do you ask children to talk about their writing, evaluate the progress they are making
and discuss their next steps?

Do you track progress in writing through the developmental stages?
Is there evidence of progress in writing within Learning Journeys/writing books?
Are parents encouraged to share examples of children's writing from home?



THE CHILD GIVES MEANING TO MARKS AS THEY DRAW WRITE AND PAINT

They choose from a variety of media and can assign meaning to these marks.

Chloe covers the whole paper and says 'I'm writing'.

In the environment

- Provide a well stocked writing area including a variety of mark makers e.g. chalks, crayons, marker pens and different types of paper.
- Include a range of meaningful mark making opportunities in other areas of provision e.g. message pad by the telephone in the role play area.
- Provide mark making opportunities in the outdoor area e.g. mud and twigs, large brushes and water and large sheets of paper and pens.
- Provide sensory experiences to support mark making e.g. "gloop".
- Provide mark making "on the move" resources e.g. clipboards, writing tool belts, boxes and bags.
- Provide resources to develop fine and gross motor control.

The role of the practitioner

- Celebrate all mark making attempts in all contexts.
- Provide a purpose for writing to encourage reluctant mark makers e.g. a sign up sheet for the computer.
- Model mark making and talk about what you are doing.
- Scribe what children say about their mark making, drawings and paintings.
- Plan to make links with physical development e.g. talk about circles when dancing.
- Regularly discuss the mark making opportunities available within the classroom.
- Remind children to write each day.
- Introduce stimulating mark making materials over time.

Partnership with parents

- Ask parents if their children enjoy drawing and painting at home.
- Ask parents to bring in any mark making their child has done at home to show you.
- Send home a list of mark making activities which would be appropriate to do at home.
- Display various mark making achievements. Use photos and anecdotes as well as pieces of mark making.
- Encourage parents to talk to children about the marks they make and praise any attempts at mark making.
- Share with parents the importance of mark making and drawing as a stage towards writing.

Example: teaching sequence for firework mark making. This could follow an observed interest in fireworks.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Talk about Bonfire Night and fireworks. Ask the children to describe their experiences of fireworks e.g. what they look like, what colours they are and which shapes they make.</p> <p>Demonstrate making these patterns in the air and ask the children to join in e.g. moving hands round in a circular movement; “this firework goes round and round”.</p>	<p>In the outdoor area with a small group of children encourage children to create their own firework picture.</p> <p>Offer the children a choice of surfaces on which to mark make e.g. the playground, large black sheet or large pieces of paper stapled to the fence. Offer a choice of mark makers e.g. spray paint bottles, roller ball paints, paint brushes, chalks, marker pens.</p> <p>Encourage children to talk about the marks they are making. Encourage and model the use of related language.</p>	<p>Provide a range of black paper, fabric and various media in which to continue making firework pictures.</p> <p>Provide ribbons and scarves in an open space so children can repeat making large movements.</p> <p>Display firework pictures and annotate with the child’s description of their marks.</p> <div data-bbox="1624 715 1924 916" data-label="Image"> </div>



Ethan wanted to draw a bird he had seen in the garden. He showed it to his key person and said “it’s a bird”.

THE CHILD USES SOME CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE LETTERS TO COMMUNICATE MEANING

The letters which the child produces may be familiar from his or her own name. They assign a meaning to what has been written. There is often no sound/symbol match at this stage.

The children use squeeze bottles to make marks on the floor in the outdoor area. They make representations of the first letters of their names and jump up and down on their letters.

Marcia is playing in the café and notes the customers' orders on her notepad. She tells the chef 'They want pizzas'.

In the environment

- Ensure there is always a wide range of inviting mark making resources inside and outside to suit a wide range of interests and learning styles and that these are regularly replenished.
- Ensure there are displays of letters and alphabet friezes at children's height inside and outside (these may be in a range of scripts/languages).
- Provide children's name cards in a variety of locations to support daily routines and other activities inside and outside.
- Ensure children have access to a selection of simple word books/ word banks, stories and captions in many areas of the provision.

The role of the practitioner

- Ensure that all adults model writing/ mark making alongside children in a range of situations.
- Plan observations of all children to identify their next steps for purposeful mark making.
- Advertise the mark making areas to the children, sharing with them the range of possibilities, the variety of resources and ideas for using them.
- Ensure all adults talk to children about writing, particularly celebrating any attempts to write letters.
- Plan adult focused activities to promote the writing of letters. Ensure all adults are using consistent language when talking about how to form letters.

