



Writing Rationale

God's Love in Action

Our children are at the heart of everything we do through **Christian values and relationships**. **Living and learning together** we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of **self belief, mutual respect and belonging** through Social Emotional Learning and academic excellence. We are dedicated to building the foundations for **happy and successful life-long learning**.

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1. Curriculum Vision

Literacy is fundamental, not only to our personal and social development, but also to our ability to understand, evaluate, dissect, and disseminate knowledge and, consequently, to our ability to function effectively in society. Therefore, at St Thomas we believe our children should be given every opportunity possible to develop their reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills that they may cultivate the tools necessary for a happy and successful life.

We are committed to ensuring that our children:

- have the necessary tools to access the curriculum.
- can transfer knowledge, ideas, and skills between subject areas.
- recognise the importance of and enjoy reading for pleasure.
- recognise the value of writing and communicating effectively.
- can continue their literacy development beyond their primary school career.

2. National Curriculum

Spelling (see English Appendix 1)

Pupils should be taught to spell:

- words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught.
- common exception words
- the days of the week

English – key stages 1 and 2

Statutory requirements:

- name the letters of the alphabet:
- naming the letters of the alphabet in order
- using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound.
- add prefixes and suffixes:
- using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs
- using the prefix un–
- using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root.
- words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest]
- apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in English Appendix 1
- write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far.

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e., letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Transcription

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.

Develop their understanding of the concepts set out in English Appendix 2 by:

- leaving spaces between words
- joining words and joining clauses using and
- beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
- using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the
- personal pronoun 'I'
- learning the grammar for year 1 in English Appendix 2
- use the grammatical terminology in English Appendix 2 in discussing their writing.

3. Intent

Why do learners at St Thomas need to study writing?

At St Thomas, we aim to give our children a writing curriculum, which enables them to become confident, creative, and independent writers who can articulate their own ideas. We support our children to develop transferable knowledge which they can use across the wider curriculum and throughout their lives and in the next stage of their education. Our objective is to develop a curiosity for both reading and writing, examining modern and classical texts as a source for discussion, analysis and writing development.

4. Implementation

Reading and writing are so closely linked that we use a variety of high-quality literature to feed reading into writing, where children can learn and build their knowledge from high quality models. We challenge children to respond to questioning using full sentences and the language appropriate to the subject material, impacting their long-term learning. Within the classrooms, vocabulary displays show key language through each phase group and are referred to as a teaching tool within the lessons.

The core texts have been put together using support and advice from the National Literacy Trust, Little Sutton English Hub, Birmingham Education Partnership and SIPS education. These texts have not only been carefully matched to our wider curriculum, but selected for their rich language and engaging stories.

We use talk for writing strategies (Pie Corbett) such as story maps, tool kits, magpie books, role-play and boxing up, to deepen our children's understanding of language and how to structure their writing for the correct audience and purpose.

The teaching of spelling and grammatical terms is taught daily and revisited throughout the year to ensure they are purposeful to the unit of work they are working on.

As part of our cross curricular links, we assess our children's writing through extended writing, which links to their English text and a wider curriculum subject. This provides our children with opportunities to embed and recall subject knowledge and key language. Each English unit follows a toolkit, which the children build upon both daily and as they progress through the school. Fiction is taught every half-term, alongside a non-fiction unit, to ensure children are provided with a breadth of different styles and features of texts.

The fiction texts are divided into six narrative type genres:

- Setting descriptions
- Character descriptions
- Dialogue to advance the action.
- Suspense and mystery
- Openings and endings
- Journey stories

Writing Purpose	 Entertain	 Inform	 Instruct	 Poetry	 Persuade	 Explain
Year 1	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Year 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Year 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Talk for writing process.

The Talk for Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through ‘talking the text’, as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully.

The key phases of the Talk for Writing process, as outlined below, enable children to imitate orally the language they need for a particular topic, before reading and analysing it, and then writing their own version.

1. Baseline assessment and planning - 'cold' task

2. The imitation phase

3. The innovation phase

4. Independent application and invention - 'hot' task

5. Final assessment - building on progression

Teaching is focused by initial assessment. Teachers use what is known as a 'cold' task or a 'have a go' task. An interesting and rich starting point provides the stimulus and content but there is no initial teaching. The aim of this is to see what the children can do independently at the start of a unit, drawing on their prior learning. Assessment of their writing helps the teacher work out what to teach the whole class, different groups and adapt the model text and plan. Targets can then be set for individuals.

