

Intent: English-Writing at New Horizons Academy

At New Horizons Academy, we are committed to ensuring that all students are equipped with strong foundational English-writing skills that enable them to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively. Our intent is to foster a love for writing, develop students' confidence in their ability to communicate through the written word, provide them with a positive outlet to develop their creativity and help our learners to re-engage with writing. We want to provide exciting writing opportunities and experiences that engage learners whilst enabling them to expand their vocabulary and be able to spell new words by effectively applying their phonics skills, spelling patterns and rules they learn throughout their time at our school. We want all children to develop their understanding of punctuation and grammar and apply it effectively to their writing. In addition, we aim for our learners to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences, encouraging them to take pride in the presentation of their learning.

We aim to:

- **Promote Literacy for Life:** We recognise the importance of strong foundational writing skills as essential tools for lifelong learning allowing them to thrive both academically and beyond the classroom in the wider world.
- **Cater to Individual Needs:** Understanding that students may come from varied educational backgrounds and possess different needs, we aim to provide personalised learning experiences. We will adopt a flexible approach to writing instruction that is responsive to each student's capabilities and potential.
- **Encourage Critical Thinking and Creativity:** We intend to cultivate critical thinking skills through engaging writing tasks that prompt creativity. Our students will explore diverse genres and styles, encouraging them to develop their unique voices while adhering to the conventions of written English.
- **Build Emotional Resilience:** We aim to use writing to allow students to explore their feelings and experiences. By fostering a safe space for expression, we support emotional well-being and resilience.
- **Explore High-Quality texts:** Through the use of the Literacy Tree scheme of work, our learners will have access to a range of high-quality texts across a variety of genres. The carefully selected texts will support our learners to develop their love for literature as well as develop their vocabulary and ability to be effective communicators and writers.
- **Promote Oracy:** Offering opportunities for our students to develop their oracy skills is crucial especially in order to

promote confidence and develop core academic and social skills. Through the use of the Literacy Tree scheme, and adapting the planned lessons, opportunities for oracy are woven into our curriculum to meet the needs of our students.

Implementation: English-Writing at New Horizons Academy

At New Horizons Academy, we deliver our English curriculum through the Literacy Tree scheme, which places high-quality literature at the heart of every lesson. To meet the specific needs of our learners, we implement this through the following strategies:

A Text-First Approach

- Immersive Hooks: Each unit begins with a "hook" to ignite curiosity and re-engage learners who may have had negative experiences with writing.
- High-Quality Literature: We use diverse, high-quality texts that serve as "mirrors and windows"—allowing students to see themselves reflected in stories while looking out into worlds different from their own. These are carefully selected by our staff to ensure that they are appropriate for our pupils and meet their needs.

Scaffolding for Success

- Adaptive Planning: While following the Literacy Tree planning sequences, teachers adapt the pace and complexity to suit the needs of their pupils.
- Phonics and Spelling Integration: As well as having separate phonics and spelling sessions to meet the needs of our pupils; opportunities to revisit and practise these skills are woven into writing sessions, allowing students to see the immediate purpose of their technical learning.
- Handwriting: Regular handwriting sessions support pupils in their transcription ability by developing a consistent style, paying attention to how letters in each family are formed. Building on their foundational knowledge in this area, pupils are equipped with the skills to be able to spell fluently and accurately leading to improved success in effective composition.
- Punctuation and Grammar in Context: Grammar and punctuation are taught through the lens of the chosen text, helping

students understand how specific grammatical choices impact the reader's emotions and understanding. Similarly to our phonics and spelling sessions, punctuation and grammar skills are taught both in stand alone sessions as well as being linked into and revisited through the Literacy Tree sessions. Giving the children multiple opportunities to learn and practise these skills, helps us to meet their varied needs.

Fostering Oracy and Expression

- Talk for Writing: Before a pen hits paper, students have opportunities to engage in various drama, role-play, and discussion based activities. These build the oral vocabulary necessary for written success. Oral composition is encouraged to support students prior to writing and during writing.

The Writing Cycle

- Opportunities for writing: We aim to provide opportunities for students to write regularly. Having the ability to constantly revisit and practise core and foundational skills, we support our pupils to address gaps in their learning.
- Reflect and improve: Through our editing and drafting process, our pupils (with support and guidance through modelling as well as verbal and written feedback) have opportunities to reflect on and improve their writing. Building their resilience as well as developing their understanding and writing skills.

Impact: English-Writing at New Horizons Academy

The impact of our English curriculum is measured not just by the quality of the work in books, but by the transformation in our students' attitudes toward communication.

Re-engagement and Increased Confidence

The primary impact is the shift from "reluctant writer" to "engaged author." Students who previously faced barriers to learning begin to view writing as a positive outlet rather than a source of frustration. This is evidenced by increased stamina in writing

sessions and a willingness to "have a go" at new vocabulary.

Academic Progress and Literacy for Life

- Vocabulary Growth: Students develop an improved "word bank" curated from high-quality texts, which they use confidently in both their speech and writing.
- Functional Accuracy: Learners demonstrate an improved ability to apply spelling and grammar rules, ensuring their writing is clear and coherent—a vital skill for their transition back to mainstream education or onward to the next stage in their educational journey.

Emotional Resilience and Self-Regulation

Through the exploration of complex characters and themes within the Literacy Tree texts, students develop greater empathy and self-awareness. Writing becomes a tool for self-regulation, allowing them to express thoughts and emotions that they might otherwise struggle to verbalise.

Improved Oracy and Social Skills

The emphasis on talk and drama results in students who can articulate their ideas clearly. This boost in communication skills leads to improved social interactions across the school day and a greater ability to advocate for themselves in the wider world.

Pride in Presentation

The impact is visible in the physical work produced. Students take pride in their "final drafts," showing care in their handwriting and layout, reflecting a newfound respect for their own creative voice.