Partnership with parents

- Share children's attempts at writing with the parents to promote the child's self esteem and encourage parents to praise any attempts.
- Write a 'tips for encouraging mark making' leaflet and send one home.
- Display children's mark making/writing and talk to children and their parents about it.
- Give parents information about the stages children move through as they are learning to write.
- Send home writing packs to encourage mark making/writing at home.

Example: teaching sequence for writing shopping lists. This could follow an observed interest in parties, food or shopping.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Talk to the children about making a shopping list for a party at the end of the week. Show the children some shopping lists, read what was purchased, and look in a shopping bag at some things already purchased for the party.</p> <p>Scribe the children's ideas for what else they need for the party and model writing a list on the board, drawing attention to initial sounds and letter shapes.</p> <p>Talk to the children about writing their own shopping lists and demonstrate how they can put their own list up on display.</p>	<p>Plan for individuals or small groups to work closely with an adult supporting their attempts to write shopping lists.</p> <p>Real objects or pictures should be available to support children.</p> <p>Praise all attempts at writing. Children may be making their own marks to represent words at this stage, but draw attention to any identifiable letters you can see.</p> <p>Observations should focus on children's engagement with the process of writing and not just the end product.</p>	<p>Over the next few weeks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide list type pads and paper in the writing area • Stimulate ideas by displaying posters, books and labels related to shopping. • Ensure there are stories about shopping to develop the interest for all children. • Provide paper for children to take and write a list at home. • Share the work with parents on an information board/display of lists. <p>Observe children using the mark making resources. When you see a child writing identifiable letters, photocopy the writing sample for their learning journey.</p>



Emma drew a picture of herself and labelled it saying "it's my name".

THE CHILD REPRESENTS SOME SOUNDS CORRECTLY AND IN SEQUENCE.

They attempt to write words including some appropriate letters.

Following a trip to the zoo, Rezminster draws a picture of a gorilla and underneath writes the letter g.

Priya draws a house and writes the letters m hs. She says it says 'my house'.

In the environment

- Set up a phonics area where children can practise the letters they learn in phonics groups. Ensure magnetic letters, whiteboards and pens and an alphabet frieze are always available.
- Provide alphabet friezes in all other areas of the provision where you want to encourage children to write.
- Provide a collection of alphabet books in the reading area that show letters in lower, as well as upper case.
- Make a class alphabet with photos of the children next to the initial letter of their name.
- Provide lots of different ways to write inside and outside including non-permanent opportunities such as water painting and whiteboard work to allow practice and build confidence.

The role of the practitioner

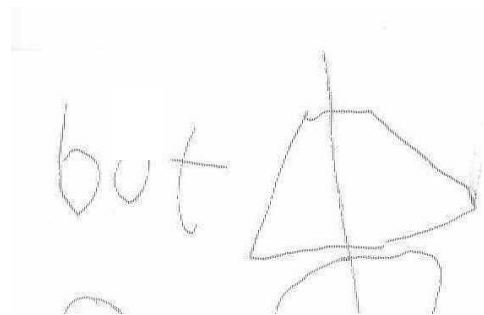
- Model writing initial letters for words in lots of different situations e.g. in a vet role play area you could write a list of animals the vet needs to see including a c (for a cat) and a d (for a dog).
- Make links between the work done in phonics sessions and other opportunities to write e.g. if the children have been introduced to the letters s,a,t,p,i,n, set up an activity at the phonics area matching pictures of food including sausages, apples, tomatoes and pineapple, to the appropriate magnetic letters.
- Use letters as part of daily routines e.g. I want all the children who have this letter in their name (write s on board) to go and wash their hands for lunch.

Partnership with parents

- As you teach new letters in phonics, send information home so parents can practise the letters with their child.
- When a child has a go at writing e.g. g for gorilla, talk to their parents about it so they know how well their child is doing and can encourage them to have a go at this at home.
- Reassure parents that writing the initial sound of a word, or just some sounds within a word is a great start to writing and that children will be able to write words more accurately in time.

Example: writing labels for a display of models. This could follow an observed interest in model making or construction.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Set up a display space near your construction area. Include name cards, architect plans, pictures of things children might make such as cars, towers, bridges etc. and blank labels.</p> <p>Show children the display space and explain that they can save a model they have made and put it on the display as long as they write a label to go with it.</p> <p>Demonstrate writing a label.</p> <div data-bbox="286 831 656 983" style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center; color: blue;"><i>Bus</i> <i>Jayden</i></p> </div>	<p>Explain to the children that you need labels to go with the pictures in the construction area.</p> <p>Ask them each to choose a picture to write a label for.</p> <p>Encourage them to say the word a few times and listen out for any letter sounds they can hear.</p> <p>Ask them to have a go at writing a label; reassure them that it will be fine if they can only write the first sound in the word.</p> <p>Encourage them to look at the alphabet frieze you have displayed to help them remember what the letters look like.</p>	<p>Over the next few weeks, regularly draw the children's attention to the display space by the construction area and encourage them to have a go at writing a label. Praise any child who does have a go at writing a label and share it with the other children.</p> <p>Plan time to join the children in the construction area and help them write labels, make plans and maps.</p> <p>Take photographs of children's models with labels next to them to add to their Learning Journeys.</p> <p>Plan other labelling opportunities e.g. labelling plants in a planting area outside.</p>