The model text is pitched well above the pupils' level and has built into it the underlying, transferable structures and language patterns that students will need when they are writing. This is learnt using a 'text map' and actions to strengthen memory and help students internalise the text. Activities such as drama are used to deepen understanding of the text. Once students can 'talk like the text', the model, and other examples, are then read for vocabulary and comprehension, before being analysed for the basic text (boxing up) and language patterns, as well as writing techniques or tool kits. All of this first phase is underpinned by rehearsing key spellings and grammatical patterns. Short-burst writing is used to practise key foci such as description, persuasion or scientific explanation.

Once students are familiar with the model text, then the teacher leads them into creating their own versions. A new subject is presented, and the teacher leads students through planning. With younger pupils, this is based on changing the basic map and retelling new versions. Older students use boxed-up planners and the teacher demonstrates how to create simple plans and orally develop ideas prior to writing. Ideas may need to be generated and organised or information researched and added to a planner. Shared and guided writing is then used to stage writing over a number of days so that students are writing texts bit by bit, concentrating on bringing all the elements together, writing effectively and accurately.

Eventually, students move on to the third phase, which is when they apply independently what has been taught and practised. Before this happens, the teacher may decide to give further input and rehearsal. Students are guided through planning, drafting and revising their work independently. It is essential to provide a rich starting point that taps into what students know and what matters so that their writing is purposeful. Writing may be staged over several days

and there may be time for several independent pieces to be written. With non-fiction, students should apply what they have been taught across the curriculum. The final piece is used as the 'hot' task, which clearly shows progress across the unit.

Teaching sequence

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Handwriting	Each class uses the Nelson handwriting scheme to sequence the teaching of handwriting across the school. A letter, join or word is taught per day according to the scheme and practiced at the start of every lesson.
SPAG	Spelling is taught using the no nonsense spelling program and taught 2-3 times a week. Grammar and punctuation is taught according to the progression of skills document and informed by the medium term planning of each unit .
Activate prior knowledge	Children reflect on and retrieve prior knowledge to support them with the new learning. Teachers use questioning and feedback techniques (such as cold calling, think, pair, share and whole class feedback) to strengthen children's understanding and allow them to make links in their learning. In addition to this, the writing overview has been carefully designed to allow for retrieval opportunities – for example through authors, themes, and skills – to ensure that children are building upon their writing skills, knowledge, and vocabulary.
Direct instruction	Teachers deliver the main input of the lesson. Modelling using 'talking aloud' strategies and instructional coaching techniques to make sense of complex ideas and support students in building schema. Using the talk for writing process, teachers will explore the toolkits for the unit of work and create story maps, role on the walls, role-play and group discussion.
Modelled Handover	Before students are secure enough to work independently, teachers use the modelled handover to scaffold learning. Using 'I do, we do, you do' gradually the students move to independent work, short bursts of writing, editing or a drama task.

Plenary	Referring to the success criteria, teachers ask the children to look back at their work and provide feedback. This feedback can be self-assessment against the criteria, peer-assessment or whole class feedback depending on the independent task. Referring to the marking policy, teachers must ensure children have responded to feedback in the moment or use it to inform the whole class feedback within the next lesson.
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The road to independence involves modelled, shared, and guided writing, before the child can write independently. Modelled writing is when the practitioner has planned what to write, tells the children the purpose of the writing, and models aloud how to do it. Shared writing is when the children know what needs to be written, and why, and make suggestions about what the practitioner might write. Guided writing is an essential component of a balanced writing curriculum, providing an additional supported step towards independent writing.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are vital to children's development across the whole curriculum. Through talk and active listening, children widen their vocabulary, develop reasoning when expressing thoughts, feelings and ideas and adopt social skills that will be so important throughout their lives. At St Thomas CE Academy, it is also essential that the children can talk and write in Standard English, as this is the gateway to academic success, whilst also valuing the dialect that is an important part of their identity.