Luke used his knowledge of sounds to label his picture of a boat.

THE CHILD WRITES THEIR OWN NAME AND OTHER WORDS FROM MEMORY INCLUDING SOME IRREGULAR COMMON WORDS

They can write his or her first name as well as some other words. These may be key words that are important to him or her such as 'mum' 'dad' 'cat' and perhaps the names of other family members.

Aston is making a Mother's Day card. He writes 'To Mum' and his own name by himself.

Millie draws a picture of her family and labels them all appropriately.

In the environment

- Make sure children's names are on display e.g. on pegs and drawers, for self-registration.
- Provide name cards in the creative area and the mark making area and encourage children to write their name on work they have done.
- Provide name cards and blank labels in the construction area, set up a display area for models and ask children to label them with their names.
- Display examples of writing e.g. cards and letters starting 'to...' and ending 'from...'
- Provide somewhere for children to post messages to each other.
- Display 'tricky words' as you learn them.

The role of the practitioner

- Praise children for all writing they try to do.
- Find fun ways of encouraging children to practise writing their name e.g. draw it on the playground with chalk and ask them to paint over it with water.
- Model writing cards, letters and messages.
- Plan interesting opportunities for writing e.g. messages in bottles to pirates, get well cards to children who are ill, letters to a giant.
- Ask children to write their name to say they have done things e.g. had a piece of fruit at the rolling snack table, had a go on a bike etc.

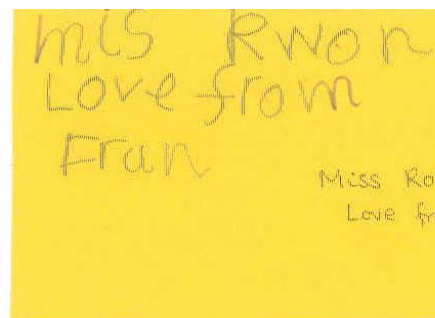
Partnership with parents

- Ask parents to help their child practise writing their name.
- Ask parents to make an 'all about my family' book with their child where they draw their family members and write their names by them.
- Send home lists of words that children might be able to read and write so that their parents can work on them at home. These might be tricky words or words children can sound out.
- Ask children to write an invitation to their parents to come and see their learning journey or other work they have done in school.
- Ask parents to bring in any writing their child has done at home to show you.

Example: teaching sequence for card making, over a week or a fortnight. This could follow an observed interest in birthdays, parties or cards.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Talk about why we send cards to each other: for birthdays, for Christmas, to say get well etc. Talk about what cards look like, picture on the front, writing inside. Show them some cards you have received.</p> <p>Model writing a card for another adult <i>To Mrs Smith</i> <i>Love From Miss Jones</i></p> <p>Get one of the children to give it to the other adult so she can model being pleased to receive it.</p>	<p>With 3 or 4 children in a small group let them choose from a range of different sizes and colours of cards. Talk about who they want to give the card to. Ask them to draw a picture that they think that person will like on the front.</p> <p>Inside the card ask the children to do their writing <i>To Jack</i> <i>Love from Callum</i></p> <p>Use your knowledge of the children to decide whether to ask them to have a go at writing the words without any help or whether to refer them to a display of tricky words. Remember 'to' is a tricky word introduced early in phase 2 of "Letters and Sounds".</p>	<p>Over the next week to a fortnight provide lots of cards of different colours and sizes in the writing area and suggest to children that they might like to send cards to their friends. Make sure there are name cards there so children can look at how to write their friend's names.</p> <p>Display some of the cards they send on a board near the writing area and praise children who make a card either to give to a friend or for display.</p> <p>Observe how the children are using the writing area. When you see a child making a card and writing most of the words from memory, photocopy the writing and add it to the child's Learning Journey for evidence.</p>

Fran wanted to make a card for her teacher who was leaving to have a baby.