Children cannot write what they are unable to express through talk therefore talk must be used as a pedagogical tool when teaching English to provide children with the opportunity to practice and develop their language and composition skills.

How?

- Teachers plan lessons to ensure the appropriate balance between teacher talk and pupil talk and engagement. Teachers understand that children will lose concentration if there is too much teacher lead talk and plan thinking and responding time into lesson introductions to support active listening. This takes the form of call and respond, talk

partners and the 'we' part of our lessons, a strategy that allows children time to absorb information, discuss their thoughts with an appropriate partner and then share their thinking with the class.

- Teachers recognise the importance of exposing their children to a rich and interesting variety of words and phrases to encourage them to develop their own vocabulary further. To this aim, they do not dumb down their language, and they take time, every day, to explore new and interesting words and phrases, across the curriculum.
- Children are taught how to work effectively as part of a group, including the rules of turn taking and building on the ideas of others.
- Teachers always model standard English in the classroom as well as modelling how to talk in complete sentences or by including the information a listener needs to understand what is being said. Children are encouraged to speak clearly and concisely when addressing the class, their peers, or the teacher.

Handwriting

At St Thomas, we teach discrete handwriting lessons using Nelson Handwriting. This is used when modelling handwriting to children and incorporated into as many lessons as possible, not just within English lessons. We take great pride in presenting our work to a high quality and have handwriting competitions and prizes, each term for every class, within our school devotions. Children's work is displayed around the school and within their classrooms, to congratulate children on their hard work and inspire others to get their work displayed around school.

It is the aim of this school that every child should be enabled to develop a fluent legible style of handwriting. Capital and lower-case letters should be used appropriately, and the letter size should be consistent. We will provide opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect skills and provide targeted support to any child having trouble. It is vital that teachers model Nelson font to the children, and explicitly teach letter formation and joins in each of these sessions. Children will practise their handwriting in their handwriting books and then revisit the handwriting taught that day in their literacy book as a discrete revisit session. Using the progression document, we build on knowledge of handwriting 'families' and increase legibility and consistency in handwriting. Using Nelson resource sheets, children who need further support are given scaffolded steps to reach the same fluency. Our children take pride in their work, understanding that the standard of handwriting should be appropriate for the purpose of their writing. They are exposed to different fonts and displays, ensuring their knowledge of letter formation is transferred

across different platforms and recognisable to them within the context of the real world. Children are aware of when quick note taking is appropriate, dictation and accuracy, or when it is appropriate for a final written draft version of their work.

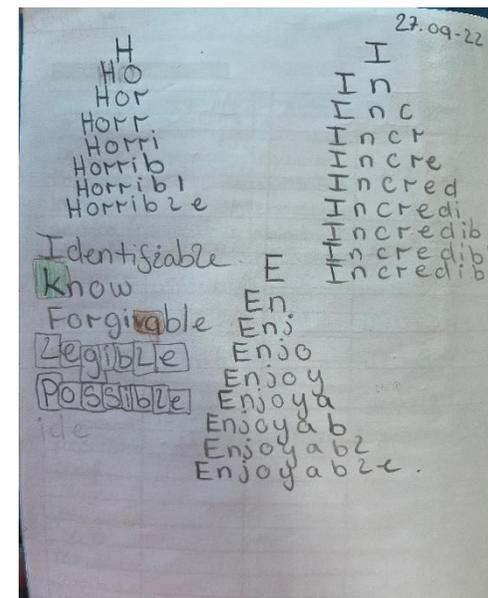
Spelling

St Thomas uses CUSP spelling as a strategy to teach and build spelling concepts and different techniques for children to become confident spellers. CUSP Spelling has been purposefully built around the principles of evidence-led practice.

This is to ensure that pupils acquire deep knowledge about the English spelling system and that this learning endures. The curriculum is written cumulatively to allow teachers to move backwards and forwards depending on the starting points for their pupils. Fully resourced, CUSP Spelling is both teacher facing and pupil facing, building consistency in how Spelling is taught across the school and ensuring that all teachers have the deep subject knowledge required to teach the statutory content of the National Curriculum for Spelling.

CUSP Spelling is a balanced approach, drawing together knowledge about phonics and vocabulary and pairing this with pattern seeking and reasoning. The CUSP Spelling curriculum is organised into 2-week blocks, with each block covering a particular set of key concepts, including spelling patterns, etymology and morphology and reasoning about spelling.