THE CHILD USES A PENCIL AND HOLDS IT EFFECTIVELY TO FORM RECOGNISABLE LETTERS, MOST OF WHICH ARE CORRECTLY FORMED

In a child-initiated activity, Emily writes 'I' 'am' and 'can' on a whiteboard, taking great care to form the letters correctly.

In the environment

- Provide resources to develop fine motor skills: small construction equipment, tweezers to pick up tiny objects such as beads and threading.
- Provide resources to develop gross motor skills: digging with spades, throwing and catching balls, pulling and pushing wheeled toys.
- Provide an alphabet frieze at child height which shows letters in the way you are going to teach children to form them.
- Make sure there are sharp pencils of different sizes available for children to use in lots of learning areas.
- Provide a range of left handed tools, especially left handed scissors, as needed


The role of the practitioner

- Plan for adults to observe writing.
- Model how to form letters correctly e.g. when introducing a new letter in a phonics session, when writing alongside a child in the role play area.
- Ensure all adults are using consistent language when describing how to form letters.
- Plan to make links with physical development e.g. talk about circles when dancing & build wrist strength by twirling ribbon sticks
- Plan a weekly opportunity for children to practise letter formation. Remember children will need to practise writing letters they can already recognise.
- Support children with additional physical needs with nonslip mats, small trays for equipment & triangular or thicker writing tools
- Teach children how to use tools & materials effectively

Partnership with parents

- Send home information about the physical development of writing, letter formation and the handwriting policy.
- Give parents examples of things they can do with their child that will develop their fine motor skills, other than using a pencil, e.g. cooking, painting & making models
- Have a display board in your classroom where parents can display writing their children have done at home.

Example: teaching a group of letters that are all formed from a circular movement (c, o, g, d, a, q). This could follow an observed interest in dancing, movement and music.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Take children to an open space, such as a hall, outdoor area or playground.</p> <p>Ask children to make large arm circular movements with their arms, perhaps using ribbons or scarves.</p> <p>Play some music, ask children to move their bodies around in a circle.</p> <p>Make sure you are using the vocabulary 'round' and 'circle'.</p> <p>After the dance, show children the letters c, o, g, d, a, q and talk about the fact that they are made from circular movements.</p>	 <p>Share 'circles painting' by Kandinsky. Ask children to draw or paint circle shapes with various mark makers (brushes, rollerball paints, chalk etc) on circular paper. As they are working, comment on what they are doing using the vocabulary 'round' and 'circle'.</p> <p>The next day, work with the same children. Talk to them about the letters c, o, g, d, a, q and explain they are made from the same circular movements as they were using the day before. Provide children with large paper and a range of mark makers to practise writing the letters.</p>	<p>Over the next week leave the music, the scarves and the ribbons in the open space so children can repeat large circular movements.</p> <p>At the creative and writing areas leave different colours and sizes of circular paper with various mark-making materials for children to make circle pictures.</p> <p>At the writing area display c, o, g, d, a, q and encourage children to have a go at writing them.</p> <p>Remind children that those activities are available and celebrate those who have a go.</p>

Aisha drew a picture of her favourite character from a book on World Book Day. Her key person noticed that she had formed all the letters correctly.



THE CHILD USES PHONIC KNOWLEDGE TO WRITE WORDS IN WAYS WHICH MATCH THEIR SPOKEN SOUNDS

Their efforts are phonetically plausible when he or she write simple regular words and particularly when he or she attempts to write more complex words.

David writes ' I went to seey fiyuweracs and hat to pc in the pub' (I went to see fireworks and had to park in the pub).

In the environment

- Provide resources linked to phonics teaching for children to apply their phonic knowledge indoors & outdoors e.g. games/puppets/computer programmes/photos/artefacts & books
- Display writing that children do. Celebrate their attempts at writing using their phonic knowledge.
- Ensure the role play area includes words children can sound out e.g. a list of jobs for pirates might include 'mend the sails' or 'get the silver'.
- Make simple books that you know the children will be able to sound out and add them to the reading area. These may be mostly made of CVC words using letters children have learned in phonics groups.

The role of the practitioner

- Model sounding out for writing, both when leading a shared writing session and when opportunities arise when playing alongside children.
- Plan lots of writing opportunities and talk to the children about them. Make sure children realise they can have a go at writing by segmenting sounds and praise them when they do.
- Make links between phonics sessions and other opportunities to read and write e.g. if you have introduced the letter j you could add Pass the Jam Jim to the reading area and put a caption of a man jumping or jogging in the writing area so children could have a go at writing a caption 'the man can jump' or 'the man can jog'.