These blocks are made up of three lessons per week: 3 x 15 minute (minimum) spelling sessions a week. Systematic revisiting and incremental progression is inherently written into the long term sequence, both within and across year groups. Years 2-6 have 16 x 2-week blocks, leaving a small number of weeks for flexible content. This includes revisiting, assessment and enrichment. Year 1 has 6 blocks, which are delivered during the summer term to begin to build on pupils' strong grasp of phonics at that point.



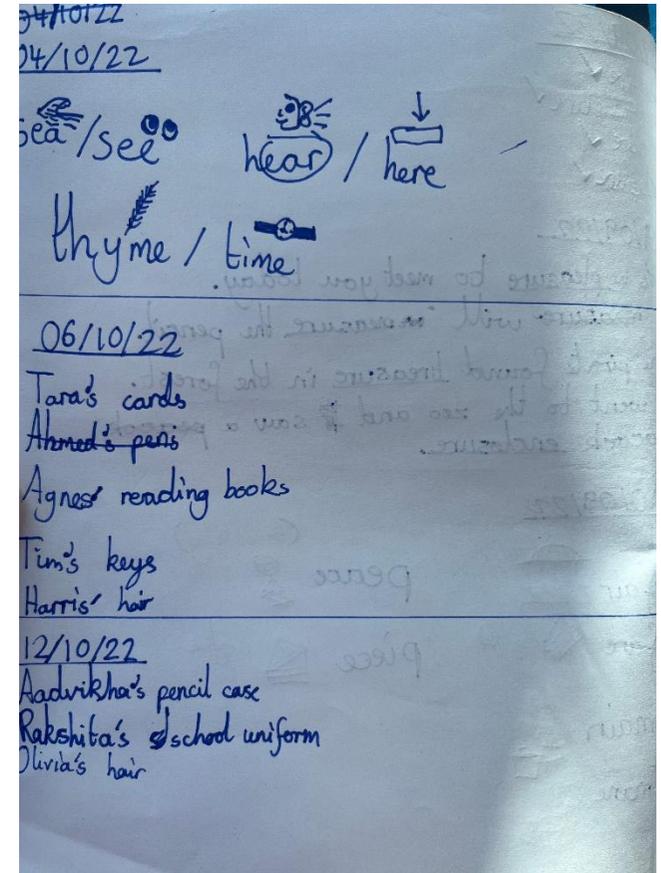
The sequence of a block follows a routine pattern to ensure that both teachers and pupils are familiar with, providing a rhythm to each unit. This includes direct instruction of key concepts, revisiting of prior knowledge, explicit teaching of Writing Rationale 2023-2024 reasoning and spelling transfer (the application of spelling knowledge into writing) and a deliberate focus on etymology and morphology.

Alongside developing their literacy skills, this will support them throughout their education, including Secondary, as they are exposed to a wider range of vocabulary required within each academic area. This will continue to support them as life-long learners. The curriculum is not built around the rote memorisation of spelling 'rules'; instead, the focus is building on what pupils have learnt about the alphabetic code through Phonics lessons and teaching them to seek patterns and reason about how to spell new or unfamiliar words. The spelling concepts included in CUSP Spelling are much further reaching than the National Curriculum programme of study for Spelling.

The statutory concepts are included in the long-term sequence, but these are paired with the study of etymology and morphology, a focus on common misconceptions, learning about self-correction and reasoning about spelling attempts.

This ensures that pupils become competent spellers and that they develop the independence to identify and correct errors in their independent writing. The long-term sequence outlines the fundamental substantive knowledge that is the focus of each block.

This is paired with the disciplinary knowledge that features in every block; reasoning, spelling transfer and error correction. Each concept is taught, revisited and consolidated throughout the curriculum so that pupils master this learning and commit it to the long-term memory. The evidence-led principles of sequencing the knowledge in CUSP Spelling mirror those that underpin the wider CUSP.



Supporting SEND

At St Thomas, we aim for all Writing lessons to be accessible for all pupils. We recognise that high-quality teaching is what is best for all pupils, including those with SEND or other additional needs. Our consistent approach to teaching is underpinned by Walkthrus instructional coaching, equipping teachers with a toolkit of research-based strategies that have been proven to work in the classroom.