Partnership with parents

- As you teach a new letter in phonics, send information home so parents can practise the letters with their child.
- Run a parent information evening or send home a leaflet explaining that you will be encouraging children to sound out words and will not always correct spellings when children are building their confidence.
- When a child has had a go at writing something difficult e.g. '*I went to seey fiyuweracs*' photocopy it to send home so the parents can see how well their child is doing.
- Set up a writing display, perhaps near the cloakroom or entrance, celebrating children's attempts at using phonic knowledge to write so parents can see this type of writing every day.

Example: linking phonics teaching to a role play area. This could follow an observed interest in food or shopping.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led work with a differentiated phonics group</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>At the start of phase 3 of “Letters and Sounds” children will be introduced to the consonant digraphs sh and ch.</p> <p>Model writing words that include the new sounds and ask children to read the words you have written.</p> <p>Give children a CVC phoneme frame and ask them to have a go at writing these words: chip, chop, chin, shop, ship, fish. Make sure they write the consonant digraph in one section of the phoneme frame.</p>	<p>Explain to the children you want to write an order for a takeaway, you want to get fish and chips. Ask them to say the words slowly and then have a go at writing them by segmenting the sounds.</p> <p>Next say you want to order chicken and chips. Again, ask them to say the words slowly and have a go at writing them.</p> <p>Praise children for trying to segment, and reassure them the writing doesn’t have to be perfect.</p>	<p>Set up a fish and chip shop role play area including a sign saying ‘fish and chip shop’ and a menu advertising ‘big chips’, ‘little chips’, ‘fish and chips’, ‘chicken and chips’ etc with prices.</p> <p>Join children in the role play area, model reading the menu, placing an order, paying for it and eating it. Also model being the shopkeeper and writing an order down.</p>

I went to Nandos. I had ice-cream in a bowl.

I went to Nandos.
I had ice-cream in a bowl.

Ibrahim wrote about what he had done at the weekend.

THE CHILD WRITES LABELS, CAPTIONS AND SIMPLE SENTENCES WHICH CAN BE READ BY THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

They can write simple sentences, sometimes using capital letters and full stops.

Sebastian writes captions for the photographs in his album with some help from the practitioner with the words he does not know. 'I saw my Aunty Flo at the wedding.'

In the environment

- Display pictures done by children with captions handwritten by adults next to them.
- Make books about children's experiences e.g. 'Our trip to the farm' with a caption by each photograph and provide them in the reading area.
- Provide whiteboards for children to use and for adults to model writing. Include these in lots of learning areas inside and outside.
- Provide long pieces of paper in the mark making area to encourage children to write sentences.
- Provide pictures in the writing area that encourage children to write captions.
- Provide word banks of tricky words or key vocabulary to support independent writing.

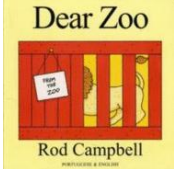
The role of the practitioner

- Plan an opportunity for shared or modelled writing at least weekly. Ensure you include captions and sentences.
- Scribe sentences and captions for children e.g. when they draw a picture, when they want to make a book.
- Talk about sentence structure when doing shared writing or reading e.g. "I am going to start my sentence with a capital letter." "I can see this sentence has a full stop."
- Display sentences that you have written in shared writing where children can see them.
- Work with children one to one or in small groups to encourage them to write sentences e.g. to write a recipe for making chocolate nests.

Partnership with parents

- Have a class toy animal that goes home with each child in turn with a book. Ask the parents to encourage their child to draw something they have done with the toy animal in the book and then scribe a sentence for their child underneath.
- Send home a 'talking tin' or other recordable device. Ask parents to say a sentence about what their child has done over the weekend into the tin so you can add it to a class book.
- Encourage children to borrow books from school to take home. Ask parents to point out sentences, capital letters and full stops in the books when they are sharing them with their children.
- Send home ideas of games parents can play such as 'silly sentences'.

Example: using a familiar storybook to encourage children to say and write their own sentences. This could follow an observed interest in wild animals or pets.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
 <p>Read the children <u>Dear Zoo</u>.</p> <p>Point out sentence structure – capital letters, full stops.</p> <p>Choose another animal to add to the book. Rehearse making a sentence for the animal chosen e.g. “you think they could send you a kitten, so we would write <i>They sent me a kitten.</i>”</p> <p>Model writing that page to add to the book.</p>	<p>Ask each child to write a page to make a group version of <u>Dear Zoo</u> to add to the reading area.</p> <p>Ask each child to choose what animal they would like and rehearse their sentence into a talking tin before they try and write it. Talk about where the capital letter and full stop should go.</p> <p>Use your knowledge of the children to decide whether to let them have a go at writing the sentence without any help or whether to provide a word bank of important words and animal names.</p>	<p>Over the next week or fortnight display <u>Dear Zoo</u> books made during the small group work next to the writing area.</p> <p>Provide lots of little books in the writing area with pictures of animals and animal names. Encourage children to have a go at writing their own <u>Dear Zoo</u> books.</p> <p>Observe how the children are using the writing area. When you see a child making a book and attempting to write captions and sentences, celebrate this, photocopy the book and add it to the child’s learning journey for evidence.</p>

Eva contributed a sentence to a class book about animals

A fish swam in the corl reef.