Where pupils may have additional needs that could prevent them from engaging with the content of a lesson, the class team will make adaptations to ensure that each child can access the learning.

Some pupils may require extra time or support in the classroom, while others may require pre-teaching of specific vocabulary or concepts.

For Writing, examples include:

- Little Wandle sensory phonics resources.
- InPrint symbols and images to aid writing.
- Dual coding support sheets and word mats.
- Precision teaching.
- Speech and language by BCHC.

As part of termly Pupil Progress meetings, the Lead Practitioner and SENDCo meet with the class teacher to identify any barriers to learning that may be hindering progress, liaising with the Pastoral Care Manager to build up a holistic view of all pupils. Staff are confident to raise any concerns they have about specific pupils, and regularly seek guidance for additional strategies or advice.

5. Impact and assessment

At St Thomas, we use a drafting process that progresses as children work their way through their school life. Starting in early years, where children will work with their teachers and peers to improve their writing, then onto a drafting book in KS1. The drafting process allows children to correct, add to and improve their first draft of their writing. As children progress through the key stages, they will become more independent in selecting ways they can improve their writing, analysing purpose, audience, grammar, and spelling from their first draft. The final draft, allows children to really immerse themselves into the world of a writer, creating a final version of their work, which has been evaluated and proofread by the children and acts as a final exit point, for assessment within that text type. Children take pride in their drafting process, giving them the experience of what real published authors go through, to perfect their skill as a writer.

All year groups take part in moderation and attend the SFE (Services for education) training on writing updates across the KS1 and KS2 exemplification materials. Both moderation sessions, inform teachers outside of Y2 and Y6 what the expected standards are (within both key stages) and how to use the writing assessment documents to assess their children's work. We are also involved in a peer review process set up by the BEP (Birmingham Education Partnership) with several other schools across the Birmingham area, cross moderating reading and writing judgements and teaching practices.

Teacher judgements are discussed during moderation sessions and pupil progress to ensure there is sufficient evidence to support their judgements within writing. All teachers complete a moderation document based on select pupils across their class and use exemplification materials to examine the writing pieces. If evidence of each writing component is achieved in a variety of pieces, they are then agreed upon. If sufficient evidence is not available, teachers can collect new evidence or review the awarded grade alongside SLT.

EYFS


 L.O. To describe a character. W/B 16/01/23
 TA
 I can say what the character looks like. ✓
 I can say the sounds that I can hear. ✓
 I can write the sounds that I can hear in the words. ✓



j l a c h a s a
 h l g h v a o s
 j l a c h a s
 s m o o l f e e t
 j j j j j j j j j j

Ref: 0526


 L.O. To describe a character. W/B 16/01/23
 TA
 I can say what the character looks like. ✓
 I can say the sounds that I can hear. ✓
 I can write the sounds that I can hear in the words. ✓