THE CHILD COMMUNICATES MEANING THROUGH PHRASES AND SIMPLE SENTENCES WITH SOME CONSISTENCY IN PUNCTUATING SENTENCES

They attempt to write in a variety of forms using an appropriate range of vocabulary. The text is readable, as the words are either spelt correctly or are phonetically plausible. Letters are reasonably consistent in size and spacing between words is generally consistent. What is written makes sense and there is some consistency in the use of capital letters and full stops. The writing expresses and communicates ideas, thoughts and feelings, making imaginative use of words and expressions.

Selecting lined paper, Eileen and Rachel write their own version of the book Mrs Wishy Washy. Their story is readable with most of the words spelt correctly and the remainder being phonetically plausible.

In the environment

- Provide well stocked, stimulating writing areas; cater for a range of children's interests, with appropriate prompts to support children when writing.
- Ensure there are displays of writing at child height which are referenced weekly to promote and value children's writing.
- Provide children with access to a range of interesting good quality books, including home made books, to stimulate their imagination.

The role of the practitioner

- Observe children engaged in the process of writing to assess and plan next steps.
- Talk to children about their writing, including use of vocabulary and imaginative expressions and plan opportunities for them to talk about their writing to other children and adults.
- Work alongside children when writing. Model writing demonstrating the use of capital letters and full stops, and drawing their attention to the patterns in spellings.

Partnership with parents

- Share children's writing with parents on a regular basis.
- Invite children to share their writing with parents at home.
- Allow children to take home books they have made to share with their parents.
- Produce a leaflet for parents explaining about supporting children's writing and the key elements which will help children develop as writers.
- Set up a story party where parents come in and make up stories with their children.

Example: teaching sequence for writing their own version of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. This follows on from children getting to know the story really well, including drawing a story map and being able to retell the story orally.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>
<p>Talk to the children about the changes you could make to the story if you wanted to write your own version. What else could Goldilocks eat other than porridge? What else could she break other than the chair? Where else could the Bears find her other than in bed?</p> <p>Model drawing 3 pictures for your own version of the story e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goldilocks eating Baby Bear's toast and jam. 2. Goldilocks breaking Baby Bear's x-box 3. The Three Bears find Goldilocks playing in the garden. <p>Model writing a caption for each picture.</p>	<p>Work with a small group of children and ask them each to draw their own 3 pictures for their version of the story. Encourage children to use each other for ideas and share their thoughts about each other's stories.</p> <p>Ask children to write their own captions to go with their pictures. Encourage children to extend their captions to more than one sentence, for example to add descriptive words to say what the food tasted like.</p> <p>Provide children with word banks of tricky words and key vocabulary to support them in their writing.</p> <p>Display the stories to celebrate them with the whole class, giving the children choices about how they are written up and presented.</p>	<p>Over the next few weeks, leave the book format in the writing area and encourage children to write more versions of the story.</p> <p>Add other formats of books e.g. concertina, zig-zag, origami and other ways of presenting the story e.g. story boards.</p> <p>Set up a book shop/library with the children for them to use during child initiated times to promote the sharing of their writing.</p> <div data-bbox="1601 837 1944 1181" data-label="Image"> </div>

THE CHILD ATTEMPTS WRITING FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES, USING FEATURES OF DIFFERENT FORMS.

They write for a range of purposes, for example writing a shopping list, a doctor's prescription, instructions for playing a game or a letter to Father Christmas. They may also write stories. Features of different forms such as lists or labels are evident.

Ella and Graham are playing in the home corner and write invitations for the friends they would like to come to tea.

Marcus says his name begins with 'm', Faraz with 'f' and Tommy with 't'. He writes 'Marcus, fz and tm' on a drawing of them playing together.

Dustin writes a shopping list for a party: 'crisps cake hats presents'.

In the environment

- Provide a well stocked writing area including a range of resources to support writing for a variety of purposes including; list templates, sticky labels, post it notes, invitations, cards, postcards, zig-zag books and registers.
- Have examples of different forms of writing displayed around the room.
- Include resources to support writing for a variety of purposes in other areas of the provision e.g. labels for models in the construction area.
- Provide labels around the room which represent the home languages spoken within the class.
- Provide a low level alphabet frieze, word cards and picture prompts which will support children in writing for a variety of purposes.