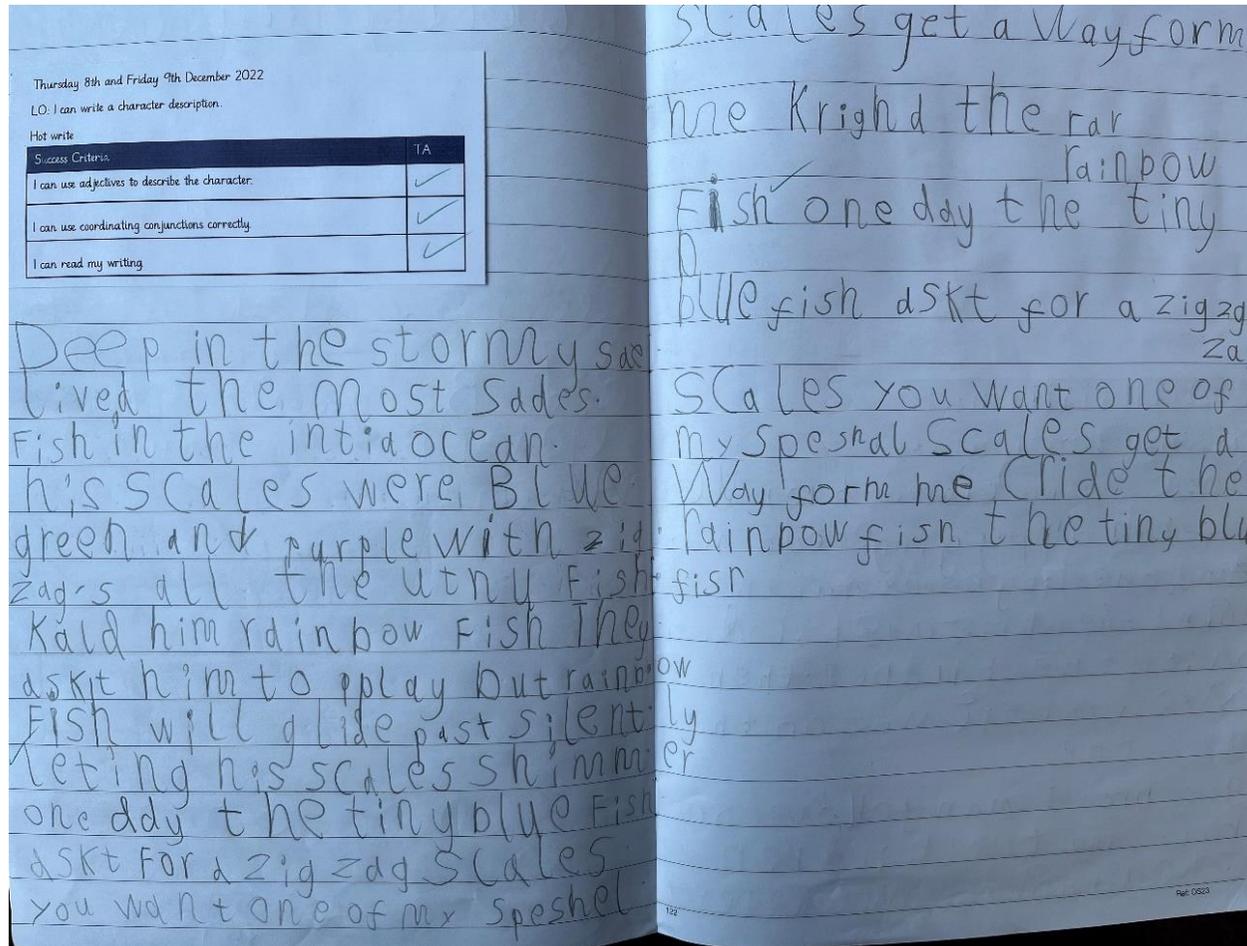


t h e g i a n t s b i g
 t h e g i a n t h a s a b e e y b b e a r d
 t h e g i a n t l a n d

Ref: 0526

EYFS: Character description based on 'Jack and the Beanstalk.'

Year 1:



Y1: Character description based on 'The Rainbow fish.'

Year 2:

LO: I know how to write a character description

Success Criteria	TA
I can write in full sentences using conjunctions	✓
I can use capital letters, finger spaces, commas and full stops	✓
I can use adjectives, verbs and adverbs in my writing	✓

The orange squirrel crawls through the trees branches. he try to find nuts to eat. he saves some for winter. he hides away from dogs and cats so he cant be eaten. he has a big tail, a tiny body and green eyes and brown neck. he eats hazel nuts, Almond and horse nuts. the female squirrel look after the baby's.

Y1: Character description based around 'Bear feels scared.'

Year 3:

LO: To write a character description.

Success Criteria	SA	TA
I can use expanded noun phrases	•	✓
I can use coordinating conjunctions	✓	✓
I can write in clear sentences to build a character description.	•	✓

Authorities are searching for this important man named Ben spotted in the rain forest by a Yanomamo tribe boy who was telling him to stop chopping the tree because there will be no air and life.

He is believed to be as short as a chair. Most distinctive are his blue large watery eyes. His hair is long and curly and his belt is thin and his black and curly hair. He appears to like trees and animals.

His skin appears to be clean and dark. His huge, powerful body various burns from staying in the rain forest.

Even though his body was covered in mud dirt and grass, he was last seen in a sad state he could eat. It is extremely important the

122 Ref: OS32

Y3: Character description based around 'The Kapok tree.'