The role of the practitioner

- Plan for many different writing opportunities throughout the year.
- Praise all attempts at different forms of writing.
- Model writing for different purposes.
- Act as a scribe for children.
- Encourage children to label their own pictures or models.
- Talk to children about your everyday writing routines e.g. "I am writing a note to Mrs Green to tell her I need a school dinner".
- Observe children when writing independently.
- Organise a system for replenishing an ongoing stock of different writing forms and resources e.g. little books, shopping list templates.

Partnership with parents

- Ask parents to include their children when they are writing a shopping list or writing a birthday card.
- Ask parents to bring in any writing their child has done at home to show you.
- Prepare a "writing at home pack" which includes a variety of resources to encourage children to write at home e.g. labels, zig-zag books, postcards, letter templates.
- Ask parents to send in examples of writing from home e.g. postcards, cards, addressed envelopes, recipes, till receipts and shopping lists.

Example: teaching sequence for office writing, over a week or a fortnight. This could follow an observed interest in taking the register.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
Adult-led whole class work	Adult-led small group work	Child-led work
<p>Ask the school secretary to visit during a whole class carpet time. Ask her to speak to the children about writing opportunities in the school office.</p> <p>Share information about writing on a register, writing telephone messages and writing the school newsletter and show examples to the class. Give children the opportunity to ask any questions they have.</p>	<p>Join a small group of 3 or 4 children in the office role play area. Talk to the children about the different writing that happens in the office and support/ model writing down telephone messages, newsletters and taking a register.</p> <p>Use your knowledge of the children to decide whether to ask them to have a go at writing the words without any help or whether to refer them to a display of tricky words.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for children to access the office role play area independently.</p> <p>Provide a message board and 'message pockets' to allow children to communicate with each other.</p> <p>Display some of the office writing and celebrate individual's achievements.</p> <p>Observe how the children are using the office role play area. When you see a child writing a message, newsletter or taking a register, photocopy the writing and add it to the child's Learning Journey for evidence.</p>

Tabitha was playing in the role play area. She took a message to give to the teacher. She wrote Tom is ill today

Message from the office:
tom is ill today

<i>apple</i>	apples
<i>orange</i>	oranges
<i>cherry</i>	cherries
<i>flower</i>	flowers
<i>bread</i>	bread
<i>strawberry</i>	strawberries

In the home corner, Aaron wrote a shopping list.

THE CHILD CAN SPELL PHONICALLY REGULAR WORDS OF MORE THAN ONE SYLLABLE AS WELL AS MANY IRREGULAR BUT HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS. THEY USE KEY FEATURES OF NARRATIVE IN THEIR OWN WRITING.

In the environment

- Provide a well-stocked writing area with a range of resources to support writing for a variety of purposes
- Include resources to support writing in other areas of the provision
- Have examples of different forms of writing displayed around the room
- Have lists/cards of irregular, high frequency words available and on display
- Display examples of phrases which contain the key features of narrative including Once upon a time, A long time ago, They all lived happily ever after, The End
- Create 'work in progress' displays so writing is not seen as 'one off' pieces and children have opportunities to develop their ideas
- Adults and children to use ICT as a means to create and publish writing

The role of the practitioner

- Plan for many different writing opportunities throughout the year.
- Create writing opportunities linked to the children's play.
- Organise a system for replenishing an ongoing stock of different writing forms and resources e.g. little books, writing frames, paper with attractive picture borders
- Ensure that children are aware of the expectation that they will write daily
- Provide opportunities for children to practise and apply skills taught in a range of situations (inside/outside etc)
- Create purposes for independent and guided/group writing.
- Praise all attempts at different forms of writing.
- Model writing for different purposes using and emphasising key features of narrative.
- Act as a scribe for children
- Talk to children about your everyday writing routines
- Plan for experiences that support, challenge and extend the children's thinking and writing skills?
- Evaluate the progress they are making and discuss their next steps
- Model and encourage children to experiment with punctuation.

Partnership with parents

- Ask parents to send in examples of writing from home e.g. postcards, cards, addressed envelopes, recipes, till receipts and shopping lists.
- Ask parents to include their children when they are writing at home e.g. reminder, shopping list, card
- Prepare a "writing at home pack" which includes a variety of resources to encourage children to write at home e.g. labels, zig-zag books, postcards, letter templates.
- Ask parents to bring in any writing their child has done at home to show you and include in their Learning Journey.
- Inform parents of children's achievements and identify their 'next steps' and the skills you are working on at school.