Year 4:

Joyfulness caused though Rumaysa as she took in her surroundings. Under the ground, the cells even more dusty than they had been before from the cells, dungen. Some cells were shiny, clean and unlocked and others were locked, rusty and dusty but they all were coated with spider webs as sticky as me in slime. She was depressed in the soaked, wee, freezing air pulling part of her hijab down from her shoulders to wrap around her like a duvee. After taking a deep breath and said 'Let's go'.

Y4: Setting description based around 'Rumaysa'

Year 5:

Success Criteria	TA	SA
I can use my toolkit to help me write independently.	✓	✓✓
I can use similes and descriptive language in my writing.	/	✓✓
I can use Michael to show the setting of my island.	✓	✓✓

I woke up and felt ^{the} icy, cold snow beneath my body.

I looked up around and sat up, I ^{had} almost forgotten ^{what} ~~at~~ ~~had~~ ~~happened~~ ~~at~~ ~~had~~ ~~happened~~. I felt as cold as a freezer, I was surrounded by ice and snow, it was really windy.

I could see polar bears in the distance and hear snow crunching beneath my feet, the island was secluded, remote and blistering cold. The island was impenetrable.

new paragraph → I desperately wanted to know where my parents were.

I climbed a mountain half way and saw the deep, vast ocean, wild animals and thick ice. Oh how I missed my parents. The mountains were as tall as sky-se

Year 5: Setting description inspired by 'Kensuke's kingdom.'

Year 6:

The Stormy Coast

Deep in the gloominess of the cave, the haunted, miserable ocean, which had dark, misty clouds of smoke laying on the surface gently, started to rumble, like a of animals ~~sprinting~~ for their lives. Suddenly, the mist came... alive. As the wind howled at the ocean, helpless fish were getting flung onto shore and a few got flung onto hard, sharp, pointy rocks, as if they got swung by a powerful human being; it was awful to watch. Seconds later, the noisy, loud sirens from the enormous lighthouse alerted everyone to leave the area quickly, whilst the ocean crashed at the shore, violently. Whilst the chaos was happening, people were thinking if they save their lives.

All of a sudden, there was a silence, the annoying sirens went quiet, the people stopped shouting, yet questioning of why the chaos stopped. There was still a sound of mumbling until they saw a dark, mysterious figure. It was an old, humble man just riding his boat whilst feeling the calm, nice water tickle him. While riding his boat the old man notice the madness that was happening. The people were wondering who he was. Was he a sailor, was he a wizard, or was he just a normal human being.

Up in the red and white lighthouse, the old man sat on his wooden, rough stool waiting for the madness to happen... again. Quicker than a blink, the waves fought each other violently; knowing scare the people to death. All of sudden, the humongous lighthouse started to fall. The old man was petrified, he sprinted so fast he could of ran a marathon. Just in time, the old man got out of the lighthouse just before it fell. Slow as a sloth, the weak lighthouse had fell and when it's a gust of dirty, mysterious water poured all over the people including the old man, it felt like you was having a shower in the freezing, dull outdoors. The old man's heart was broken, all he had was gone, forever.

Y6: Setting description based around 'The Lost thing.'

6. Staff CPD

All teaching staff receive 1:1 instructional coaching, delivered by a trained coach from the senior leadership team. These fortnightly meetings follow a programme based around cognitive load theory and quality first teaching. Staff questionnaires and audits are completed at two points in a year, to signpost subject knowledge support. Subject leaders have a 1:1 session, each half term, with senior leaders, to develop action plans and support for their curriculum area. Teachers also receive 1:1 coaching with either the subject lead or our lead practitioner in planning and delivering a reading unit.

Teachers are supported with:

- Detailed medium-term planning.
- Writing coverage document.
- Toolkits for talk for writing units.
- Tier 2 vocabulary to use in the classroom.
- Modelled examples from grammarsaurus.
- Planning and resources from no nonsense spelling.
- Access to Nelson handwriting videos and resources.
- 1:1 planning guidance from subject leader.
- SFE training on moderating writing.
- Peer review of writing and reading with BEP.
- Access to high-quality texts linked to each unit of work.
- Descriptasaurus teacher guides and support sheets.