TEACH	PRACTISE	APPLY
<i>Adult-led whole class work</i>	<i>Adult-led small group work</i>	<i>Child-led work</i>

<p>Continue to support children to compose sentences, blending and segmenting words. Introduce and support the use of new vocabulary.</p> <p>Focus upon the correct spelling of words, appropriate to the individual needs of the child. focus upon spelling phonically regular words including those of more than one syllable (e.g. upon, batman, until, upset, zigzag).</p> <p>Encourage children to learn how to spell irregular, high frequency words (e.g. people, said, they, was, know, what, who, because). Tell and re-tell stories, model the use of story maps.</p> <p>Help children to become familiar with patterns of written language. Pick out the key features of narrative and use them when you model writing a class version of the story.</p> <p>Ask the school secretary to visit and speak to the children about writing opportunities in the school office, the tricky words they use and features of different forms (notes, messages, letters, emails, orders, school newsletter). Show examples. Give children the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.</p> <p>Have an author visit.</p>	<p>Join a small group of children in small world or role-play. Help them to introduce a storyline into their play.</p> <p>Talk to the children about the characters and sequence of events in stories (beginning, middle and end). Include and emphasise key features of narrative when story telling.</p> <p>Use your knowledge of the children to decide whether to ask them to record their story, writing the words without any help or whether to refer them to a display of 'tricky' words.</p> <p>Set a challenge – how many tricky words can you write before the sand runs through the timer?</p>	<p>Encourage children to access the small world, construction and role-play area including the outdoor area for 'imaginative play'.</p> <p>Observe how children are using the above areas; praise them for their imaginative ideas.</p> <p>Help them to extend ideas and introduce story book/fantasy language in their play.</p> <p>Encourage them to extend their play into story writing. Ask them to share their writing with others. Add any examples to the child's Learning Journey for evidence.</p> <p>Display writing and celebrate individual's achievements. Create 'work in progress' displays so that writing is not seen as 'one off' pieces and children have opportunities to develop their ideas.</p>
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New National Curriculum

Following extracts taken from “*The National Curriculum in England – Handbook for Primary Teachers*” (www.scholastic.co.uk, ISBN 978-1-407-12862-7)

“Pupil’s writing during Year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

Pupils entering Year 1 who have not yet met the ELGs for literacy should continue to follow their school’s curriculum or the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their word reading, spelling and language skills.

However, these pupils should follow the Year 1 Programme of Study in terms of the books they listen to and discuss, so that they develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar, as well as their knowledge more generally across the curriculum. If they are still struggling to decode and spell, they need to be taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly.

Teachers should ensure that their teaching develops pupils’ oral vocabulary as well as their ability to understand and use a variety of grammatical structures, giving particular support to pupils whose oral language skills are insufficiently developed” (page 16)

The Year 1 Programme of Study for Writing Pages (pages 19-21) outlines the statutory requirements for ‘Transcription – Spelling and Handwriting’ and ‘Composition’ which includes vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Notes and guidance (non-statutory) are also included.

The ‘Composition’ element includes the following:

“Pupils should be taught to:

Write sentences by:

- saying out loud what they are going to write about
- composing a sentence orally before writing it
- sequencing sentences to form short narratives
- re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense

Discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils

Read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher”

Practitioners should consult the National Curriculum to ascertain the complete set of statutory requirements for Writing.

Publications:

- Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Early Education
- The National Curriculum in England, Handbook for Primary Teachers, Scholastic
- Getting Ready to Write, Alistair Bryce-Clegg, Featherstone Education
- Supporting Boys' Writing in the EYFS. Becoming a writer in Leaps & Bounds, Julie Cigman, Routledge publication
- Young boys and their writing, Sally Featherstone & Jenni Clarke, Featherstone Education
- Making my own Mark – Play & Writing, Helen Bromley, BAECE
Mark Making Matters, The National Strategies Early Years www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- The Little Book of Props for Writing, Featherstone Education
- Write Dance: Ragnhild Oussoren
- Penpals for Handwriting (Cambridge University Press)
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition, T Harms, D Cryer & RM Clifford
- ECERS-E: The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Curricular Extension to ECERS-R, K Sylva, I Siraj-Blatchford & B Taggart

Online Resources:

- [Dough Disco Shonette Bason - YouTube](#)
- <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/early-education-toolkit>
- <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/early-years-enewsletter>
- <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>
- www.facebook.com/oxonearlyyears
- Twitter *#early years*